



# Managing health and safety in schools at Alert Level 2

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## Purpose of this document

This document sets out the key principles and minimum public health requirements that define responsible, healthy and safe operations for schools working under Alert Level 2.

The core principle behind this document is to protect the health and safety of all teachers, employees, children and their parents and caregivers.

Schools and early learning services are safe environments for children, young people and staff. Additional public health control measures are in place to prevent the spread of disease and to support contact tracing.

From a public health perspective, Alert Level 2 means there is lower public health risk from COVID-19 than under Alert Levels 3 and 4. However, there are still likely to be new cases which may be the result of household transmission or associated with cluster outbreaks that are contained. The disease remains in New Zealand, so we need to remain vigilant and take appropriate steps to avoid transmission. People are able to leave home but are asked to do so in a safe and conscientious way.

There is further opening up of activity during Alert Level 2, particularly in terms of travel, education, sport and recreational activity, retail and hospitality, and personal movement. Public health and border measures remain largely unchanged from Level 3, to ensure our approach to contact tracing, testing, isolation and quarantine is maintained.

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 requirements for Alert Level 2. Work with your staff to do this, including your elected health and safety representatives.

## Alert Level 2 summary

The overriding principles for [Alert Level 2](#) are:

- to minimise the risk that someone gets infected in the first place
- to ensure we can identify and contact anyone who has been in close contact with a person, if someone in a school or early learning centre is infected
- understand that Level 2 is not business as usual

It is safe for all students and staff to return to school in Alert level 2. Schools are safe because hygiene habits will be strong and schools will put into place safe and sensible practice.

Schools won't open midweek. Whenever the decision is made, they will open at the beginning of the following week.

Distance learning is available for those unable to attend school, for example who are self-isolating.

Residential Specialist Schools and Day Specialist Schools including satellite units will be open for children to attend.

School hostels fully return to occupation.

Ministry staff supplemented by resource teachers and school staff continue to support children with learning support needs by phone and Skype where their health status requires them to stay isolated.

School transport able to increase as the number of students increases.

The Food in Schools Programmes will be able to be fully operational.

OSCAR programmes can open as can other before and after school programmes.

An increased number of school redevelopment and construction projects can resume.

People at higher-risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (eg those with underlying medical conditions, especially if not well-controlled) are encouraged to take additional precautions when leaving home. They may work, if they agree with their employer that they can do so safely.

The safety and wellbeing of students, staff and their households, continues to be a priority.

### Changes from Alert Level 3

The significant changes for schools and early learning centres are:

- Physical Distancing – Physical distancing is a good precaution to prevent the spread of disease. In an Alert Level 2 school environment, this means children, young people, and staff maintaining a physical distance so that they are not breathing on or touching each other, coupled with good hygiene practices (coughing into your elbow, handwashing and drying) and regular cleaning of commonly touched surfaces. There are situations where physical distancing is not possible, such as 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.

In an early learning environment, it is not really possible to have a physical distance between children and staff. Young children require a lot of physical support and it is not possible to explain or maintain a physical distance between young children given the age of the children and set up of centres. This means good hygiene practices (coughing into your elbow, regular handwashing, and drying) are even more important.

- Mass gatherings – workplaces, educational facilities, and public and school transport are not considered mass gatherings. This means there are no restrictions on numbers of people indoors or outside at schools and early learning services other than what other public health or health and safety measures require.

The exception is where people from outside the school may be attending, eg for a school production or school ball. In these examples and if a school is hiring out their hall or allowing community groups to use school facilities, the mass gathering rules will apply.

- Sports and playgrounds – school playgrounds, sports equipment use and activities can resume. Contact sports can resume. This relies on being able to contact trace who is on site during school hours and at school team training and competitions. Any inter school events that recommence will need to have a contact tracing register in place to record those playing for and against teams.

- There is no bubble concept at Level 2 so there are no restrictions on groups of children and students mixing with others on site. Where practicable where groups/classes do mix – attendance should be recorded as it should if the composition of groups and classes change during the day.
- Teachers/staff are not restricted to one group and can move freely between groups of students.

