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30 August 2021

## He Pānui Kōhungahunga

the Early Learning Bulletin



### Early Learning Bulletin 30 August 2021

#### Message from the Secretary for Education

Ngā mihi o te Rāhina,

I wanted to give mention today to the early learning leadership teams and staff who have been doing double duty over the last couple of weeks. I know many of you have had to do your jobs alongside parenting duties – no mean feat!

Thank you for your continued feedback about the bulletin. Where we can, we've provided additional information. The bulletins draw on a range of information – not all of it is within our control and this can lead to delays in its publication.

Regardless, I'd like us to get into more of a rhythm around the bulletin to give you more certainty of its arrival and to better manage the preparation at our end. From tomorrow:

- our COVID updates will be sent no later than 4pm
- if, for any reason, we cannot meet the 4pm deadline, bulletins will be sent at 8am the next day

- we'll send an update everyday even if it is simply to say there is no new information.

Thank you again to all of you who have indicated that you are confidently getting ready for some children on Wednesday. Please ensure you're not adding undue stress to your early learning whānau by asking them to provide evidence that they are working. Continue to be kind and support each other.

We look set to continue these updates for a couple of weeks at least – this afternoon we received confirmation that New Zealand regions south of Auckland's regional boundary will shift into Alert Level 3 at 11:59pm Tuesday 31 August and will stay in Alert Level 3 for a period of one week, with review on Monday 6 September.

For those of you in Auckland, you'll stay in Alert Level 4 for a further two weeks until Monday 13 September, while those of you in Northland will remain in Alert Level 4 until at least 11:59pm this Thursday 2 September.

We do know that Alert Level 3 brings its own challenges – it is always so good to hear how services and their staff create situations that work for them and their communities. Make sure your own wellbeing is a priority too.

Ngā manaakitanga

Iona

In today's bulletin:

- Attendance at Alert Level 3
- Opening your service at Alert Level 3
- Expansion of Childcare for Workers of Alert Level 4 Business or Services Scheme to include OSCAR providers
- Managing and supporting staff at Alert Level 3
- Alert Level boundary map now live
- Advice on vandalism

### **Attendance at Alert Level 3**

For those of you south of the Auckland boundary, we know you are busily planning for a return of some children and staff at Alert Level 3. So that we can best support you, it is helpful that

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we know estimated numbers that will be attending on Wednesday when at Alert Level 3.

To make this as easy as possible for you, we are going to use Mataara to send you a text message at 10am tomorrow morning. All we need from you in your texted response, is the number of children you are expecting onsite (and no other words or messages if you can avoid it please).

[Mataara emergency contact tool](#)

A reminder the number this message will come from is 8707.

As always, please contact your regional team if you need any assistance.

### **Opening your service at Alert Level 3**

Early learning services are expected to open for families who need it at Alert Level 3.

You will need to work through the logistics of this in discussion with your early learning whānau. The reasons why families need their children to attend will vary. You will need to make your own decisions about prioritisation within the maximum bubble size of 10, again in consultation with parents and whānau who want their children to attend. If you need support to have these conversations, please contact your local Ministry team.

Services that open at Alert Level 3 will continue to be funded as if all their enrolled children had attended as expected. Identify children as being present or absent as usual in your SMS.

Services can only remain closed if there are no families that need the service to open or if the service can't operate safely within public health parameters. If you need to remain closed for either of these reasons, use code EC (emergency closure) and you will continue to receive Ministry funding.

Services that opt to remain closed for any other reason will not receive Ministry funding. Use code SC (service closed) in your SMS.

Our Alert Level 3 guidance is available below.

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[COVID-19 guidance for early learning services and kōhanga reo at Alert Level 3 \[PDF, 339KB\]](#)

### **Expansion of Childcare for Workers of Alert Level 4 Business or Services Scheme to include OSCAR providers**

The Childcare for Workers of Alert Level 4 Business or Services Scheme has been expanded in Auckland and Northland to include accredited Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) providers.

