



Health and safety in schools for COVID-19

GUIDANCE FOR ALERT LEVELS 1 - 4

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Purpose of this document

This document summarises the public health measures and recommendations, to support health and safety at COVID-19 alert levels 1 – 4.

Additional public health measures help to prevent the spread of disease and to support contact tracing.

Schools as a PCBU have obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 to ensure the health and safety of its staff, children and the public. See our [health and safety guidance for boards of trustees and school leaders](#) for further information.

You will already have a plan for managing health and safety; this guidance will assist you to review and update that plan to reflect the public health measures at each alert level. Work with your staff to do this, including your elected health and safety representatives.

Alert level system

New Zealand's [4-level Alert System](#) specifies measures to be taken against COVID-19 at each level. The system helps people understand the current level of risk and the restrictions that must be followed.

The measures may be updated on the basis of:

- new scientific knowledge about COVID-19, and
- information about the effectiveness of intervention measures in New Zealand and elsewhere.

It is therefore possible that the information in this document might need to change. If this occurs, we will quickly advise you of this and update the content and disseminate.

The Alert Levels may be applied at a town, city, territorial local authority, regional or national level.

Specific public health measures may be agreed for schools and early learning services which can differ from the measures applied to other organisations, businesses and individuals. These measures will reflect the context of a school or early learning service environment, including the lower levels of risk for children and young people and the controlled nature of the environment.

Further information on the alert system can be found on the uniteforrecovery.govt.nz website.

Health and Safety at Work Act

To meet your requirements under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 you must manage risks and protect staff, children and young people. This means that your leadership, staff, students, and community need to understand what the risks are and what they and you need to do to manage them. How you will do this needs to be planned, thought out and discussed. Your plans should then be detailed in your health and safety plan.

The expectation of the government, community, staff and regulators is that schools will meet the highest possible standards and that Boards of Trustees, management and individual staff actively manage adherence to the safety measures and expectations. It is expected that all involved ensure

they are looking out for the health and safety of their colleagues and community, while at work. It is crucial that board members, principals and managers are seen to be leaders in this work.

Workplaces are obliged to eliminate transmission risks where possible and where not, to substitute work practices or provide as high a level of control as possible. A simple example is where possible, propping or wedging a door open rather than focusing on wiping the handles regularly. It is expected that you maintain or create new practices that meet or exceed the public health measures as they are updated.

Implementing or maintaining infectious disease controls remains vital for the health and safety of workers and other people.

It's important that you discuss your approach to operating safely at all Alert Levels with staff or their representatives. WorkSafe recommend you talk with your staff about which controls you'll use at each level. This means your staff will understand how you intend to manage work safely and what they need to do to help.

WorkSafe also recommend you document your approach for all alert levels so it can be shared with others, including your school community. This will also make it easier to regularly review and update your approach. This guidance has been designed to support you in this process.

Please also refer to the [WorkSafe website](#) for further information and advice regarding COVID-19.

Public health measures and recommendations

Measure/risk	Alert Level 1	Alert Level 2	Alert Level 3	Alert level 4
Overarching description / implication for education	The disease is contained in New Zealand (but not overseas). Schools, early learning services, tertiary education providers and workplaces are open, and must operate safely.	The diseases is contained, but the risk of community transmission remains. It is safe to send your children to schools, early learning services and tertiary education. There will be appropriate measures in place.	High risk the disease is not contained Schools between years 1 to 10 and Early Childhood Education centres can safely open but will have limited capacity. Children should learn at home if possible.	Lockdown in place. Likely that disease is not contained. All educational facilities closed onsite – but open for distance learning
Public health measures at all alert levels:				
If people are sick, they should stay home (phone Healthline or their GP and get tested if they have flu-like symptoms)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are to observe students/children on arrival checking for symptoms and ask those presenting as unwell to go home or arrange for parents and caregivers to come and pick up. Please note, this does not mean that temperatures are to be taken. • Principals at state and state-integrated schools have authority to preclude a student from attending if they believe on reasonable grounds they may have a communicable disease under section 19 of the Education Act – see Guide to Legal Powers • Private schools are able to ask someone presenting as ill to not attend • Contact the local medical officer of health if there are any concerns about someone believed on reasonable grounds to be ill, refusing to stay away. 				
Wash and dry hands, cough into elbow, don't touch your face				
Schools connected to a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 [MSWord link] must close on an individual or group basis for 72 hours to allow contact tracing and cleaning. They could be closed for a further 14 days (but open for distance learning) – you will work with public health units to manage this and the direction to close will come from the Medical Officer of Health				
Stringent self-isolation of those who display relevant symptoms of COVID-19, test positive for COVID-19, have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, or have been overseas in the last 14 days – Ministry of Health information for self-isolation				

