

SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION AT DELTA ALERT LEVEL 2

This is a resource for primary and secondary schools in New Zealand. It is different from the guide that we developed in 2020 because, since last year, our understanding of the way Covid-19 is transmitted from person to person changed a lot.

We now know that Covid-19 is much likelier to spread through airborne transmission than by surface contact. But much more important is close contact with someone infected, touching or sharing air with them or being exposed to contaminated air.

[Dr Siouxsie Wiles, 19 August 2021](#)

The advice given by the government, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Sport New Zealand is constantly being updated. **Physical Education New Zealand has taken their advice that relates specifically to schools and suggested some things schools and teachers might like to consider for school physical education.**

Iona Holsted, the Secretary for Education, sends out regular communications to school leaders. The senior leadership team, or head of physical education faculty will be aware of the updates as they relate to Covid-19 in the school setting. Your school will already have a policy, procedures and plan in place, written in line with the latest guidelines and should be updated as things change.

As we know with COVID-19, things can change quickly, so we recommend to always refer to the Covid 19 website for the most up to date information and guidelines.

Other useful links are:

- [Unit Against Covid 19 Alert levels and updates](#)
- [Education guidance](#)
- [Sport New Zealand's Recreation and sport at each Alert Level](#)
- [Ministry of Education's Covid webpage](#)
- [Education outside the classroom: Alert Level 2 guidance](#) prepared by Education Outdoors New Zealand.

Early childhood education services have different guidelines. Read the [Ministry of Education advice for early learning services](#).



Version control

Version	Created	Changes
1	13 September 2021	

At Alert Level 2, all early learning services, schools, kura, and tertiary education facilities are open to everyone.

School playgrounds are open.

Schools should put extra public health control measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and keep staff, ākonga (students) and tamariki (children) safe.

School events or activities like performances, cultural events and sports can continue. Ākonga and teachers do not need to physically distance.

[Unite Against Covid-19 /Education \(7 September 2021\)](#)

Daily physical education, as part of a balanced curriculum, should continue as normal.

People (staff and students) may be feeling anxious about running or moving around or using physical education equipment that others may touch.

Teachers might adapt their programmes at this time to focus on the other three strands of the health and physical education learning area – movement is just one of the for strands.

Face coverings

Face coverings are not mandated for use when in schools. It remains an option for individuals and a decision for the individuals and whānau. Whatever decisions students and teachers make, it is their own to make and needs to be respected. Where an individual chooses to use a face covering they should supply and wear their own, and to do so safely. This option applies to younger children too.

Public health advice for those under six is getting children to cough and sneeze into their elbow and wash and dry hands. The use of masks is permitted but not actively encouraged.

There will be differences of view about the use of face coverings, and it is important to show tolerance toward individual choice in this matter.

However, the Director General of Health strongly encourages staff and students aged 12 and above to wear face coverings in secondary school settings to align with the requirements when out and about and indoor public places.

[Ministry of Education Bulletin to school leaders \(7 September 2021\)](#)

Some teachers and students will choose to wear masks – that's their choice and that's just fine.

Wearing a mask does not stop you from teaching or learning in physical education.

Equipment

There is no requirement to clean surfaces between uses by different groups or to clean playground equipment. It is suggested that other shared equipment is cleaned regularly but, again, there is no requirement to undertake cleaning between each use by different groups or individuals.

Washing hands before and after using shared equipment including playground equipment remains a priority.

Many school playgrounds will be accessible out of school hours and unable to be monitored for contact tracing. Ensuring students wash and dry their hands before and after use will help mitigate any possible risk from others using the equipment.

Public health recommends that schools clean and disinfect surfaces once each day. This is particularly focused on high-touch surfaces such as door handles, bathroom taps, desktops, handrails, etc. If surfaces look visibly dirty, they should be cleaned first. It's best to use a disinfectant that is antiviral and follow instructions. A bleach/water solution will be appropriate for most surfaces.