## Health and Safety at Work Act requirements

To meet your requirements under the Health and Safety Act 2015 during Alert Level 2 you must manage risks and protect staff, children and young people. How you will do this needs to be detailed in a COVID-19 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 requirements as they are updated.

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

Schools resuming teaching and other work on-site for the first time need to think about how to work differently to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

For schools who are already operating, now is a good time to revisit the approach you already have in place.

The key controls for schools and all workplaces are:

- ensure people with COVID-19 symptoms or feel generally unwell stay away from school
- maintain physical distancing (in schools this means children, young people, and staff maintaining a physical distance so that they are not breathing on or touching each other)
- enable good hygiene practices
- keep track of people that enter your school

As you're thinking about what working at Alert Level 2 means for how you operate, you need to consider how you'll implement these infection controls.

It's important that you discuss your approach to operating safely at Alert Level 2 with staff or their representatives. WorkSafe recommend you talk with your staff about which controls you'll use at this level and how this may differ from what you did at Alert Level 3. 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 Alert Level 2 approach so it can be shared with others, including your school community. This will also make it easier to regularly review and update your approach.

To ensure you are minimising the risk of COVID-19 appropriately, and that your school can continue to operate safely, you need to consider the following questions.

- How will you manage the risks of restarting part or all of your operations at Alert Level 2?
- How will you ensure all staff are able to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19?
- How will you gather information on your staff's wellness to ensure they are safe and well to work?
- How will you operate your school in a way that keeps staff, children, young people and other people coming on-site safe from exposure to COVID-19?
- How will you manage an exposure or suspected exposure to COVID-19?
- How will you check to see if your work processes and risk controls are effective?
- How do any changes impact on the risks of the work you do?

This guidance has been designed to support you in this process.

Please also refer to the [WorkSafe website](#) for further information and advice for transitioning to Alert Level 2.

## Public health measures that must be taken in schools

In addition to your usual practices when managing health and safety, there are some specific [public health requirements](#) for Alert Level 2 that **must** be adhered to in all schools:

- Parents are asked to keep any sick children at home. If a sick child comes to school, send them home.
- 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 1 metre should be used as a guide, particularly between adults.
- Hand sanitiser at entry to class rooms and in shared spaces. Soap, water and the ability to dry hands must be provided in bathrooms.
- Where practicable ensure that children and young people regularly wash and dry hands, cough and sneeze into their elbow, and try to avoid touching their face.
- Physical education classes and break time activities can include access to sports equipment including playgrounds but hygiene practice should be observed after playing with equipment.
- Disinfect and clean all surfaces daily.
- Contact tracing registers must be set up and identify which children and adults are on site, in each teaching space, including recording if there is a different composition of children and adults during the day. This includes recording visitors to the site, including parents.
- Consider whether students should be allowed off the premises at lunchtime.

PPE is not required or recommended as necessary in any educational facility by the Public Health Service.

## Further information on public health measures

The below provides further information to support your implementation of the public health measures and identifies the measures at Alert Level 3 which no longer apply in Alert Level 2.

Alert Level 2	Alert Level 3
Children at higher-risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (e.g. those with underlying medical conditions, especially if not well-controlled) 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.
Staff at higher-risk of severe illness from COVID-19 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 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.
Wash and dry hands, cough into elbow, don't touch your face	No change
If people are sick, they should stay home (phone Healthline or their GP and get tested if they have flu-like symptoms).	No change
<a href="#">Schools connected to a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19</a> 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.	No change
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 – <a href="#">Ministry of Health information for self-isolation</a> .	No change
School staff are to observe students on arrival into the classroom 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.  A reminder that Principals at state and state-integrated schools have authority to preclude a student from attending if they believe on reasonable grounds may have a communicable disease under section 19 of the Education Act – see <a href="#">Guide to Legal Powers</a> .	No change
Hand sanitiser at entry to class rooms 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 bathrooms. If supplies are limited, soap and water continues to be most effective for washing hands (20 seconds) in bathrooms.