Measure/risk	Alert Level 1	Alert Level 2	Alert Level 3	Alert level 4
PPE is not required or recommended as necessary in any educational facility by the Public Health Service				
Schools are encouraged to display QR Code posters for the NZ COVID Tracer App				
Keep classroom temperatures to 18 degrees. 18 – 20 degrees is a comfortable temperature, below that there is increased risk – from a cold household, workplace or school				
Public health measures and recommendations which vary by level¹:				
Attendance onsite	It is safe for all children and students to be on-site. All school-aged students must attend. Anyone self-isolating, waiting for a test result or who is ill, must remain at home.	It is safe for all children and students to be onsite (some children vulnerable to illness may choose to remain at home). Anyone self-isolating, waiting for a test result or who is ill, must remain at home.	Children to learn from home if possible. Onsite delivery only for years 1 – 10. Years 11 – 13 to learn from home. Anyone self-isolating, waiting for a test result or who is ill, must remain at home.	No onsite learning.
Method of delivery for learning	Onsite with distance learning provided for those requiring to self-isolate or waiting for a test result.	Onsite with distance learning provided for those requiring to self-isolate, waiting for a test result or choosing to remain at home because they are vulnerable to illness.	Blended delivery – onsite and distance learning.	Distance learning only.

¹ NB there are no specific public health requirements for schools and early learning services at Alert Level 1. These are recommendations only and align with the [Golden Rules for Alert Level 1](#).

Measure/risk	Alert Level 1	Alert Level 2	Alert Level 3	Alert level 4
Children at higher-risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (e.g. those with underlying medical conditions, especially if not well-controlled)	There are no restrictions on personal movement at Alert Level 1 - all children should attend school.	Children are encouraged to take additional precautions when leaving home. Parents, caregivers and students will need to work with the school to develop a plan to manage a safe return to school. Distance learning will continue to be available to those who choose to remain at home.	Children at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 are encouraged to stay home wherever possible. Distance learning will continue to be available to those who are able to remain at home.	N/A
Staff at higher-risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (e.g. those with underlying medical conditions, especially if not well-controlled)	There are no restrictions on personal movement at Alert Level 1 - all staff are able to work at school	Staff are able to work on-site if they can do it in a safe way. Staff and employers should discuss and agree whether additional control measures can be put in place, whether these workers can work from home, or if not, what leave and pay arrangements will apply. Staff to work with their GP or specialist if they need help understanding their own level of risk and how best to stay healthy.	Staff who are have a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should stay at home. If they want to come to school you may agree to the request only if it can be assured that it is safe for them to do so. Staff to work with their GP or specialist if they need help understanding their own level of risk and how best to stay healthy.	N/A

