

Health and Safety Procedure Communicable Disease Response Procedure

Refer to Ministry of Health

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/communicable-disease-control-manual>

A communicable disease is one that is spread from one person to another. The spread of a communicable disease may happen through a variety of ways that include: contact with blood and bodily fluids; breathing in an airborne virus; or by being bitten by an infected insect. In New Zealand there are diseases that are listed as ‘notifiable diseases’. Schools are required to contact the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health if they are informed that a person attending their school has been confirmed with one of these diseases. This list can be found in the Ministry of Health Communicable Diseases Manual (see link).

Procedures identifying and communicating risk from exposure of a communicable disease

If someone attending or working at our school has been identified through the DHB or a health practitioner as having a communicable disease there are procedures in place (advised by the Ministry of Health) to identify who may have been in contact with that person and the level of risk. Procedures include notification to staff members and whanau of students who may have been in who may have been in contact.

The notification in writing advises staff and whanau of what steps they must take to a) have a medical check b) monitor health c) when they may return to school.

People with communicable diseases must not attend school until they can provide medical confirmation that they are no longer infectious.

- **Staff who have a communicable disease** must stay at home on sick leave and not come to school. If possible, this can be changed to ‘working from home’ if there is work they are able to undertake from home. Sick leave due a communicable disease can be applied for as ‘disregarded sick leave’ once they are able to return to work. If their sick leave allowance runs out they may apply for discretionary leave with pay. Extended sick leave is able to be reimbursed from the MOE after eight days.
- **Students who have a communicable disease** must stay at home and not come to school. These students must provide proof that the student is clear of the disease before they return to school. Learning opportunities must be provided to the student, either in hard

copy or with the use of a device. These students while they are engaged in learning from home are counted as 'attending school'.

People suspected of having a communicable disease

Sometimes a person may be 'suspected' of having a communicable disease. If the grounds are reasonable, our school reserves the right to preclude the student (or staff member) from attending school under section 77 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

- The Principal may ask a staff member to attend a medical practitioner, paid for by the school, to confirm they are safe to be at school. The staff member may choose to attend their own practitioner at their own cost (by the discretion of the Principal).
- The Principal, with reasonable grounds and the support of the Board, may preclude a student *"until the board has received a certificate from a medical practitioner stating that the student is well enough to go back to school."*

Notification

- Notification of preclusion must be in writing; a letter, email or text signed by the Principal or their delegate
- The reasons for suspicion of a communicable disease must be outlined in the notification (e.g. observed symptoms) along with the requirements prior to returning to school and who to contact at the school
- The medical certificate from a medical practitioner, confirming the student is well enough to return to school must be received prior to the student returning to school.