Any OSCAR worker in the scheme must:

- Be fully safety checked, including a Police vet
- Provide care for the children in the home of the Alert Level 4 worker

If you are an OSCAR provider located in Auckland or Northland who can provide childcare please contact us at [ece.info@education.govt.nz](mailto:ece.info@education.govt.nz).

Please note, OSCAR providers will be contracted and funded into the scheme through the Ministry of Education.

The childcare scheme is only available during an Alert Level 4 lockdown period.

### **Managing and supporting staff at Alert Level 3**

The safety and wellbeing of children, staff and their households, continues to be a priority in Alert Level 3. When opening facilities, the public health requirements must be adhered to so that COVID-19 is prevented from spreading within the community.

Further to yesterday's bulletin and information detailing the health measures you should take at Alert Level 3, the below information will support you to work with your staff to agree your plan to manage work safety, and what they need to do to help. The advice from Worksafe on our website also expands on this.

#### [Health and Safety at Work Act](#)

By following the public health requirements and guidance for operating under the different alert levels, and having a plan to meet your service's circumstances, you will meet your

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obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act in relation to mitigating the risks posed by COVID-19.

Services should take a health and safety risk-based approach to understand and investigate the concerns of their employees in good faith. You will need to determine an appropriate response in line with employer and employee duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, and advice from the Ministry of Health.

Work with your staff when developing and reviewing your health and safety plan, including with your elected health and safety representatives.

WorkSafe notes that before reopening, the persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) should self-assess their ability to operate safely at alert level 3. This includes thinking about how you are going to manage risks and protect staff, students and whānau under Alert Level 3.

A reminder that PCBUs need to document their thinking in a COVID-19 safety plan and share that plan with their staff. More information about what's needed in the plan, including a plan template, is available on the Worksafe COVID-19 safety plan page.

#### [Novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Worksafe website](#)

Some relevant factors might be:

- the risk to the employee (e.g. their own health status if they remain in the workplace, based on medical advice)
- the risk to other people at the service (e.g. if a person in the employee's home is sick with COVID-19 symptoms but has not yet been tested, or is in self-isolation)
- the risk to other people in the employee's household or 'bubble'.

If the employee has provided medical evidence that they should self-isolate based on public health guidelines and health and safety advice, then:

- the employee should work from home wherever practicable
  - if they are unable to work from home, discretionary paid leave should be provided.
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Under health and safety law, staff member(s) may stop working if they believe the work would expose them or any other person to a serious risk to health and safety arising from an immediate or imminent evidenced exposure to a hazard such as COVID-19 infection. They must discuss their concerns with you, and may only continue with that course of action if they reasonably believe that risk still remains.

If after considering public health guidelines and health and safety advice, you do not agree the employee should self-isolate, you should work with them to try to identify why they consider the work is unsafe, and rectify the matter, so far as is reasonably practicable. While your employee's health and safety concerns are being resolved you may require them to carry out suitable alternative work, either onsite or working from home. You may also agree on a leave arrangement such as annual leave or unpaid discretionary leave.

### **Alert Level boundary map now live**

The Alert Level Boundary map provides indicative Alert Level 3 and 4 boundary lines that will come into effect at 11:59pm on Tuesday 31 August 2021. The boundaries are subject to change and may be updated to align with the Health Order. The map can be accessed on the COVID-19 website.

[Alert Level boundary map - COVID-19 website](#)

### **Advice on vandalism**

If your service property has been vandalised, you should **notify the Police immediately**.

If the vandalism has affected the security of the building, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) guidance on what constitutes essential works under Alert Level 4 includes the repair of building elements that effect the security of a building such as broken windows, external doors and window frames.

At Alert Level 3, on-site work is permitted with appropriate health and safety measures.

More information and examples can be found on the MBIE website under COVID-19: Building and construction sector guidance.

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[Construction and trade sector information - MBIE website](#)

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