

Te Kōhanga Reo o Nga Kuaka

Planning template for the 2020 Coronavirus (COVID -19)

1. Introduction

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a type of coronavirus. There are simple steps you can take to protect you and your family/whānau. COVID-19, like the flu, can be spread from person to person. When a person who has COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or talks, they may spread droplets containing the virus a short distance, which quickly settle on surrounding surfaces.

You may get infected by the virus if you touch those surfaces or objects and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes. That's why it's really important to use good hygiene, regularly wash and thoroughly dry your hands, and use good cough etiquette.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a cough
- a high temperature (at least 38°C)
- shortness of breath.

These symptoms do not necessarily mean you have COVID-19. The symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu. Shortness of breath is a sign of possible pneumonia and requires immediate medical attention.

We don't yet know how long symptoms take to show after a person has been infected, but current World Health Organization assessments suggest that it is 2–10 days.

At this stage this coronavirus is spreading across a many countries in many parts of the world, the ability for it to affect a whole country or the world makes it a "pandemic," which is a kupu this document relates to a lot.

2. Context

Pandemic characteristics and impact: The effect on our whānau

A pandemic has unique characteristics when compared with a more "typical" disaster. For example:

- Widespread impact

The impact of a pandemic would likely be widespread, even nation-wide, not localised to a single area and there may be little outside assistance. Many business continuity plans assume some part of an organisation is unaffected and can take up the required capacity.

- Not a physical disaster

A pandemic is not a physical disaster. It has some unique characteristics that require measures to limit contact, restrict movement, introduce quarantine and ban public gatherings.

- Duration

A pandemic would not be a short, sharp event leading immediately to the start of a recovery stage. A pandemic emergency may last several weeks or months. Plans need to take this into account.

- Notice

Some advance warning is likely if a pandemic develops overseas, but that warning period may be very short. Should pandemic corona spread within New Zealand the education sector would most probably be one of the first sectors to be closed and closures sustained

- Primary effect is on staffing levels

Unlike natural disasters where disruption to infrastructure and service delivery is likely to be related to hardware, a pandemic is more of a threat to kaimahi. Employers will need to plan for the scenario of up to **50% kaimahi absences at the height of a severe pandemic**. Ministry of Health modelling shows that two weeks leave is the average amount of leave required for sickness and recovery of a kaimahi member. Overall, a pandemic wave may last about eight weeks, though the pandemic may come in several waves of varying severity over time.

3. Coronavirus Pandemic Planning

We must ensure we have an emergency plan in place to meet health and safety requirements.

It is not possible to predict how long this pandemic may last. There could be more than one wave of infection during a pandemic period. Each wave could typically last about eight weeks.

Continuity planning for a pandemic should include:

- identification of essential activities (and the core people and skills to keep them running), ensuring these are backed-up with alternative arrangements
- minimising the risk of infection for staff and students.

Pandemic manager

The “pandemic manager” is likely to be the Tumuaki or a member of the management team, or a small team working together. Some tasks the “pandemic manager” may perform include:

- Establishing a system to monitor staff who are ill or suspected of being ill, including contacting staff who are unexpectedly absent from work – has their doctor been notified of their illness? Have they been in contact with anyone? Have “contact” issues been addressed? Is someone able to care for them?
- Ensuring adequate supplies of tissues, medical and hand hygiene products, cleaning supplies and masks. It may be difficult to purchase such products once a pandemic begins.
- The above two points are particularly important during the “stamp it out” stage when you may still be required to remain open but vigilant.

Although we expect widespread centrally coordinated closures during this pandemic event, the following section has been developed to enable us to plan and manage remaining open at this stage.

Our pandemic plan should consider how to minimise illness among kaimahi, tamariki and whanau and include:

- Restricting entry of people with coronavirus symptoms.
- Practising good personal hygiene and workplace cleaning habits.
- Increasing social distancing (by minimising close physical contact and avoiding situations where you or the tamariki may come into contact with infected people, such as outings to enclosed places). Though social distancing is a key strategy during a pandemic, this would be a challenge for us with our young tamariki. As long as closure has not been directed, we should take a common sense approach on how to handle appropriate social distancing between tamaiti and tamaiti, and tamaiti and kaimahi.
- Managing kaimahi and tamariki who become ill.
- Managing any kaimahi and tamariki who are travelling overseas or who have recently returned from affected countries.

