



Tertiary Provider and International Bulletin

Sunday 29 August 2021

COVID-19 Update

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COVID-19 Alert Level Changes

All of New Zealand remains at Alert Level 4 until 11.59pm on Tuesday 31 August. From that time, all New Zealand outside of Auckland and Northland will shift into Alert Level 3. Auckland and Northland will stay at Alert Level 4 for a further period, which will be decided on Monday 30 August.

In tertiary education, all teaching should continue to be delivered remotely, wherever possible. At alert level 3 Some facilities may open for limited activities involving small groups (up to 10 people including tutor) where it is not possible to deliver teaching remotely.

Alert Level 3 – Updated Guidelines for Tertiary Education Organisations

We have updated our [Guidelines for Tertiary Education Organisations](#) based on public health advice in advance of the next COVID-19 Public Health Response health order. This is to give TEOs and students outside of Auckland and Northland as much clarity as possible as you prepare for a change to Alert Level 3. Once the Alert Level 3 Public Health Response Order is gazetted tomorrow, we will do a final check to ensure all aspects of the order are reflected in our guidance. If there are further changes, we'll notify you immediately.

As we noted in our bulletin last Friday, the Public Health team at the Ministry of Health has closely reviewed the current guidance for the tertiary education sector at Alert Level 3 and identified key areas where changes need to be made. These changes were: staff/student bubbles should be limited to 10 people or fewer (with onsite examinations only allowed for these groups), and at-risk staff should not be onsite unless fully vaccinated (see further below).

These new recommendations by Public Health further support a lowering of risk for staff, students and whānau.

In addition, we highlight the following key points in our updated guidance to help TEOs prepare for Alert Level 3:



- Site access to prepare for re-opening (and to meet public health guidance) is allowed before Alert Level 3 comes into effect. We suggest TEOs and campus businesses provide staff with a letter they can take with them explaining why they are going to their place of work in Alert Level 4. As a reminder: where access to a tertiary site is permitted at Alert Level 4, a minimum number of staff should be onsite for a minimum amount of time, contact tracing systems and infection prevention measures must be in place, and physical distancing must be maintained at all times. If there is more than one staff member on site, staff must wear a face covering.
- At Alert Level 3, staff and students should bring face coverings or masks with them when attending on-site activities. Face coverings should be worn at indoor facilities (e.g. libraries and student health services) where these are open. They are strongly recommended at all other times, particularly where physical distancing may be difficult.
- At Alert Level 3, TEOs should have contact tracing systems in place for all staff and students onsite. TEOs should display the official NZ COVID Tracer QR code posters in a prominent place at or near main entrances, and ensure (to the greatest extent practicable) that each person entering the facility scans the QR code or provides details to enable contact tracing. Contact tracing information that identifies which student/staff bubbles have met, and where and when they have met must also be collected.
- Record-keeping requirements to support contact tracing is becoming mandatory for certain businesses that may operate on campus during Alert Level 3 – for example, food retail venues operating for delivery or contactless collection. This requirement comes into effect seven days from the change to Alert Level 3. The full list of places where record keeping is becoming mandatory is [here](#). Businesses can also check this page for further guidance to help them comply with the new requirements, which will be available soon.

Update to tertiary student accommodation and travel guidance

We have also updated our guidance on tertiary student accommodation, as we approach an Alert Level change. There may be further details following publication of the Health Order, which we will provide guidance on in our next bulletin.

Students in an Alert Level 4 area

Students must continue to remain in their current accommodation.

There are very limited circumstances in which changing accommodation is allowed at Alert Level 4 – for example, needing to use an emergency home like a women’s refuge. Changing accommodation outside of these circumstances requires an exemption from the Director-General of Health. Exemptions are granted only in exceptional circumstances. For more information, see ‘Leaving or relocating home’ and ‘Individual exemptions’ at the Unite against COVID-19 website: [Permitted movement at Alert Level 4 | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#).

Students in an Alert Level 3 area

The Ministry recommends all students in an Alert Level 3 area remain in their current accommodation.

