COVID-19

Step-by-step guide for managing COVID-19 in primary and intermediate schools and kura

23 November 2021

Purpose of this step-by-step guide

This is a companion guide to Managing COVID-19: A public health toolkit for primary and intermediate schools and kura. It aims to provide clear steps for education officials to support the management of COVID-19 contacts within these education environments.

Contents

VERSION 1.1

General information

Scope

This document provides detailed steps to follow to be able to support the management COVID-19 contacts in school communities. See the Appendix for acronyms and key terms.
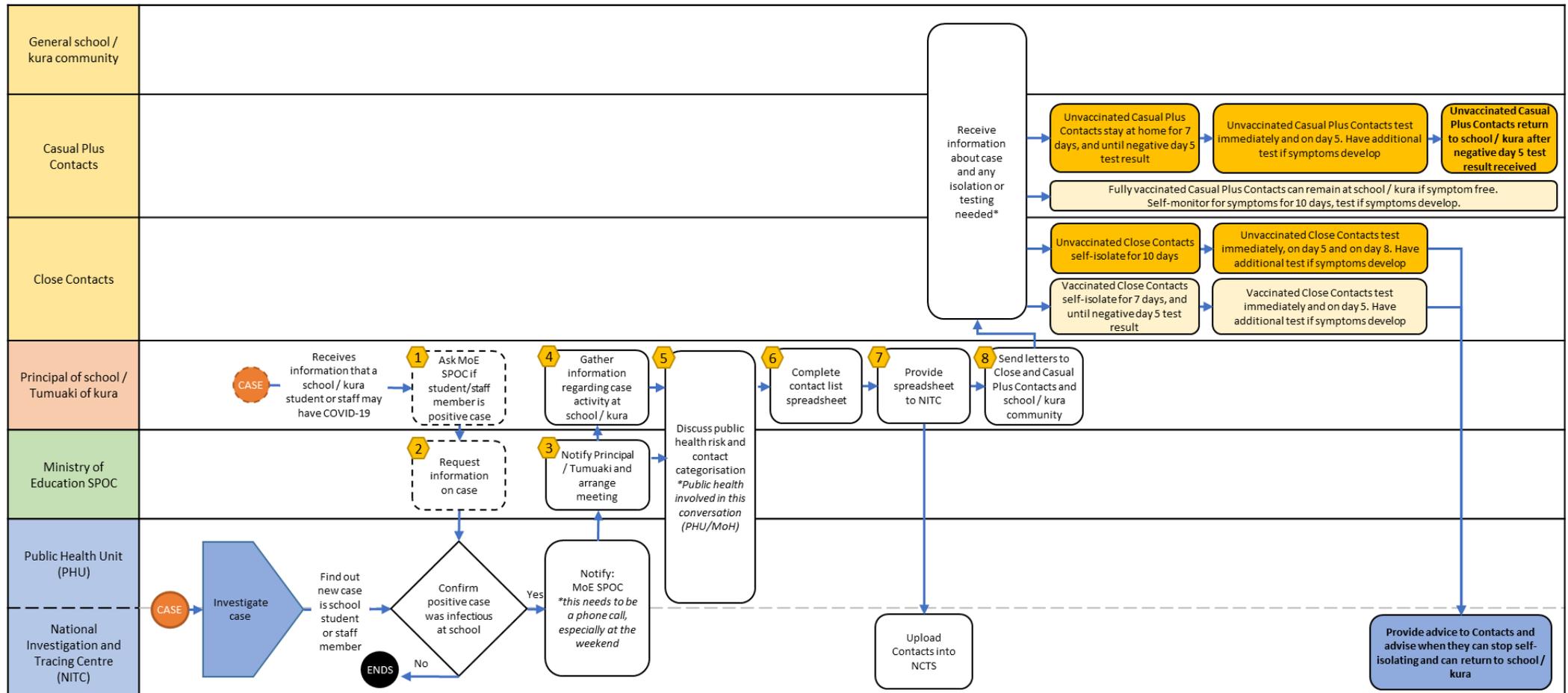
It does not include detailed steps that health officials will complete, apart from where education and health officials undertake actions together.