Alert Level 2	Alert Level 3
<p>Schools, like workplaces are not considered to be gatherings under alert level 2. Therefore there are no bubbles and no changes are needed to breaks, start and finish times.</p> <p>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 the mass gathering rules will apply</p>	<p>Introduce staggered entry times into classes with one time for school transport, to minimise gatherings of children and/or parents.</p> <p>Breaks, starts and finishes should be staggered and children stay in their bubbles – again, to minimise congregation of students in shared spaces.</p>
<p>Children do not need to sit in the same place every day at Alert Level 2. Contact tracing will still need to be in place though (through your timetable, attendance register and visitor register)</p>	<p>To support contact tracing students should sit in the same place each day</p>
<p>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 1 metre can be used as a guide, particularly between adults. Practice should be sensible.</p>	<p>Physical distancing was 2 metres outside and 1 metre inside previously</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Physical education classes and break time activities cannot include sports with &lt;2m physical distance or where the same equipment is touched by different students (balls, ropes, sticks, etc)</p>
<p>Disinfect and clean all surfaces daily</p>	<p>No change</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>No change</p>
<p>PPE is not required or recommended as necessary in any educational facility by the Public Health Service</p>	<p>No change</p>
<p>Teachers are able to teach more than one group/class of students</p>	<p>Where possible, it is recommended that teachers stay with the same school bubble of students</p>

## Other recommendations

In addition to the specific public health requirements, the following information will help inform your planning, and support you to implement the public health requirements.

- Staff such as RTLB, itinerant music teachers and relievers will be able to work across different schools.
- Classrooms can be used by different student groups/classes and different groups of students in each class. In at secondary school a usual school timetable could be followed. See also the requirement for contact tracing.
- 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). 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
- Consider how to manage any possible queues at your school office (for visitors) – you will be familiar with the systems dairies and supermarkets have used (one in and one out, or marking 2 metre spacing on the ground).
- School libraries are able to operate as normal if students and staff are undertaking regular hand washing and staying away if sick.
- Shared supplies and equipment are able to be used if students and staff are undertaking regular hand washing and staying away if sick.
- 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.
- For singing, consider keeping a 1 metre distance as a precaution and where practicable (and similarly when using wind instruments).
- Playgrounds can be used at Alert Level 2 in schools (to align with reopening of public spaces) – wash hands before and after use.
- 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 – see contact register information below).

## Activities and events

For events, there are no restrictions on numbers of people indoors or outside at schools and early learning services other than what other public health or health and safety measures require.

The exception is where people from outside the school may be attending, eg for a school production or school ball. In these examples and if a school is hiring out their hall or allowing community groups to use school facilities, the mass gathering rules will apply.

Any events or activities held off-site must meet all public health requirements, including staying away if sick. You should not be travelling inter-regionally to events which do not meet the requirements for gatherings.

For offsite activities, consider using a controlled environment rather than an uncontrolled one where practicable, and work closely with the provider (PCBU) to agree your health and safety plan for that event, including individual plans for those vulnerable to serious illness with COVID-19.

As you do with all your activities, you will need to take a risk assessment approach for key activities such as assemblies, school camps and travel for sporting and cultural reasons.

**Assemblies** - can go ahead however you should maintain sufficient distance between students so they aren't touching or breathing directly on each other. There are no restrictions on the number of students attending assemblies.

**Sports (on school grounds)** – physical activities including using shared equipment can go ahead. Physical distancing 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.

**Field trips, school camps** – these could potentially go ahead but will need careful planning. Along with your usual risk management approach you will need to consider:

- symptoms of COVID-19 (which may be similar to other illnesses in the early stages)
- the importance of protecting those vulnerable to respiratory illness – do you know who on your staff, in your volunteers and in your student population may be at greater risk?
- if someone were to become ill with a serious illness, do you have facility to be able to respond to that, including the ability to isolate that person while you seek advice from a medical professional?
- do you have appropriate personal protective equipment and the ability to clean hard surfaces if someone were to become ill with flu, gastro bug, COVID-19 etc?

**Cultural activities** - practices and rehearsals will be able to go ahead (note the physical distancing recommendation of 1 metre distance where practicable, for singing and wind instruments). Performances where visitors are attending, including parents and caregivers, will need to align with public health requirements for gatherings.

