

I am writing to you about the outbreak of the coronavirus in Wuhan, China. Having spoken or had email contact with several of you over the past few days I know this virus is of concern. I would particularly like to thank the parents who are voluntarily isolating any of their children who have come from, or been to, China; until two weeks have passed since arriving in New Zealand.

There are currently just over 2000 cases of this new virus reported in China. Most of these are in Wuhan and the surrounding Hubei Province, but there have also been cases in other parts of China, especially in larger cities such as Guangzhou and Shanghai. There have also been cases Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore, the USA, France and Australia. All of the cases in other countries are directly traceable to time spent in Wuhan and human-to-human transmission.

We are closely monitoring information provided by the Ministry of Health, which currently advises that there are no cases of the virus in New Zealand and that the risk of an outbreak in New Zealand is low. They advise that there is no specific action to be taken at this time. They are not suggesting that schools are closed nor that students should be isolated. Consequently, we will be open as per our communication starting Wednesday 29 January.

However, you will see from the following that at Whangaparaoa College we will be more careful than the Ministry of Health suggests. This is what we require:

1. Learners who have come from, or been in, China during the break will not be allowed to attend school for two weeks from their entry into New Zealand. This is to ensure they have no symptoms of the virus.
2. If you have returned from China in the last two weeks, you must contact the school immediately by email to our nurse Alexis Purvis, [alexispu@wgpcollege.school.nz](mailto:alexispu@wgpcollege.school.nz)
3. If your child has returned from international travel sometime in the last two weeks please complete the following survey monkey so we can know when they returned and where they travelled.  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FZB5B5F>
4. If you or your child has met up with anyone who has been to Hubei over the holidays, your child is not to attend school for two weeks from their entry into New Zealand. Please let us know via the school absence line; and your child will be marked as a justified absence.
5. All staff will be ensuring that students are provided with work during the time they are not at school. This will be provided through a digital form and will be work that is as close as possible to the work being completed by students in the class.

Other actions include:

- At the start of the each period students will be required to clean their hands with hand sanitiser (this will be provided in each class)
- Our toilets are being cleaned at least twice daily; and surfaces where there is a high touch frequency are also being cleaned regularly

Some folk have asked about facemasks. We do not think this is necessary, but we recognise that some parents may wish their children to do so; which is fine.

For parents who have not been overseas and are worried about those coming back into school, please trust that we are doing more than the authorities are recommending and that we have a committee, led by the school nurse, who will meet daily to ensure that we are following best practice.

If you would like more information, you can go to the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health websites:

Ministry of Health - Coronavirus Information:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

Ministry of Education - Coronavirus information

<http://education.govt.nz/news/novel-coronavirus/>

If you have any concerns about one of your children, the Ministry of Health guidance suggests that you contact Healthline at 0800 611 116 or your GP for medical advice.

We are regularly monitoring advice from the Ministry of Health and the Auckland Regional Public Health Service. We will communicate with you again if the situation changes.

We are looking forward to the start of 2020.

Sincerely yours

James Thomas

Principal