[Ministry of Education – Covid Alert Level 2 FAQ for schools](#)

Ventilating classrooms

As your staff and ākonga start returning to the classroom, it's important you consider how you ventilate your teaching spaces.

The fastest and easiest way to ventilate is by opening the windows, doors, and any vents. It's good practice to fully open all windows during breaks and after school for as long as possible.

[Ministry of Education Bulletin for school leaders
\(7 September 2021\)](#)

Gatherings

Although schools are not considered to be gatherings when people are there to receive, provide or support education services, specific health measures must still be applied.

As soon as your event or activity brings people onsite who are not there for education purposes, (including students, parents and caregivers), then the rules for gatherings do apply (limit of 50 indoors and 100 outdoors). This would include sporting activities and performances such as school plays and cultural events.

Indoor events and gatherings continue to be higher-risk activities for transmission of COVID-19 and any indoor events that bring together very large numbers of people, including students, should be avoided. This includes students congregating to watch a sporting or cultural event indoors and indoor school assemblies.

Set up routines for the teacher, teacher aides, and students to wash and dry or sanitise their hands before and after each physical education class.

Shared equipment should be cleaned regularly.

When your students come in from a physical education lesson, play or lunchtime open the classroom windows to get the fresh air circulating.

External providers

External providers can go onto school sites.

For non-curriculum-related activities, including out-of-hours music and art, interschool sports or inter-school cultural activities, they can go ahead but the rules for gatherings must apply (which for example, limits the number of spectators).

Activities such as shouting, singing, and dancing are considered higher-risk and should be done in well-ventilated areas or outdoors.

Everyone will need to ensure they are recorded as being on-site (through the timetable and/or visitor register) and following appropriate hygiene and other health and safety measures required by that school, including that shared equipment will also need to be regularly cleaned.

[Ministry of Education Covid Alert level 2 FAQs for schools
Organising and running events](#)

Organising and running events

For most day-to-day activities at schools, the rules for gatherings do not apply.

However, any event or activity that brings people onsite (who are not there for education purposes) including students, parents and caregivers, will need to have the rules for gatherings applied. (See above)

You'll need to treat the running of any large programmes with strong caution, particularly if there are a number of different schools participating or large numbers of students (and parents and caregivers) involved at the same time/indoor space.

We'd recommend that these types of events are deferred until your school returns to Alert Level 1.

If you do decide to go ahead, it is recommended that you develop a specific health and safety plan for managing the programme so that you can meet all the required health measures and public health recommendations.

Minimising congestion should be a key priority for that plan, including in the classrooms or spaces being used for delivery.

[Ministry of Education bulletin to school leaders \(8 September 2021\)](#)

If you engage external providers in your physical education programme, your school should already have a provider plan in place that outlines the processes the provider's staff follow when they are at your school. This should include arrival at the school (sign in), hygiene, health and safety, and equipment use and cleaning.

It is likely that most classes sizes are under 50 people, therefore physical education classes planned for indoor venues like school gymnasiums and halls can go ahead.

Teachers should have a plan in place to minimise congestion, for example, a one-way movement system for different classes entering and leaving the spaces and changing rooms.

Large groups

Workplaces, educational facilities, and school transport are not considered gatherings when people are there to receive, provide, or support education service. This means there are no restrictions on numbers of people indoors or outside at schools, other than what other public health or health and safety measures require.

However, indoor events and gatherings continue to be higher-risk activities for transmission of COVID-19. Any indoor events that bring together very large numbers of people, including students, should be avoided, for example, students congregating to watch a sporting or cultural event indoors, and indoor school assemblies. If they are to go ahead, they should take place in well-ventilated areas or outdoors.

But where people from outside the school may be attending (e.g. for an inter-school match, a school production or school ball), the rules for gatherings will apply.

