

COVID-19 update 18 March

You will be aware the Ministry of Health's Director-General has confirmed a case of COVID-19 in a Dunedin school following a student testing positive for coronavirus.

On advice from the Southern District Health Board the school will now remain closed until Tuesday (Monday being Otago Anniversary Day). Close contacts have been identified and are being tested for the virus. [The letter to the community from SDHB provides further information](#)

The Ministries of Education and Health are working closely with Public Health services in Dunedin and the school leadership to help minimise disruption, progress contact tracing and reduce the possibility of spread.

Reminder – schools remain open

At this stage, we are not expecting widespread school closures. We are planning for temporary closures, like what is happening at Logan Park School but as the World Health Organisation has confirmed, the risk to children remains low and parents should continue to send their kids to schools and early learning centres.

Consequently any decisions about school closures will be made on a case by case basis. In the meantime, unless students are unwell themselves, then parents should keep sending them to schools and early learning centres as these environments continue to be safe and the best place for them to continue their learning.

Talking to children and young people about COVID-19

Given the rise in the number of reported cases, there may be children or young people in your life who experience distress. As a trusted adult, you can help reassure and educate them about COVID-19 – it can be good to talk to them now, so they can understand the illness and be reassured.

[A useful resource for parents, caregivers, whānau and teachers talking about the virus with children and young people can be found here](#)

This can also be downloaded as an [information sheet](#).

Up-to-date information and advice

A reminder that information and advice for students, whānau and the education sector is [available here](#)

While the website is being regularly updated with education-related content, the [Ministry of Health is the Government agency leading the response to COVID-19](#)

The Secretary for Education joined the Director-General of Health for the Ministry of Health's COVID 19 update today. You can view that, and all [Ministry of Health updates here](#).

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