Measure/risk	Alert Level 1	Alert Level 2	Alert Level 3	Alert level 4
Washing and drying hands	Soap, water and the ability to dry hands should be provided in bathrooms.	Hand sanitiser at entry to classrooms and in shared spaces. Soap, water and the ability to dry hands must be provided in bathrooms. If hand sanitiser is in short supply, washing and drying hands with soap is still the most effective hygiene measure.	Hand sanitiser at entry to classrooms and in shared spaces. Soap, water and the ability to dry hands must be provided in bathrooms. If hand sanitiser is in short supply, washing and drying hands with soap is still the most effective hygiene measure.	Anyone coming onsite must observe all hygiene and physical distancing measures for Alert Level 4.
Physical distancing	Physical distancing is not a requirement but where possible or practicable is encouraged when you are around people you don't know.	Children, young people and staff should be far enough away from each other so that they are not breathing on or touching each other, coupled with good hygiene practices and regular cleaning of commonly touched surfaces. There does not need to be a specific measurement but where practicable and reasonable 1 metre can be used as a guide, particularly between adults. Physical distancing of 2 metres is recommended for parents and caregivers, from people they don't know (to align with public health measures outside the school grounds).	Everyone must maintain a 2 metre physical distance outside and 1 metre inside during breaks and 1 metre on school transport. Visitors, including parents and caregivers, should maintain a 2m distance from those who are not part of either their household or workplace/school bubble. 'School bubbles' of no more than 20 children formed. Introduce staggered entry times into classes with one time for school transport. Breaks, starts and finishes should be staggered and children stay in their bubbles, to minimise congregation of students in shared spaces. NB school bubbles can move classrooms but only if high-touch surfaces are cleaned in between bubbles and no bubbles mix that aren't already sharing a space. Recommended to keep any movement to a minimum.	Anyone coming onsite must observe all hygiene and physical distancing measures for Alert Level 4.

Measure/risk	Alert Level 1	Alert Level 2	Alert Level 3	Alert level 4
Cleaning	Regular cleaning and disinfecting of commonly touched surfaces is recommended	Disinfect and clean all surfaces daily	Disinfect and clean all surfaces daily. NB school bubbles can move classrooms but only if high-touch surfaces are cleaned in between bubbles and no bubbles mix that aren't already sharing a space. Recommended to keep any movement to a minimum.	N/A
Limits to gatherings	Schools, like workplaces are not considered to be gatherings. There are no restrictions on gatherings in schools at Alert Level 1.	Schools, like workplaces are not considered to be gatherings. If however a school brings others onsite eg, hire out school hall, use of buildings by community groups, or events like school productions and school balls then rules for gatherings and other public health measures would apply.	No gatherings – people asked to stay at home other than for essential personal movement	No gatherings – people asked to stay at home other than for essential personal movement.
Physical and cultural activities / playgrounds	There are no restrictions on physical activities including cultural and sporting activities, practices and events. Playgrounds open.	Physical education classes and break time activities can include access to sports equipment including playgrounds but hygiene practice should be observed before and after playing with equipment. There will also need to be regular cleaning of shared equipment such as balls, sticks etc. Physical distance is not possible in some sporting activities. In these situations extra emphasis on handwashing and drying (or cleansing with hand sanitiser) before and after activities and regular cleaning of equipment is very important.	Physical education classes and break time activities cannot include sports with <2m physical distance or where the same equipment is touched by different students (balls, ropes, sticks, etc). Playgrounds closed.	N/A

Measure/risk	Alert Level 1	Alert Level 2	Alert Level 3	Alert level 4
Contact tracing	<p>Contact tracing registers are not required at Alert Level 1. As is usual practice you will need to continue to record attendance in your SMS and record visitors coming on-site.</p> <p>There is no requirement to include parents and caregivers undertaking drop offs and pick-ups in your visitor register.</p>	<p>Contact tracing registers must be in place and identify which children are in each teaching space, record when and who they have contact with during the day if that changes. This includes recording who the adults are in contact with as well as recording any visitors to the site, including parents.</p>	<p>Contact tracing registers must be in place and identify which children are in each teaching space, record when and who they have contact with during the day if that changes. This includes recording who the adults are in contact with as well as recording any visitors to the site, including parents.</p> <p>To support contact tracing students should sit in the same place each day</p>	<p>People visiting the site should be recorded in a register.</p>
Visitors (visitor register)	<p>There are no restrictions on visitors.</p> <p>Keep a visitor register as is usual practice (and use this to work with local health authorities to identify close contacts, should there be a case connected with the school).</p> <p>Parents and caregivers doing drop offs do not need to be recorded in your visitor register.</p> <p>Please keep your visitor register for at least 2 months.</p>	<p>Parents and caregivers who come on site need to be noted in the visitor register. You may wish to consider asking parents and caregivers to do drop offs outside the gate where practicable, but that is not a requirement.</p> <p>Volunteers can be used at Alert Level 2 in class as long as they are meeting all the public health requirements and are recorded in your timetable and/or visitor register (make sure you have up to date contact information for them).</p> <p>Record all visitors to your site, including parents and caregivers, in your visitor register (as is usual practice but also to assist if contact tracing is necessary).</p> <p>Set up a process to record names, date, time in and out, where they visited and phone and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No non-essential visitors. There should be no volunteers for classroom activities. <p>Consider how you might monitor those entrances to minimise non-essential visitors from coming on site. If staffing on site is limited, one entry point may be the most practical way to manage visitors, coupled with staggered starts.</p> <p>Drop offs by parents and caregivers must, unless there is a valid reason (eg depending on the age or needs of the student), take place before parents and caregivers get to the school gate and ideally a reasonable distance away, to limit large numbers of people congregating (and therefore won't require recording for contact tracing purposes).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