[Ministry of Education Covid Alert level 2 FAQs for schools](#)

Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC)

EOTC programmes can be offered if managed appropriately, with robust health and safety plans in place. Education Outdoors New Zealand (EONZ) is a Ministry PLD provider and has developed tools to help schools support outdoor learning experiences across all levels of education.

Team sports

At Alert Level 2, team sports events can continue. These are limited to 50 people in indoors venues and 100 people at outdoor venues. The 100-person limit includes players and spectators. Referees, officials and other workers providing services to a sports game are not included in the 100 people.

If a sports ground has more than 1 field, you can play multiple games at the same time, as long as each group is separated. Groups should try not to mix with each other or share common facilities such as changing rooms at the same time.

[Sport New Zealand's Active play, recreation and sport at level 2 \(10 September 2021\)](#)

At Alert Level 2, when people from outside the school may be attending a sporting event, the rule for gathering applies. Team sports are limited to 50 people in indoors venues and 100 people at outdoor venues. The 100 person limit includes players and spectators. Referees, officials and other workers providing services to a sports game are not included in the 100 people.

If you have sole use of the facility for curriculum teaching and learning, there is no maximum number (as these school learning activities are not considered a 'gathering').

If a sports ground has more than 1 field, multiple games can be played at the same time, as long as each group is separated.

Groups should try not to mix with each other, or share common facilities such as changing rooms at the same time.

Education outside the classroom activities, including overnight trips can go ahead, but will need careful planning. Read EONZ's [EOTC and Outdoor Education at Alert Level 2 \(7 September 2021\)](#).

Physical distancing is not possible in some sporting activities. In these situations, extra emphasis on handwashing and drying (or cleansing with hand sanitiser) before and after activities and regular cleaning of equipment is very important.

Avoid handshakes with opposition players at the end of the game. Try the elbow bump instead.

Consider if wearing a face covering would present a safety risk. Face coverings do not need to be worn when playing sport but are encouraged before and after at indoor facilities

Visiting public venues

Mandatory record keeping

If your class visit a swimming pool or other recreation centre as part of their physical education learning, the venue will have systems and processes already in place to record who is onsite at all Alert Levels are sufficient to enable contact tracing.

At Alert Level 2, indoor sports facilities such as gyms, swimming pools, dance studios and health clubs can open, but with extra safety measures.

Facilities may restrict numbers to help with physical distancing.

You will need to keep 2 metres apart from others.

It is a legal requirement for venues to keep a record through the COVID Tracer App or an alternative means of those who attend their facilities. It is mandatory for these venues to display a QR code for the NZ COVID Tracer app prominently at the main entry point of their building.

Gatherings, events and public venues

Sports are limited to groups of 100 in a defined space outdoors and 50 in a defined space indoors (as a single group – different people cannot come and go under these group limits).

These group limits include all players and spectators (but not referees and officials).

A sports venue can have multiple defined spaces by keeping:

- people in separate groups of up to 100 (if outdoors) or 50 (if indoors)
- measures to keep the groups separate such as separate entrances/exits, if possible, temporary or permanent walls between groups, and separate airflow for each group for indoor facilities.

These groups must not mingle or share common facilities at the same time.

Face coverings

You should wear face coverings when you are indoors at sport and recreation facilities such as gyms, dance studios and health clubs apart from when you are exercising or playing sports.

All customer-facing staff at indoor sport and recreation facilities are encouraged to wear a face covering while serving customers – except at swimming pools.

If you use external venues, you should follow the processes that the venue managers have put in place.

Know in advance what the process is for recording the students' attendance at an external venue.

Avoid congestion at entrances. Ensure students can wait somewhere where they can maintain 2metre physical distance of the public entering the venue, while you check them in.

If your class goes to an indoor recreational venue as part of the physical education class, the class must be in their own defined space with its own separate airflow, and where possible, with separate entrances/exits.

Staff and students aged 12 and above should wear face coverings inside these venues.

They may take them off to exercise or playing sport if they choose to.