**Inter-school events** – these can go ahead although there will be limitations due to the public health measures required and will need specific contact tracing ability of those playing for and against teams. Where people from outside the school may be attending or if you are hiring out your hall or allowing community groups to use school facilities, the rules for gatherings will apply.

### **Good hygiene practices**

Good hygiene practices will continue to be a priority at Alert Level 2 as the best way to minimise potential spread of COVID-19. The [COVID-19.govt.nz](https://www.covid-19.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](#)

## **Staying home if sick**

Symptoms to monitor for are any respiratory symptoms such as a cold, a head cold, blocked ears, cough, sneezing, chills and a fever. Anyone with those symptoms should stay home and contact Healthline for advice, which may include getting tested for COVID-19 as a precaution.

Anyone with these respiratory symptoms should not to enter into your school.

## **Cleaning**

Regular (daily) cleaning of surfaces is recommended alongside your usual cleaning schedule.

Review your cleaning policies and practices to ensure a routine for cleaning high touch surfaces (door handles, table tops in common spaces etc.) and bathrooms, is up to date. Make sure your cleaners have appropriate information, training and equipment and have their own health and safety plan, or are included in your plan (if they are employed directly by you).

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 some [information about cleaning surfaces on the COVID-govt.nz website](#) and further information about [minimising the spread of infectious diseases](#) on the Ministry of Health website.

## **Facemasks and other personal protective equipment**

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 and early learning services, all children, young people, and teachers with any symptoms are being asked to stay at home, and we are asking schools to send anyone home who has or develops symptoms.

Schools will also record who is on-site each day for the purposes of contact tracing.

Standard hygiene measures are also really important including:

- hand hygiene – that is, washing hands regularly with soap and water and drying well, or using hand sanitiser when soap and water aren't available
- coughing or sneezing into tissues or your elbow and then performing hand hygiene
- cleaning surfaces regularly.

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.

### Supporting those vulnerable to COVID-19, to attend

By implementing the public health measures required in schools, it will minimise risk for someone who may be at-risk of serious illness from COVID. While it is safe for them to attend school, the public health measures are very important and you may need to discuss any additional measures that the child or their caregiver may need to provide confidence to return to school. You may need to have a similar discussion with staff in the same position.

The person's GP or other healthcare professional may advise they should wear a facemask when at school. A facemask should not be required otherwise.

Build in regular reviews of this plan with the staff member or student and their parents/caregivers (at least weekly).

Go to the [COVID19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz) website for advice for people who are considered at risk.

For staff and students who have a household member who is at-risk of serious illness, there is no reason for them not to return to school. The public health measures will minimise risk, including ensuring anyone who is sick remains at home.

### Determining student numbers

If you have staff who are vulnerable to serious illness with COVID-19, they are able to work on-site at Alert Level 2 if it is safe to do so. Put a plan in place with those staff members to support their return (see above). There may be an impact on your ability to teach all your students on-site at Alert Level 2 from staff who are sick or who are at risk and who you are unable to reach agreement with on a safety plan.

- Connect with your staff to determine your staffing levels for on-site and offsite delivery, and for all other administrative and facilities-related work
- The expectation is that with the exception of some students who are sick, all students will be attending at Alert Level 2. Ask your parents and caregivers to notify you by DATE and TIME, to advise you if their child won't be attending school in person when Alert Level 2 commences
- Identify if have a shortage of teachers, teacher aides and other support staff:
  - You may need to redistribute some students into classes 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
  - 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 kahui 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 2.
  - 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
- If due to staffing restrictions, you do not have capacity to safely support all your learners on site, some students will need to continue undertake school-led learning from home including those required to self-isolate or are staying home as a precaution while they have signs of flu-like illness such as a cold or cough
  - Develop your timetable and disseminate
  - Confirm with your families and whānau what your first day arrangements at Alert Level 2 will be including expectations for drop off and pick up
  - For parents and caregivers of new entrants, advise them what your process will be (eg – start at 11 am on their first day)
  - Review your planning and timetabling after the first 2 – 3 days as needed

Staff who are at-risk and are staying away from school on advice of their medical practitioner, might be prioritised to support learners from home.

