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You will have seen in the media that we have now had one confirmed case of Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19) in New Zealand. The threat of a pandemic within New Zealand is still considered to be low, however, we all need to be aware of steps we can take to keep it this way.

The Ministry of Health has updated their Advice for travellers and are monitoring the situation, along with the World Health Organisation, Ministry of Education and other agencies within New Zealand.

COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) - Advice for travellers - Ministry of Health Website

The latest advice is to continue to self-isolate and seek medical advice, if you suspect you have contracted the virus. It is also important to talk with tamariki about how to keep germs under control.

Encourage tamariki to:

- Sneeze and cough into the crook of their elbow.
- Use tissues for blowing noses and dispose of them safely to avoid others coming into contact with used tissues.
- Everyone must wash their hands after coughing, sneezing or blowing noses.
- Adults to use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser after blowing a child's nose etc.
- Being extra vigilant with hygiene when travelling around New Zealand.
- Keeping tamariki (and adults) away from group events such as playgroups and outings, whilst they are unwell.
- Wash all fresh produce (fruit and vegetables) before use as these are handled by many different people.

These steps are easy to take and reduce the risk of spreading disease. They are not fool proof however, so it is very important that you keep us informed if you become aware of anyone suspected of contracting the virus and with whom you or tamariki have had contact.

As an Early Childhood Service, we are continuing to monitor the situation. If we are advised by the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education that the situation warrants further action, we will be prepared.

Last year we created a new Emergency Management Plan which included pandemic planning. This is now in place. A copy of the Emergency Management Plan is available under Policies in Educa. For a copy of the Pandemic Plan, please [click here](#).

For further information please see the Ministry of Health or your local DHB website.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch with your Visiting Teacher or Placement Consultant for further advice or information.