Measure/risk	Alert Level 1	Alert Level 2	Alert Level 3	Alert level 4
		<p>physical address information for all people who come into the school.</p> <p>Please keep your visitor register for at least 2 months.</p>	<p>Set up a process to record names, date, time in and out, where they visited and phone and physical address information for people who come into the school.</p> <p>You should already have contact details for all your students, parents, caregivers and staff so shouldn't need to record this (perhaps remind families, whānau and staff to update you if their address or phone number has changed, or changes).</p> <p>Please keep your visitor register for at least 2 months.</p>	
Teaching across groups	Teachers are able to teach more than one group/class of students	Teachers are able to teach more than one group/class of students	<p>Where possible, it is recommended that teachers stay with the same school bubble of students.</p> <p>In practice there may be a need to have a designated relief or back-up teacher identified for each school bubble</p>	N/A
Food preparation	Operate as normal.	If you prepare food on site you must check the MPI guidance on re-opening food businesses and ensure your school and any suppliers meet all health and safety requirements before you recommence the supply of food to your students.	If you prepare food on site you must check the MPI guidance on re-opening food businesses and ensure your school and any suppliers meet all health and safety requirements before you recommence the supply of food to your students.	N/A

Measure/risk	Alert Level 1	Alert Level 2	Alert Level 3	Alert level 4
Libraries	Operate as normal.	Libraries can be operated as the virus does not survive for long on paper and cardboard (less than 24 hours), so books and other paper and cardboard can be put aside overnight and used the next day by other students. Books with plastic sleeves should be wiped down with a disinfectant wipe before re-issuing the next day.	Libraries can be operated as the virus does not survive for long on paper and cardboard (less than 24 hours), so books and other paper and cardboard can be put aside overnight and used the next day by other students. Books with plastic sleeves should be wiped down with a disinfectant wipe before re-issuing the next day.	N/A
External students onsite (eg, music programmes, technology schools)	Operate as normal.	<p>Other schools' students can come on-site during the week and for school-run out of hours' programmes. External providers can come onsite including for example other teachers and team coaches/managers.</p> <p>You will need to treat the running of these programmes with strong caution, particularly if there are a number of different schools participating or large numbers of students (and parents and caregivers) involved.</p> <p>It is recommended that you develop a specific health and safety plan for managing the programme. Minimising congestion should be a key priority for that plan, including in the classrooms or spaces being used for delivery.</p> <p>If parents and caregivers come into the classrooms or other teaching spaces to observe, you need to apply the current rules for gatherings at this alert level.</p>	No external students and staff onsite.	N/A