4. Kohanga action plan whilst open

Transmission prevention whilst our whare are open

Table 1 - Summary of Coronavirus Protection Measures

Protection measure	Where applicable
Hand hygiene, cough etiquette, ventilation	Everyone, all the time
Health and safety policies	Everyone, all the time
Social distancing	Everyone, whenever practical stay at least one metre away from other people.
Protective barriers	In situations where regular work practice requires unavoidable, relatively close contact with the public, for example, reception areas.
Disposable surgical mask	Sick people coughing and sneezing Kaimahi having close contact with suspected infected people, for example, in sick bay caring for the sick (this includes first aiders) Also as a possible adjunct to protective barriers.
Disposable particulate respirator masks, eye protection, gloves, gowns, aprons	Health care workers participating directly in close contact patient care when there is a high risk of contact with respiratory secretions, particularly via aerosols (mostly inpatient settings). Unlikely to be necessary in schools.

Restrict workplace entry of people with coronavirus symptoms

On declaration of Code Red, consider putting up notices at all entry points, advising whanau not to enter if they have coronavirus symptoms.

Tamariki who are unwell should remain at home. Kaimahi, parents and whānau should be advised not to come in when they are feeling unwell, or if they are exhibiting any coronavirus symptoms.

Use your normal communication methods to ensure all kaimahi, parents and whānau receive notices. You may also provide them with information about how to stay well during this pandemic, such as the [Ministry of Health](#) advice.

In our pandemic planning establish a process for ensuring that ill students and kaimahi have completed any required quarantine period and *are healthy* before allowing them to return.

Tamariki and kaimahi who have recovered from the coronavirus are unlikely to be re-infected (they will have natural immunity) and should be encouraged to return as soon as they are well after the 14 day quarantine period and, for tamariki, to kohanga if it has re-opened to them.

Personal hygiene

You can make a major contribution to national preparedness and safety through personal hygiene education programmes. We will keep in line with the advice given from the Ministry of Health COVID-19 information recommendations. Personal hygiene measures should be reinforced as a key way to minimise coronavirus transmission:

- Cover nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing (into elbow or into a disposable single use tissue).
- Immediately dispose of used tissues.
- Adopt good hand washing and drying practices, particularly after coughing, sneezing or using tissues.
- Keep hands away from the mucous membranes of the eyes, mouth, and nose.
- Ensure that adequate supplies of hand hygiene products are available. This is a high planning priority as there may be shortages of liquid soap and paper towels.

Communicate hand and personal hygiene information to kaimahi and whanau:

- Hygiene notices should be posted in all workplace entrances, washrooms, hand washing stations and public areas. The notice examples provided (see the Resources section) could be simplified to make them appropriate.
- Use brochures, newsletters, global emails, notice boards, and information included with payslips, informing kaimahi, whānau and students of the importance of hand hygiene and workplace cleaning at all times, especially during a pandemic.

Cleaning

During this pandemic our kohanga maybe be closed, and we may need to clean thoroughly to destroy any virus. This applies particularly to hard surfaces (for example, sinks, handles, railings, objects and counters).]

Cleaning of surfaces with a neutral detergent followed by a disinfectant solution is recommended. Surfaces that are frequently touched with hands should be cleaned often, preferably daily. Information about the appropriate choice and concentration of disinfectants can be found on the [Ministry of Health](#) website.

- Hygiene practices should be elevated in a pandemic to an even higher level than usual.

- Remind kaimahi and students not to share cups, dishes and cutlery; and ensure these items are thoroughly washed with soap and hot water after use.
- Remove books, magazines and papers from common areas.
- Consider ways of cleaning and/or restricting communal use of some play, physical education equipment and office equipment.
- When a person with suspected coronavirus is identified and has left, it is important that their work area or office and any other known places they have been are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- Planning should identify the basic hygiene practices (including hand hygiene) to be followed by cleaners, protocols for the use of personal protection equipment (if recommended by the Ministry of Health), and methods for waste disposal.