Each step is colour coded to the role responsible – either the Principal / Tumuaki or the MoE Single Point of Contact.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Principal / Tumuaki	- Ask MoE Single Point of Contact if student/staff member is positive case - Discuss public health risk and contact categorisation with MoE Single Point of Contact and public health - Complete assessment of contacts - Provide list of contacts to NITC - Send letters to Close Contacts, Casual Plus Contacts and school community
MoE Single Point of Contact	- Request information on a case from a public health unit - Provide information about the education facility - Notify school / kura and arrange meeting - Discuss public health risk and contact categorisation with Principal / Tumuaki and public health - Support Principal / Tumuaki to complete assessment of contacts
Public Health	- Investigate case - Confirm positive case was infectious at school - Notify MoE Single Point of Contact of case at school - Discuss public health risk and contact categorisation - Provide the infectious period, self-isolation end date and testing dates
National Investigation and Tracing Centre (NITC)	- Upload Close Contacts into NCTS - Provide advice to Contacts

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Process flow chart for roles and responsibilities

Swimlane	Content
General school / kura community	
Casual Plus Contacts	Unvaccinated Casual Plus Contacts stay at home for 7 days, and until negative day 5 test result → Unvaccinated Casual Plus Contacts test immediately and on day 5. Have additional test if symptoms develop → **Unvaccinated Casual Plus Contacts return to school / kura after negative day 5 test result received** Fully vaccinated Casual Plus Contacts can remain at school / kura if symptom free. Self-monitor for symptoms for 10 days, test if symptoms develop.
Close Contacts	Unvaccinated Close Contacts self-isolate for 10 days → Unvaccinated Close Contacts test immediately, on day 5 and on day 8. Have additional test if symptoms develop Vaccinated Close Contacts self-isolate for 7 days, and until negative day 5 test result → Vaccinated Close Contacts test immediately and on day 5. Have additional test if symptoms develop
Principal of school / Tumuaki of kura	CASE → Receives information that a school / kura student or staff member may have COVID-19 → **1** Ask MoE SPOC if student/staff member is positive case → **4** Gather information regarding case activity at school / kura → **5** → **6** Complete contact list spreadsheet → **7** Provide spreadsheet to NITC → **8** Send letters to Close and Casual Plus Contacts and school / kura community
Ministry of Education SPOC	**2** Request information on case → **3** Notify Principal / Tumuaki and arrange meeting
Public Health Unit (PHU)	(Discuss public health risk and contact categorisation *Public health involved in this conversation (PHU/MoH)*) · Notify: MoE SPOC *this needs to be a phone call, especially at the weekend*
National Investigation and Tracing Centre (NITC)	CASE → Investigate case → Find out new case is school student or staff member → Confirm positive case was infectious at school → Yes / No (ENDS) → Upload Contacts into NCTS → **Provide advice to Contacts and advise when they can stop self-isolating and can return to school / kura**

Receive information about case and any isolation or testing needed*

1 Corresponding step in Step-by-step guide   *Contacts that are required to self-isolate and get tested will also be contacted by public health

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Step-by-step guide

1. Ask MoE Single Point of Contact if student/staff member is positive case

When to use

Follow these steps if the Principal / Tumuaki hears that there might be a student or staff member case, but they have not been officially notified by the MoE Single Point of Contact.

Who does this step

Principal / Tumuaki of school or kura

Before you begin

Ensure that you:
- have received information from a reliable source that a school student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19.
- have identified the right MoE Single Point of Contact to contact

Steps

1	If during weekday hours, email and if outside of business hours, call MoE Single Point of Contact seeking confirmation of the positive case. If possible, include: • Name of possible case • Date of birth • Name of school / kura that case attends	Within 1 hour, between 7am and 9pm

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2. Request information on a case from public health

When to use

Follow these steps if the MoE Single Point of Contact has been advised by a Principal / Tumuaki that there is a positive case in their community.