Measure/risk	Alert Level 1	Alert Level 2	Alert Level 3	Alert level 4
Shared supplies	Supplies can be shared. Good hygiene practices continue to be recommended.	Shared supplies and equipment are able to be used if students and staff are undertaking regular hand washing and staying away if sick.	Avoid using shared supplies If shared supplies are necessary within a bubble, consider using designated bins for clean and used supplies. Shared supplies are considered high-touch and should be cleaned frequently	N/A
Music, instruments, singing etc	Practices, rehearsals and performances can go ahead Instruments can be used as normal. Good hygiene practices continue to be recommended.	Practices, rehearsals and performances can go ahead – physical distancing of 1 metre is recommended where practicable including singing and using wind instruments.	Do not share instruments between students or school bubbles. For example musical instruments unless they are student-owned and only handled by that student, should not be used. Playing wind instruments (eg recorders) is not recommended in Level 3 (except at home in their home bubble)	N/A
Drinking fountains	OK to use at this level – follow usual safety precautions (regular cleaning, don't touch mouth to metal, wash hands regularly)	Consider whether appropriate to use, particularly are students capable of using them safely? Encourage using water bottles where possible.	Drinking fountains should not be used at Alert Level 3. Water bottles should be used and appropriate health and safety considerations followed.	N/A

Good hygiene practices

Good hygiene practices will continue to be a priority at all levels as the best way to minimise potential spread of COVID-19. The uniteforrecovery.govt.nz and [Ministry of Health](https://www.health.govt.nz) websites are a good source of information including:

- [Hand washing](#)
- [Cough and sneeze etiquette](#)
- [Cleaning surfaces](#)

There are [posters](#) available online to support you to convey key messages about hygiene.

Staying home if sick

The vast majority of children and young people with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will not have COVID-19.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include new onset or worsening of one or more of the following:

- Cough
- Fever
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Temporary loss of smell

These symptoms are similar to a range of other illnesses, like influenza. Having them doesn't mean a person has COVID-19, but you should remain vigilant.

Shortness of breath can indicate pneumonia, and requires urgent medical attention.

Children with asthma, hayfever, allergies, ear infections or other acute or chronic conditions may have similar symptoms.

Before a child is sent home, they should be feeling unwell and there should always be a conversation with the caregiver to determine whether there is another explanation for their child's symptoms that may mean that they do not pose a risk to others and do not need to go home.

Cleaning

Once staff and students are on site regular cleaning of surfaces is recommended alongside your usual cleaning schedule. See the above table for specific public health requirements at the different levels.

Review your cleaning policies and practices and consider increased cleaning for high touch surfaces (door handles, table tops in common spaces etc.) and bathrooms. Make sure your cleaners have appropriate information, training and equipment.

Make sure the specific instructions are followed for the disinfectant being used (eg spray and leave on surfaces for 30 seconds before wiping down).

Ensure the availability of appropriate cleaning supplies (eg disinfectant and cloths) for cleaning of high-touch surfaces.

There is information about [cleaning surfaces](#) and further information about [minimising the spread of infectious diseases](#) on the Ministry of Health website.

Facemasks and other personal protective equipment

Following basic hygiene measures at home and at school are the best defence against COVID-19 including:

- cough or sneeze into your elbow or by covering your mouth and nose with tissues
- put used tissues in the bin or a bag immediately
- wash your hands with soap and water often (for at least 20 seconds)
- avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- clean surfaces regularly.
-

The risk of infection increases the closer you are to someone who is infectious and the longer duration of time that you spend close to that person.

In schools, all children and young people with any COVID-like symptoms are being asked to stay at home, and we are asking schools to send anyone home who has or develops any symptoms of illness. With the exception of Level 1, there are also physical distancing requirements.

Public Health officials have advised that if these measures are in place, then personal protective equipment is not needed.

Some children and young people may choose to wear face masks. It could be part of their cultural practice to do so and to support their hygiene needs. Encourage respect - people are being proactive in keeping themselves and others safe.

Nurses in schools and other health professionals will need to follow their own industry guidance for using PPE.

School bubbles – alert level 3

At alert level 3 many families will be able to keep their child at home as they have someone available to care for that child. If a child needs to attend school however, you will need to put them in to a 'school bubble' of no more than 20 students.

Parents and caregivers' work and care circumstances may change during the Alert Level period, meaning they can no longer support their child learning from home. This could result in an increase of students on site. Your planning will need to take this possible growth in numbers into account.