Ventilation

The [Ministry of Health](#) and the [Department of Labour](#) recommend all internal spaces should be well ventilated, preferably by fresh air via opening windows, or by properly designed and maintained air-conditioning systems.

Social distancing

In kohanga reo social distancing is difficult to achieve, but any raising of awareness or any level of compliance will be useful.

Social distancing is a strategy to protect kaimahi and tamariki during a pandemic by minimising their contact with others. Events involving large gatherings should be avoided, whether inside or outside. A distance of at least one metre should be maintained between people wherever practical. The Ministry of Health has the following suggestions for minimising contact, but you will need to decide which of these measures are practicable:

- Where possible avoid meeting people face-to-face – use the telephone, video conferencing and the internet to conduct business as much as possible – even when participants are in the same building.
- Avoid any unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone non-essential meetings, gatherings, workshops or training sessions.
- Avoid public transport
- Bring lunch and eat away from others (avoid the staffroom and crowded cafes). Introduce staggered lunchtimes and morning teas to reduce numbers in the staffroom.
- Do not congregate in staffrooms or other areas where people socialise. Do what needs to be done and then leave the area.
- If a face-to-face meeting with people is unavoidable, minimise the meeting time, choose a large room and sit at least one metre away from each other if

possible. Avoid hongi, kisses, shaking hands or hugging. Consider holding meetings via conference call or outside.

- Set up systems where whanau and kaimahi can request information via phone, email or fax and have information ready for fast pick-up or delivery.
- Encourage tamariki and kaimahi to avoid recreational or other leisure classes or meetings where they might come into contact with infectious people.

Managing kaimahi and students who become ill

When we have kaimahi or tamaiti with those symptoms of coronavirus as mentioned in the introduction, it is easy to determine that they should be stood down from kohanga and standard protocols should be adhered to as per our “Illness policy, approved 28 August 2018.”

However the duration of the stand down period of isolation at this stage is unknown as the criteria for COVID-19 is changing regularly, hence we will be waiting for guidance around this from the Ministry of Health.

Once a clearer isolation period is announced it will be “INSERTED HERE”

Rationalizing and planning core roles for our kaimahi

In this coronavirus pandemic it is important that kaimahi and whanau with core skills are available to keep essential parts of our kohanga functioning even if it has been closed to tamariki. The following points are designed to help us plan for this type of contingency by identifying core people and core skills needed for our kohanga to operate.

Issues we are always reviewing and considering are include:

- What are the “essential” parts of our kohanga?
- Who are the key people required to keep these essential parts running?
- What are the core skills required to keep them running?
- Is there sufficient back-up for kaimahi and whanau and skills if there is a high level of absence? Are there other resources (such as volunteers, retirees) that could be drawn on if necessary? Is it possible to co-ordinate/operate this provision remotely, using telephone and email?
- Who are the key people required to manage the pandemic contingency plan?
- Do you have any systems which rely on periodic physical intervention by key individuals to keep them going? How long would the system last without attention?

Once the core people and skills are identified, ensure that they are aware of their position and how they will be managed in the event of a pandemic. Consider

strategies for minimising the possibility that they become ill with influenza, by working from home or other social distancing measures.

You may wish to have non-essential staff indicate their willingness to carry out “alternative duties” such as tracing contacts of infected students and/or staff or assisting another agency (for example, in health or welfare roles) during the Code Red phase to help the community manage and recover from the pandemic.

Creation of an isolation area

In the event of a tamaiti or kaimahi being unwell, there will naturally be a time lapse prior to their collection if deemed not suitable for the kohanga. The Kohanga has arranged an area on isolation that will act as a holding area until collection, from their respected whanau. Post collection the area will be appropriately terminally cleaned.

Resource management whilst our whare are open

-A pandemic may have other **impacts on services**, for example:

- supplies of materials needed for ongoing activity may be disrupted when, for example, supplies are normally imported across borders that have been closed or are being tightly controlled
- services from sub-contractors may be affected (impacting maintenance of key equipment and this issue merits close planning attention)
- demand for infrastructure services may be affected – demand for some services may increase (internet access is a possible example); while demand for others may fall (for example, types of travel activity may reduce)
- education delivery is not expected to continue during a pandemic. In a pandemic early and enforced sustained closure of education facilities to children and students is the most likely scenario.

