



## Tertiary Provider and International Bulletin

Thursday 16 September 2021

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Kia ora koutou,  
Ko tēnei te wiki o te reo Māori – kia kaha te reo Māori!

### COVID-19 Alert Level Changes

The government announced on Monday that Auckland will **continue to remain in Alert Level 4** and will in principle move to **Alert Level 3 at 11.59pm Tuesday 21 September**. This will be confirmed on Monday 20 September. The rest of New Zealand beyond the Southern and Northern Auckland regional boundary will **remain at Alert Level 2** with a review of settings also on Monday 20 September.

This bulletin provides in-depth coverage of guidance for those of you in Auckland preparing for an anticipated move to Alert Level 3 next week.

General [Alert Level 3](#) information is available on the Unite against COVID-19 website.

### Rāhui | Alert Level 3 – Guidelines for TEOs and students in the Auckland region

TEOs and students in Auckland preparing for the anticipated move to Alert Level 3 next week should follow the Alert Level 3 guidance in our [Guidelines for Tertiary Education Organisations](#). Our guidelines are up to date, except on cross-boundary travel (e.g., from an Alert Level 3 area to an Alert Level 2 area) and some minor clarifications. We discuss these further below. Otherwise, we are not expecting to make significant changes to our guidance, although we will do a final check once the Health Order confirming the alert level change for Auckland is in place.

### Overarching principles

At Alert Level 3, all guidance needs to be read and actioned with the following key principles in mind:

- All teaching and other activities should be done remotely, wherever possible.



- Where it is not possible to deliver teaching online, some facilities may open (e.g., for research, post-graduate teaching, lab/workshops).
- Any class, workshop, etc. that cannot be delivered online should be limited to 10 people or less. Each such group is considered a 'bubble' and should not interact with any other student/staff bubbles of 10. Contact tracing information that identifies which student/staff bubbles have met, and where and when they have met should be collected.
- For any on-site activities, appropriate infection control measures, such as physical distancing and face coverings, along with Worksafe requirements must be met at all times.

#### *Key guidance*

- 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.
- On-site examinations at Alert Level 3 should only take place for existing students/staff bubbles of 10, where it has not been possible to deliver teaching online.
- At-risk and vulnerable people (or those caring for/living with vulnerable people) should not be required to carry out any on-site activities unless they are fully vaccinated. However, they may work on site if they wish to, and it is safe for them to do so.
- Libraries and computer labs may remain open where they are essential to education delivery and can be operated using closely monitored personal distancing conditions. There is a high bar for an activity to be considered essential to education delivery. Access to libraries or computer labs should only be allowed when the delivery of education cannot occur remotely, e.g., for research, post-graduate teaching, labs or noho-based delivery.
- Face coverings must be worn at student health services and pharmacies where these are open. They are strongly recommended at all other times, particularly where physical distancing may be difficult.

Further detailed information on [Alert Level 3](#) is also available on the COVID-19 website.

#### **Tertiary student accommodation and travel guidance at Alert Level 3**

We are aware that some students who have been in Auckland for Alert Level 4 are looking at returning to their TEOs in Alert Level 2 areas once Auckland moves to Alert Level 3. **Cabinet has yet to decide the rules for cross-boundary travel once Auckland moves to Alert Level 3.** Student and staff are advised to wait until the Health Order is finalised before making travel plans. When Auckland moves to Alert Level 3 students should remain in their current accommodation if possible and we recommend they do not move into or return to student accommodation.

#### **Alert Level 2 and 3 – minor changes to guidance**

We have made minor changes to our Alert Level 2 and Level 3 guidelines to make it clear that they provide both minimum legal requirements and recommendations, to ensure we're consistent in how we discuss these, and to ensure guidance provided to education entities is aligned with other COVID-19 guidance where appropriate.

TEOs and students should continue to follow the updated Alert Level 2 and 3 guidance in our [Guidelines for Tertiary Education Organisations](#). We encourage providers to continue making their usual good sensible judgements within the guidelines, with their usual care for staff and learner wellbeing.



