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We have just this minute received the latest bulletin from The Ministry of Education. I have extracted the relevant information relating to share with you regarding:

- Self Isolating Groups - Circles of Care
- Childcare for Essential Staff

Self-isolating groups - circles of care

Further to our mention about self-isolating groups in our letter template yesterday, we can confirm these groups don't need to be registered. There are however some very important messages that do need to be understood by all in the group:

- The intent of forming this group beyond an immediate household is to be able to provide necessary support for people who rely on support from others (eg, elderly people living alone, families who need support with caring for children)
- In forming this group, everyone in it must understand how crucial it is to keep it tight and to an absolute minimum number of people
- Even in a small group, people must take care of themselves and others through good hygiene, including thorough handwashing and drying, good coughing and sneezing etiquette and physical distancing.

An example could be where an essential worker who is required to work, can have their child cared for by a trusted buddy, as long as they are not elderly or vulnerable. That buddy and the buddy's own household will need to be included as part of that self-isolating group. However, it is critical that the buddy and their household cannot then have any other external contacts. As soon as a member of that household has contact with another person (and therefore their household) they all need to be incorporated into the self-isolating group. Another example could be helping a family with care for their disabled child to give the primary carers some time to rest. But again, you need to be identified as part of their self-isolated group and you cannot have any other contacts other than those in your own household.

Staying open for the care children of essential staff

Currently the plan is for all services and schools to cease operating from 11:59pm Wednesday 24 March. We are aware that some essential staff will have children that need to be taken care of whilst they're working. We are currently considering options for how these staff can best be supported. This information will be available as soon as decisions are made. Keep an eye out for any early learning bulletins coming out in the near future. At this time, we would like to remind you that schools and early learning services are not classified as essential services and will need to close for lockdown.

If you would to access the complete Bulletin please visit the Ministry of Health Website.

I will continue to forward up to date information as I receive it.

Take care and stay safe