Possible Interventions

- Online shopping and ordering
- Small incremental purchases
- Whanau support for help with specialised skills, building repairs etc....

-**Kaimahi absences** can be expected for many reasons, including:

- illness or incapacity (suspected or actual)
- their need to stay at home to care for sick dependents
- they may feel safer working from home (for example, to keep out of crowded places such as public transport – public transport may cease)
- some people may be assigned to ‘alternative duties’ for their employer or another agency (such as health or welfare roles)

- others may need to stay at home to look after pre-school and school-aged students (as other early childhood education services and schools may be closed).

Possible Interventions

- Identify potential responsibilities and jobs (administrative, planning, educational jobs) for the home isolation setting
- Connecting with other kohanga and ECE staffing coverage and assistance

Issues we may wish to consider include:

- What are critical kaimahi numbers and skills required to keep essential parts of the kohanga running? At what level of kaimahi absence does “business”, such as administration, stop? What arrangements need to be made to minimise risks to kaimahi?
- Who would have appropriate delegation to make the decision to shut activity down when absence rates threaten safe continuation of core operations?
- Pandemic coronavirus may affect regions of New Zealand and the world differently in terms of timing, severity and duration. Some regions may be hit earlier, longer or harder. Restrictions on movement of people may be imposed and many kaimahi activities may therefore be difficult to maintain. It may be a question of dispersing the knowledge and skills through appropriate, planned kaimahi training programmes.

Communication

Up to date and accurate information is vital for us all, given the ever changing nature of a pandemic like COVID-19 we will aim to keep everyone up to speed as logistically possible. It is likely there will be anxiety leading up to and during this coronavirus pandemic and this is likely to contribute to increased absence and/or increased stress to whanau board, managers, kaimahi, whānau and students. We currently have a “communication policy approved 26/2/20” which is a good starting point, but other approaches to manage this would be to:

- Communicate early the possibility of a pandemic and our preparedness to manage it – to our whanau hui, kaimahi, students, parents and whānau. Ministry of Health coronavirus advice might be useful.
- Discuss with kaimahi possible health and safety issues, and leave arrangements for them if they are ill or need to look after dependents.
- Have a comprehensive plan in place which is clearly communicated to your board, kaimahi, tamariki and whānau. Ensure that communications management during the pandemic is part of the plan.

- In activating our plan, provide clear, timely and pro-active communications to your board, kaimahi, tamariki and whānau explaining how we are managing the situation.
- Establish a “communications tree” to circulate important messages. Consider how we might maintain communication with:
 - board, kaimahi, student, parents and whānau
 - other kohanga/ECE in your area/cluster
 - relevant agencies and community support networks
 - key suppliers and contractors.

In addition, it is also important to build communication links with key contacts, relevant agencies and community support networks:

- Healthline Covid-19 0800 358 5453
- Te Kohanga Reo National Trust 04-381-8750, 0800 Kohanga, 0800 564 2642
 - Tari Matua – HR Andrew Hema (04) 381 8750
 - Local Tainui -Waikato branch 07 856 8885
- District health boards
- Ministry of Education regional or local office
- Other Kohanga/ECE in your cluster/area

5. Closure of kohanga

Currently we would be guided by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Kohanga Reo National Trust and the government. It would be the responsibility of the allocated pandemic manager to stay up to date with the ongoing information regarding rules and regulations.

In other foreseen events that would expedite the closure of the kohanga are listed in our current policy titled, “Closing Kohanga at Short Notice, approved 8 August 2018”. The process of this is also outlined in this document.

6. During Closure of Kohanga Things to consider

Like previously mentioned with this coronavirus pandemic it is important that kaimahi and whanau with core skills are available to keep essential parts of our kohanga functioning even if it has been closed to tamariki.

What opportunities are there were our kohanga whilst the doors are closed:

- Virtual reo session to whanau and tamariki at home in isolation
- Renting of facilities
- Offering other services
 - Call centre for healthline in te reo Maori etc
- Offering other services out of the buildings
- Cleaning, organizing, repair, maintenance work for kaimahi
- Administrative, planning work for kaimahi
- Training and educational opportunities with access to putea for kaimahi
- Making relationships with other kohanga