How many students your school can safely support on site will be dependent on a range of considerations:

- the number of staff who are able to work on site (eg, aren't staying at home because they are at higher risk of severe illness)
- the number of individual learning spaces you can provide in each classroom that are at least 1 metre distant from other learners and staff
- the number of school bubbles you can accommodate in each room so that they are at least 2 metres distant from other school bubbles and with a maximum of 20 people in each school bubble

- for modern learning environments and other large learning spaces, this means you can have more than one school bubble in each room. You may wish to allocate modern learning environments to school bubbles with older children, who are more likely to be able to self-manage and stay in their school bubble allocated space

Please contact your [Ministry regional office](#) if you have any concerns regarding your capacity to support likely attendance.

Checklist for determining school bubbles

- **Connect with your staff to determine your staffing levels for onsite and offsite delivery**, and for all other administrative and facilities-related work (you will continue to have staff working from home as they are vulnerable to serious illness if they contracted COVID-19)
- **Ask your parents and caregivers to notify you by DATE and TIME**, to advise you if their child will be or won't be attending school in person when your school reopens
- **Collate that information by each learning space** (eg Room 1, received 12 positive responses, Room 2 received 8 positive responses, Room 3 received 15 positive responses)
- Group family members together wherever possible
- You may wish to consider grouping year 9 and 10 students by key subject area
- **Determine how many children you can cater for in each classroom** given the 1 metre physical distancing requirement (eg up to 20 in a standard classroom and up to 75 in a modern learning environment)
- After the deadline for parent responses, **follow up with those you haven't heard from** to try and minimise unexpected arrivals on re-opening your premises
- Identify where there may be too many positive responses for the capacity for the particular classroom space:
 - Where possible, it is recommended that teachers stay with the same school bubble of students. In practice there may be a need to have a designated relief or back-up teacher identified for each school bubble
 - For secondary schools in particular, you will have additional classrooms that can be used to accommodate students, but the ability to do this will depend on teaching and staffing capacity
 - You may need to redistribute some students into school bubbles that may differ from their usual classmates
 - You may also wish to work with another local school to manage any possible overflow
 - Work with your teachers about who to put with whom, if you do need to move students into another class
 - Consider approaching a reliever to be available exclusively for work in your school. This may necessitate guaranteeing at least a minimum number of days paid work per pay period. In this way, the movement of relievers between schools is minimised and you will have staffing flexibility to cover

- Under alert level 3 students will be participating in learning from teachers either onsite or via teachers providing distance learning from home, or in person. Despite good planning principals may face uncertain student attendance levels that may create staffing “pinch points”. In managing these pinch points principals should consider:
 - Talking with other principals in their cluster or kāhui ako to see if there are local options for accessing teachers who may be prepared to attend other schools than their own on a temporary basis for Level 3.
 - Talking directly to their normal relievers or recruitment agencies about their likely needs for relievers now. This includes engaging relievers who due to their underlying medical conditions may be unable to come on-site to teach.
 - Discussing with their MoE Regional Director other options for supervision
 - NB you will need to build breaks for staff, into your timetable so that they aren’t required to be in front of a school bubble for the duration of the school day
 - Any roster system would need to adhere to the public health requirements and would need to be with agreement of staff
- Develop your staggered timetable and disseminate to all relevant school bubbles
 - Confirm with your families and whānau what your first day arrangements will be including expectations for drop off and pick up, staggered timetabling, putting children into school bubbles etc
 - For parents and caregivers of new entrants, advise them what your process will be (eg – start at 11 am on their first day) – see the [Ministry Bulletin](#) for guidance regarding new entrants
 - Review your planning and timetabling after the first 2 – 3 days and adjust as needed; this could include consideration about how you can safely increase the size of your school bubbles

As part of your planning, you will want to give consideration to how you can link those studying at home with their other classmates (whether onsite or offsite) and with their teachers and other support staff.

Staff who are at-risk and are staying away from school, might be prioritised to support learners from home, leaving those on site to engage with students on site.

Please contact your Ministry regional office if you need any support with this process

Physical distancing strategies – alert level 3

Schools will need to maintain physical distancing between students and staff of 1 metre inside and two metres outside. Physical distancing requirements can be supported through managing the **space** between people and the **timing** of when people might congregate.