Who does this step

MoE Single Point of Contact

Before you begin

Ensure that you:
- have received enough information to pass on to public health, and that the information has come from a reliable source
- have the contact details of the public health service

Steps

1	Call public health to advise of possible case, and confirm details of the case with the information they have received from the Principal / Tumuaki (step 1). **Note** that public health is available to support education settings from 8am-6pm, 7 days per week.	Call within 1 hour (within public health operating hours).
2	Confirm any available information, including: • Name of case • Name of school If public health has completed a case investigation, they may be able to also provide: • Infectious period OR information that not infectious at school • Any known activities at the school during that infectious period • Isolation end date and testing advice for contacts (note that this may need to be reviewed if there are subsequent cases) • Case number (this is important to be able to link the contact list spreadsheet in the contact tracing system)	
3	Discuss appropriate time to meet with school / kura to complete risk assessment	

3. Notify school / kura and arrange meeting

When to use

Follow these steps if you have been notified of a positive case of COVID-19 within a school or kura community.

Who does this step

MoE Single Point of Contact

Before you begin

Ensure that you have:
- received all the information you need from public health

Steps

1	Call the Principal / Tumuaki of the school or kura concerned to advise them of the positive case and the details: • Name of case • Name of school If public health has completed a case investigation, they may be able to also provide: • Infectious period OR information that not infectious at school • Any known activities at your school during that infectious period • Isolation end date and testing advice for contacts (note that this may need to be reviewed if there are subsequent cases) • Case number (this is important to be able to link the contact list spreadsheet in the contact tracing system)	Within 1 hour (dependent on public health being available) and between 7am and 9pm
2	Arrange a time to virtually meet with the Principal / Tumuaki and public health to discuss public health risk and contact categorisation.	
3	Follow-up with an email to the Principal / Tumuaki, and public health with • confirmation of meeting time and date • virtual meeting invite	

4. Gather information regarding case activity at school / kura

When to use

Follow these steps once you have been notified of a case at your school / kura.

Who does this step

Principal / Tumuaki

Before you begin

Ensure that you have:
- clear information about the case that has been identified and the days they were infectious while at school

Steps

1	Collate information about Contacts of the case and their interactions with the Case. For example • teachers • classes • close friends / staff members • extracurricular activities at school / kura • vaccination record Think about if there are any equity considerations for any of the contacts. For example, will particular contacts require additional support to isolate or get tested?	Within 8 working hours of notification
2	If time allows, prepare to share the information with public health, if requested prior to the discussion on risk assessment and contact categorisation	
3	Advise the MoE Single Point of Contact if the information has been shared.	

5. Discuss public health risk and contact categorisation

When to use

Follow these steps to determine the public health risk within the school / kura setting.

Who does this step

Principal / Tumuaki, MoE Single Point of Contact, public health

Before you begin

Ensure that you have:
- received information about contacts (Principal / Tumuaki)
- details about the case and any contacts identified through the case investigation (public health)
- any additional information about the activities of the case that might be relevant to contact categorisation, eg, who the case had class with, ate lunch with etc. (anyone)

Steps

1	Meet virtually to discuss the public health risk associated with this case attending school during infectious period	Within 8 working hours of notification
2	Seek clarification on • challenges with finding information • grey areas with categorising contacts, ie. ILE settings • dates for isolation and testing based on exposure • assistance available for contacts who may require additional support to comply with public health advice • the case number (if this hasn't already been provided) • other concerns Note: this meeting will consider whether a school may shift to online learning	
3	Establish next steps: • timeframe for completing contact categorisation (to be expected within 8 hours on weekdays) • when contact lists will be provided to NITC • when letters will be sent to the school / kura community	

6. Complete assessment of contacts

When to use

Follow these steps when completing assessment of contacts. This may be an iterative process, if contacts are identified over time.