### Contact-tracing reminder

To stop any future spread of COVID-19, there is a need to trace the contacts of anyone who has had exposure to COVID-19 and break the chain of transmission. Recording people's movements helps to do this quickly. The [NZ COVID Tracer App](#) is our fastest way to respond to the Delta virus – the faster we respond, the faster we can stop it.

You can find QR code posters at many locations you visit. Scan these using the NZ COVID Tracer app to create a private digital diary of the places you visit. The app keeps us one step ahead of the virus — the more we scan the safer we will be. You can also turn on Bluetooth tracing in your app. Bluetooth tracing keeps track of who you have been near, while maintaining everyone's privacy.

TEOs should display the official NZ COVID Tracer QR code posters in a prominent place at or near main entrances and ensure that each person entering the facility scans the QR code or provides details to enable contact tracing. In particular, TEOs are responsible for ensuring contact tracing information identifies which students and staff (and any other visitors) have been in each 'controlled learning space' and 'other controlled environments' and is collected (whether via the COVID-19 Tracer App, or other means).

Mandatory record keeping is required at busy places and events at all alert levels, to ensure we are able to contact trace quickly.

For more information on contact tracing, please visit the [Unite Against COVID-19 website](#).

### Whakakore | Alert Level 4 –Guidance reminder for the Auckland region

In the meantime, TEOs and students in Auckland should continue to follow the updated Alert Level 4 guidance in our [Guidelines for Tertiary Education Organisations](#). All tertiary education facilities should continue to be closed except for necessary student accommodation, and those deemed as 'Essential services.'

Further detailed information on [Alert Level 4](#) is available on the COVID-19 website

### Stress counselling and support

This will continue to be an unsettling time, and the uncertainty of COVID-19 can have an impact on our mental wellbeing. We continue to remind staff and students that mental wellbeing is important, and can be supported through accessing a range of the self-help resources:

- Mental Wealth by **Le Va** provides online resources to help young people look after their mental health, and includes online counselling: <https://www.mentalwealth.nz/>
- **The Lowdown** provides videos and articles about anxiety and depression and also includes support through a free 24/7 helpline, text and webchat: <https://thelowdown.co.nz/>
- **Aroha** is a chatbot to help young people cope with stress: <https://portal.habits.auckland.ac.nz/Portal/#/landing-covid19bot-trial>

There are also a number of helplines that are available and can connect people to trained counsellors. These include:

- **1737** which is available 24/7 via free call or text
- **Youthline** which can be accessed by calling 0800 376 633 or by free texting 234. Youthline also has a web chat function
- **OUTline** has a free helpline available between 6pm and 9pm for members of the rainbow community. This can be accessed by calling 0800 688 5463.
- If you have immediate concerns for the safety of yourself or someone else, please call 111.



In addition to the support and services available to all New Zealanders, there are Pacific mental health and addiction providers that have activated pandemic plans and are supporting their communities digitally where possible. These providers include:

- Pasifika Futures in Waitematā, Canterbury and Counties Manukau
- Fonua Ola in Counties Manukau
- Kāute Pasifika in Waikato
- Pacific Health Service Hutt Valley and Naku Enei in the Hutt Valley
- Vaka Tautua in Capital and Coast DHB and Auckland Ministry of Health are in touch with the Pacific mental health community in Auckland and are looking at options to support as needed

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

### **Travel: permissions, and exemption requests**

While Auckland remains in Alert Level 4, cross-boundary travel continues to be heavily restricted. [Go to the COVID19.govt.nz website](#) for further information on what travel is permitted and what you need to do if permitted to travel.

#### *Exemption to travel*

If your travel is not permitted within the Health Order, then you will need to apply for an exemption. Exemptions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. [Go to the COVID19.govt.nz website for further information.](#)

### **COVID-19: locations of interest 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.

#### *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/>

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](#).

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/>