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

### Contact tracing

You are required to have a contact tracing register. Your contact register (a combination of timetable, attendance register and visitor register) will provide good information to health authorities, so they can contact people that might be considered a close contact of a confirmed case, and determine whether they will need to self-isolate. The information you capture will need to identify which children are in each teaching space, and record when and who they have close contact with during the day if that changes. This includes recording who the adults on-site are in close contact with as well as recording any visitors to the site, including parents and caregivers.

For contact tracing purposes, the [Ministry of Health](#) describes close contacts at your school as anyone who had:

- face-to-face contact in any setting within two metres of a case for 15 minutes or more
- having been in a closed environment (eg, a classroom, hospital waiting room) within 2 metres of a case for 15 minutes or more

Your timetable should reflect what classes teachers were rostered on for. Record the days when relief teachers and other staff were in class in addition to the timetabled teacher.

Keep recording daily student attendance in your student management system as that will also be needed for contact tracing purposes (ie was a student in class on the days when a person was at school and considered to be infectious) and more broadly to manage and support attendance.

Contact tracing has implications for breaks and lunchtime. Older students, particularly at Secondary school, could consider keeping their own record of who in addition to their classmates, they were in 'close contact' with each day (as they would need to do for other close contacts they had in their personal time).

You may also want to consider your current policy for students leaving school grounds during lunchtimes or free periods.

You should already have contact details for all your students, parents, caregivers and staff so shouldn't need to record this (remind families, whānau and staff to update you if their address or phone number has changed, or changes).

### **Visitor register**

Record all visitors to your site, including parents and caregivers, in your visitor book (as is usual practice but also to assist if contact tracing is necessary).

Set up a process to record names, date, time in and out, where they visited and phone and physical address information for all people who come into the school. This information is important for the process of contact tracing, should it be required to track down and prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

Please keep your visitor register for at least 2 months.

## **Providing a safe workplace for staff**

- Staff at higher-risk of severe illness from COVID-19 can return to work on-site if it is safe to do so. You will need to agree a plan together, to manage this safely (see above)
- All staff must follow public health requirements including regular hand washing and good cough and sneeze etiquette
- Staff who are not well will stay home (or be asked to go home) – they should contact Healthline or their GP and get tested if advised to do so
- Regular cleaning, including daily cleaning of high-touch points will be in place to further support the health of staff
- Connect with all staff regularly whether in person, by email, phone, message etc
- Staff meetings can be held on site with appropriate public health measures in place.
- Staff can share common space with another staff member (eg, staff room or office) but it is recommended that where practicable a 1 metre distance is used, but this is not a requirement. You should discuss this with your staff.
- Support professional development whenever possible, including virtually
- Place hand sanitiser in close proximity to equipment shared by staff (e.g., printer/copier) and at the entrance to the staffroom or shared staff spaces
- There is a range of wellbeing information and support available for staff, including having access to EAP services through their employer. Please go to our website for further information to support wellbeing in your community - [supporting wellbeing](#)

## Food preparation in a school environment

We know many schools supply meals to students eg breakfast, lunches or have canteens/tuckshops that students can purchase prepared takeaway food from. It has never been more important to make sure that hygiene is your number one consideration before you continue to provide any of these services 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.

The MPI checklists [Re-opening a Food Business Checklist](#) and [Safe work practices](#) provide a summary of the most important food safety and hygiene practices to be followed before resuming food production and delivery under the different alert levels.

## 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.

Encouraging good cough/sneeze etiquette and no touching of hands to faces can be reinforced once safely evacuated or safely inside.

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. 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 transitioning to Alert Level 2 – [WorkSafe website](#)
- Alert Level 2 information – [COVID-19 website](#)
- Alert Level 2 public health requirements for schools and early learning services – [Education detail for Alert level 2](#)
- Our [Education.govt.nz](#) has education-specific information
- The [COVID19.govt.nz](#) website and Ministry of Health website continue to be the best places to find information about COVID-19 relevant to New Zealand
- 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 office if you have any questions – [Local Ministry offices](#)