However, students may move out of their accommodation in an Alert Level 3 area **if relocating on a permanent or long-term basis** to accommodation in an **Alert Level 3 area**, or returning to their primary home or place of residence **in an Alert Level 4 area**. Students must carry evidence of their purpose of travel and location if they are returning from an Alert Level 3 area to an Alert Level 4 area, e.g. proof of accommodation arrangements. For more information, see [Personal travel over an Alert Level 4 and 3 boundary | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#).

Students are strongly discouraged from moving into or returning to student accommodation at Alert Level 3 if they have been offsite for Alert Level 4, unless it is an emergency. Students must not change their accommodation if they have been directed by a medical officer of health to isolate.



Higher-risk staff

Staff members who have a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should be fully vaccinated before working on site. At Alert Level 3, all other staff members are encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as possible, but are still able to work on site if they are not fully vaccinated.

Generally, people are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after they have received the second of the two doses of the vaccine. However, staff should work with their GP or specialist if they need help understanding their own level of risk and how best to stay healthy. Further information is available [from the Ministry of Health here](#).

Many people who are at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 will already be fully vaccinated. However, where a person cannot work on site because they are higher risk and not yet fully vaccinated, they should provide their employer with appropriate medical evidence to support this (such as a medical certificate obtained at the employer's cost if required within the first three days after a request to return to work on site, and at the employee's cost after that). Staff at high risk who are not fully vaccinated should work from home. If work is not available at home, they should be provided with discretionary paid leave.

Information for people considered at higher risk from the effects of COVID-19 can be found on the [Ministry of Health website](#).

Disclosure of vaccination status

Ministry of Health advice is for everyone to get vaccinated, however you **cannot** make it a requirement for anyone get vaccinated.

You can ask a staff member whether they have been vaccinated, but they do not have to disclose their vaccination status. If they choose not to disclose their vaccination status, you may assume that they are unvaccinated but should inform the staff member of this assumption.

Personal information about vaccine status must be protected and cannot be shared without the staff member's consent.

COVID-19: locations of interest, vaccines and the basics

Locations of interest

With a high number of locations of interest, we ask that providers continue to be diligent and contact their stakeholders directly, as they have been doing, if they become a location of interest.

Vaccines

You can go online to the national booking system [BookMyVaccine.nz](#), or phone the COVID Vaccination Healthline on 0800 28 29 26 to reserve your spot. Everyone over the age of 12 will be eligible to book from this Wednesday 1 September. Detailed advice on COVID-19 vaccination is available from the Ministry of Health, which can be accessed [here](#).

COVID-19 basics

The Ministry of Health continues to remind everyone to please remain vigilant and stick to the basics:

- If you're sick, stay home. Do not go to work or school. Do not socialise.
- If you have cold, flu or COVID-19 symptoms, call your doctor or Healthline on 0800 358 5453 and get advice about getting tested.
- If you have been told to self-isolate, you legally must do so immediately.
- In an emergency always call [111](#).



Things change quickly so stay up to date by following the links below:

For health advice, please refer to the Ministry of Health's website.

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

Please continue to check the **Ministry of Health's locations of interest page** to find out if you might have been exposed to COVID-19 [COVID-19: Contact tracing locations of interest](#) | [Ministry of Health NZ](#)

For cross-agency information about COVID-19, including what support is available, health advice, and travel restrictions visit the All-of-Government website <https://www.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/>

Stress counselling and support is available. Friends and family members can help you to cope. You can also get help and information from, your education provider, your GP or local community health centre, Youthline at [0800 376 633](tel:0800376633) or www.youthline.co.nz or by calling or texting [1737](tel:1737)

For resources in Te Reo Māori, visit <https://covid19.govt.nz/updates-and-resources/translations/te-reo-maori/>

For information to support Pacific communities, visit <https://www.facebook.com/MinistryforPacificPeoples/>

For resources in [sign language and easy read formats](#).

Free counselling/Psychology Service in response to COVID-19 for Migrants and Former Refugees: [Diversity Counselling New Zealand](#) | [DCNZ Hamilton](#) | [Contact Us for help](#)

To keep updated on travel restrictions and visa information visit <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/coronavirus-update-inz-response>

Advice for international students in NZ <https://naumainz.studyinnewzealand.govt.nz/help-and-advice/healthcare/the-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know>

For additional advice for tertiary providers/whare wānanga visit the Ministry of Education website <http://www.education.govt.nz/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-3/>