Who does this step

Principal / Tumuaki

Before you begin

Ensure that you have:
- received information about the case and contacts from public health, including the case number and the infectious period of the case
- have access to the template contact list spreadsheet from the toolkit

Steps

1	Categorise the contacts using the template spreadsheet that includes drop-down fields. • Note: If a contact is listed more than once (this may occur if they were exposed on multiple occasions, for example in two different classes), always categorise the contact based on the higher risk. For example, if a contact is categorised as both a Casual Plus Contact and a Close Contact, they should be categorised as a Close Contact. • Ensure that you clearly identify which day the contact was at school or kura	Within 8 working hours of notification
2	Finalise the contact categorisation, check for any data quality issues and save using standardised naming convention: [School name_case number_contact list_date]	
3	Further public health input may be sought in specific circumstances: • There has been further transmission within the school / kura • There have been significant staff exposures that put a school's ability to operate at risk • There are individuals at high risk of severe disease and/or where the risk mitigation strategies may be challenging to apply (eg, children with disabilities or complex behavioural needs) • Schools with hostel settings	

7. Provide list of contacts to NITC

When to use

Follow these steps when the contact categorisation has been completed.

Who does this step

Principals / Tumuaki

Before you begin

Ensure that you have:
- saved the spreadsheet using the naming convention [School name_case number_contact list_date]
- checked that the spreadsheet is completed correctly and any data quality issues have been fixed. This will avoid time delay in the information being uploaded into the NCTS

Steps

1	Password protect the spreadsheet [use review tab > protect workbook > enter password]	Within 8 working hours
2	Draft and send email to **covid-19_contacttracing@health.govt.nz** using the following text: Subject line: School name_case number_contact list_date Kia ora Following the case being identified at [school / kura name], attached is a list of individuals who have been identified as Contacts for upload into the NCTS. Noho ora mai - [Principal/Tumuaki]	
3	Draft and send follow-up email to **covid-19_contacttracing@ health.govt.nz** using the following text: Subject line: School name_case number_contact list_date Kia ora The password for the contact list just sent through for [school / kura name] is [include password]. Noho ora mai - [Principal/Tumuaki]	

4	The NITC team will respond to your emails to inform you that your spreadsheet has been received.	

8. Send letters to Contacts and school / kura community

When to use

Follow these steps to inform the Contacts of a case of the steps they need to take to isolate and get tested for COVID-19, and to the general school / kura community.

Who does this step

Principal / Tumuaki

Before you begin

Ensure that you have:
- the template letters provided in **Managing COVID-19: A public health toolkit for primary and intermediate schools and kura**
- the information about school / kura name, when the case was at school / kura, the dates when testing is required and the dates when isolation of contacts ends
- contact details for contacts and their whānau

Steps

1	Populate the template letters from **Managing COVID-19: A public health toolkit for primary and intermediate schools and kura** with the information required	Within 8 working hours
2	Use the information from the contact categorisation spreadsheet to create lists of • who should receive the **Close Contact letter** • who should receive the **Casual Plus Contact letter**	
3	Send the completed Close Contact and Casual Plus Contact letters to the relevant people	
4	Send the **general letter** to the rest of the school / kura community	
5	If there are any equity considerations for particular contacts, work with whānau to ensure they are able to easily comply with public health advice and are aware of support available.	
6	Ensure you are aware of the timing of when students will be able to return to school following their isolation period and negative test results	

Appendix: Acronyms and key terms

MoE SPOC   Ministry of Education Single Point of Contact. This is likely to be the Director of Education for one of the 11 regions.

MoH   Manatū Hauora / Ministry of Health

NCTS   National Contact Tracing Solution. This is the IT system that is used to capture case and contact information.

NITC   National Investigation and Tracing Centre. This is the Manatū Hauora / Ministry of Health contact tracing team.

PHU   Public Health Unit. There are 12 public health units across Aotearoa New Zealand.