

COVID-19: Alert Level 3 - Guidance for School Based Health Services providers (1 May 2020)

This guidance aims to support safe decision-making and care delivery planning for School Based Health Services (SBHS) services while the New Zealand Alert Level 3 restrictions are in place.

The objectives are to:

- protect the wellbeing of rangatahi and their whānau;
- focus on equity of health outcomes;
- limit the transmission of the COVID-19 virus; and
- maintain the safety of the workforce.

Main points

1. The Ministry of Health (the Ministry) recommends School Nurses be re-deployed to schools during Alert Level 3 to:
 - meet otherwise unattended health needs of students attending schools during Level 3. Health needs can include but not limited to skin sores, sore throats, sexual health matters.
 - ensure students with health needs who are not on the school premises are aware of currently operating services to receive face to face help, eg primary care, and how they can contact the school nurse.
 - link students with mental health related issues to the school counsellor or other services available
 - support students with family and social issues, including family and sexual violence and link them to other services available
 - connect students to health and support services available online. Links to online resources are provided below.
 - help teachers address COVID-19 related questions – will usually involve guidance to other public health resources, or practical guidance around hygiene etc.
2. Prior to the re-deployment of SBHS nurses to a school in your region, we recommend contacting the school to identify the number of students on site and determine the need for onsite services during Alert Level 3.
3. DHBs and Services are asked to develop a plan to catch up on delayed psychosocial assessments that were not undertaken due to the COVID19 alert level 4, and in part level 3 for once pandemic management restrictions are lifted.

NB: In any case where high need or health risk has been identified AND attempts to contact the rangatahi have been unsuccessful, providers are expected to have a system in place for liaising with Oranga Tamariki, the Police or Civil Defence to ascertain the safety of the rangatahi / whānau.

4. Immunisations
 - As you will be probably be aware school-based immunisation programmes were identified as being unable to continue as schools are closed and are unable to restart to until schools fully reopen.
 - Please bear in mind the minimum gap between doses of HPV vaccine - you may wish to consider referral to general practices or returning for vaccination in the 2021 school year if you are unable to deliver both doses in 2020.
 - It is important for planning to be done or to have plans in place to restart these programmes when all students are back in schools.

Managing face-to-face SBHS contact

1. Where there is clinical concern for the health or wellbeing of the rangatahi **and** raised risk of transmitting COVID19 then prior discussion is required with a clinical leader or manager to balance risks in a way that keeps staff safe (e.g. planned primary care or hospital assessment, delayed assessment or other way of monitoring).

NB: Raised risk of transmitting COVID19 includes where there is any person in the whānau or SBHS nurse's household 'bubble':

- a. who reports any sign of COVID19 or flu-like illness; or
- b. who is showing any signs of COVID19 or flu like illness; or
- c. who is in self isolation and/or reports being in close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID19; or
- d. is an essential worker who comes in and out of the household bubble; or
- e. is immune-compromised or has heightened vulnerability.

2. Practice universal precautions and infection control procedures at both individual and service level, including for example hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette, cleaning examination surfaces, phones and keyboards.
3. Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in accordance with current Ministry of Health guidelines.
4. Ideally limit duration of direct contact to less than 15 minutes and, as far as possible, maintain physical distancing of 2 metres between adults. This includes physical distancing arrangements in waiting area.
5. Assign face-to-face contacts to times and spaces where there is not likely mixing with people presenting with infections (e.g. separate clinic times, separate clinic spaces).

Online Resources:

COVID19 questions and answers for primary health care workers:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/COVID19-novel-coronavirus/COVID19-resources-health-professionals/COVID19-primary-care/COVID19-questions-and-answers-primary-health-care-workers>

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for community health workers:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/hp7353-ppe-ipc-poster-community-care-providers-28mar20-v3.pdf>

Telehealth, virtual technology consulting:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/COVID19-novel-coronavirus/COVID19-resources-health-professionals/managing-patients-and-reporting-using-telehealth-and-online-tools>

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-advice-essential-workers-including-personal-protective-equipment/personal-protective-equipment-use-health-care>

<https://www.telehealth.org.nz/health-provider/>



Youth
Resources.pdf