In the classroom

- For modern learning environments you can have more than one school bubble in each room, but will need to ensure that those school bubbles work in separate spaces within the classroom and don’t share resources between school bubbles. Consider using furniture to physically divide the room between each school bubble (bubbles to have at least 2 metres space between them)
- When having breaks, school bubbles would use different spaces when they go outside.

- School bubbles can move classrooms but only if high-touch surfaces are cleaned in between bubbles and no bubbles mix that aren't already sharing a space. Recommendation is to keep any movement to a minimum.
- For schools with hostels, work with hostel management to group boarders wherever possible, into the same school bubbles in class as they are in the hostel (and vice versa)
- Rearrange student desks and common seating spaces to maximize the space between students (a minimum of 1 metre)
- Where possible, turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) to reduce transmission caused from virus-containing droplets (e.g., from talking, coughing, sneezing).
- If desks can't be moved/separated, which will be the case for many schools, mark the desks clearly so students know where they can and can't sit
- Consider space for the teacher to be able to move in the room and still allow 1 metre distance from the student desks/work spaces
- Whenever possible, hold physical education and music classes outside and encourage students to spread out. Consider using visual cues to demonstrate physical spacing.
- For singing, it is recommended that participants are outside and 2 metres distant from each other. Inside singing is still OK, but keep a 2 metre distance between all participants rather than 1 metre (use of wind instruments not recommended at Alert Level 3)
- Consider using visual aids (e.g., masking tape, electrical tape, stickers, etc.) to illustrate traffic flow and appropriate spacing to support physical distancing

Outside the classroom.

- Stagger arrival and dismissal times, breaks and lunch times for the different classes and year levels to minimise high numbers of staff and students congregating in the same spaces
- Explain to students why they must arrive at school and leave the school grounds at their allotted time
- You will need to consider how you will manage those students who arrive at school early (eg, when their parents or caregivers have to be at work) – can someone provide supervision onsite so a 2 metre distance can be encouraged for those early arrivals? You may need to advise parents what your school hours will be at Alert Level 3 to avoid having children too early and too late on site and unsupervised.
- Use as many entry points as practicable rather than funnelling all students through the same entry space. These approaches can limit the amount of close contact between students in high-traffic situations and times. Consider how you might monitor those entrances to minimise non-essential visitors from coming on site. If staffing on site is limited, one entry point may be the most practical way to manage visitors, coupled with staggered starts.
- Use the classroom for eating lunch (washing hands before and after)
- Playgrounds should not be used at Alert Level 3 in schools
- As part of your timetabling, schedule access to areas of your grounds at different times so that school bubbles don't intermingle; or where space allows, allocate different parts of the school grounds for the different school bubbles for breaks
- Consider your policy to support supervision of break times, arrival and departure times and school grounds so that staff can support and encourage physical distancing and minimise where possible any congregation by students and parents

- Consider your policy for bathroom breaks for students – staggered break times will assist with reducing congregation in bathrooms.

Managing in an emergency

Fire alarms and other emergencies may require you to either evacuate your buildings or move everyone inside. The priority in these situations is keeping students and staff safe from the threat arising through the emergency event – fire, flood, earthquake etc.

You will also need to ensure your health and safety plan can respond to other accidents or issues that may be faced in regard to health and safety, given smaller numbers of staff on site. This includes having sufficient staff with first aid experience.

Reviewing your plan

Work with your staff to develop, implement and then regularly review your plan including your incident reporting protocols.

Further information

- Worksafe information for COVID-19 – [WorkSafe website](#)
- Alert Levels information – [COVID-19 website](#)
- Ministry of Education - [COVID-specific information](#)
- You can keep in touch with your local District Health Board website and stay informed by updated Ministry of Health information on their website - [Public Health Units – Ministry of Health](#)
- For anyone with COVID-like symptoms, they should contact Healthline (for free) on [0800 358 5453](#) or phone their doctor immediately
- Please contact your regional ministry contact if you have any questions – [Local Ministry offices](#)



We **shape** an **education** system that delivers
equitable and **excellent outcomes**

He mea **tārai** e mātou te **mātauranga**
kia **rangatira** ai, kia **mana taurite** ai ōna **huanga**