

COVID-19: 'First case' communications plan

Summary

- In the event of a 'first case' of COVID-19 being confirmed on one of our campuses, our response will be one of 'full disclosure', i.e. communicating all known information quickly and widely (while respecting personal privacy) to prevent unnecessary speculation.
- We anticipate that confirmation of a first case will come from the Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) to our Health, Safety & Wellbeing team [REDACTED], although this might not be the case depending on the circumstances.
- The table below outlines the steps and action to be completed, and in this order of priority. With framework messages already drafted and only needing specific details dropped in once known (where, when, how etc.) the aim is to complete these steps within a 20 minute time frame.
- For simplicity, the comms response will be broadly the same regardless of whether it is a student or staff member who is confirmed as the first case, with some additions (e.g. student accommodation) if it's a student.

Communications response

STEPS	ACTIONS	WHO	NOTES
Official confirmation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ARPHS alerts HSW 2. HSW alerts central comms 3. HSW alerts faculty/division 4. HSW alerts Campus Life 	AC/HF RE/TS Dean/DFO/C&M BM/AMP/AD	HSW to make sure they get all relevant details Will need to know if student is living in halls
Accommodation (if resident student)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Campus Life alerts accommodation team 2. Other residents informed 	MR/TB MR/TB	See Appendix 1 for message template
Faculty/division		Comms	See Appendix 2 for message template

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comms sends C&M main message 2. Send all-faculty message 3. Post message on faculty intranet 	<p>Dean</p> <p>C&M</p>	
Other faculties/divisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comms sends main message to COP 	Comms	COP to circulate as they see fit
SLT/VCDD/Chancellor/Council	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Email to SLT list 2. Email to VCDD list 3. Email to Chancellor 4. Email to Council 	<p>VC/Comms</p> <p>VC/Comms</p> <p>VC</p> <p>Chancellor/VC</p>	<p>See Appendix 3 for draft message</p> <p>Ditto</p> <p>Ditto</p> <p>Ditto</p>
Inform all staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All-staff email 	VC/Comms	See Appendix 4
Inform all students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All-student email 	VC/SCC	See Appendix 5
Inform media	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media statement sent 	Comms	See Appendix 6
Main website for public and media	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post Notice page 	<p>Comms/Web</p> <p>Comms/Web</p>	Use media statement for content

	2. Post homepage headline and link		
Student channels other than all student email/-e-screens/Facebook/student pages		AM/AD (with [REDACTED])	
Staff intranet	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post Notice page 2. Post homepage headline and link 	Comms	See Appendix 7
Main website FAQs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post 'first case' FAQs 	Comms	See Appendix 8
Staff intranet FAQs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post staff-focused FAQs 	Comms	Appendix 8 FAQs for staff
Wider stakeholder engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete priority steps above first 2. Send main message to wider stakeholders 	<p>All</p> <p>Comms</p>	See Stakeholder Engagement Plan for details

APPENDIX 1 – Messages for case within a student residence

Email for – confirmed case within a residence (immediate apt)

Dear (Shared apartment student),

We are contacting you to advise that a student living in your apartment has tested positive for COVID-19.

We understand that this may be of concern to you, but please be assured that we are working closely with Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) and acting according to their protocols.

What this means for you is:

- You are now required to begin self-isolation measures. Your residential team will be in contact with you to go over the logistics of this, but you should familiarise yourself with the [guidelines for self-isolating](#) as outlined by the Ministry of Health.
- You will be contacted by either our team or by a health official in regards to being tested.

We know that this is a difficult message to receive, but know that we are here to support you and want you to let us know if there is anything we can do to make this as easy for you as possible.

We ask that due to the sensitivity of this situation, and so that we as a community can continue to support each other, the privacy of the resident is maintained and respected.

Email for – confirmed case within a residence (immediate floor)

Dear (Shared bathroom student),

We are contacting you to advise that a student living on your floor has tested positive for COVID-19.

We understand that this may be of concern to you, but please be assured that we are working closely with Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) and acting according to their protocols.

What this means for you is:

- While we await confirmation of next steps from the Ministry and ARPHS, we ask that you begin self-isolation measures. Your residential team will be in contact with you to go over the logistics of this, but you should familiarise yourself with the [guidelines for self-isolating](#) as outlined by the ministry of health.

We know that this is a difficult message to receive, but know that we are here to support you and want you to let us know if there is anything we can do to make this as easy for you as possible.

We ask that due to the sensitivity of this situation, and so that we as a community can continue to support each other, the privacy of the resident is maintained and respected.

Email for – confirmed case within a residence (immediate hall wide)

Dear (entire residence),

We are contacting you to advise that a student living in your residence has tested positive for COVID-19.

We understand that this may be of concern to you, but please be assured that we are working closely with Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) and acting according to their protocols.

The University and Accommodation Services (?) have detailed contingency plans in place to respond to different situations that may arise as a result of COVID-19. They will be actioned depending on the circumstances and any directives from the Ministries of Health and Education.

Contact tracing processes will be undertaken and those staff and students likely to have come into direct contact with this person will be contacted as part of the process. If you have not been contacted in relation to this case, it is because you have not been deemed to have been at risk of exposure by the ARPHS.

We know that this is a difficult message to receive, but know that we are here to support you and will be in be communicating any key information to you as we receive it.

We ask that due to the sensitivity of this situation, and so that we as a community can continue to support each other, the privacy of the resident is maintained and respected.

APPENDIX 2 – main message for faculty

Dear colleagues/students

The University of Auckland has confirmed that a **student/staff member** in our faculty has tested positive for COVID-19.

The **student/staff member** is in the **[xx] department/team**.

I understand that you will be concerned by this news, but please be assured that we are working closely with Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) and following their protocols to support our **student/staff member** and to protect the wider University community. The **student/staff member** in this case has taken all the correct steps and is now **being treated in hospital/in isolation at home**.

At the moment ARPHS is contact-tracing the people that this student has been in contact with recently, and will communicate directly with them on what they should do.

The University has detailed contingency plans in place to respond to this situation, and we will be working closely with the public health service on next steps.

[Faculty to add special messages they have in place and any general messaging we can provide] e.g.:

- Self-isolation
- Any faculty closure info
- Online teaching
- Hygiene response in their faculty

The University is informing all key stakeholders, including the media, about this situation, and details are also likely to appear on social media. We urge you to please respect the privacy of our **student/staff member** and anyone involved in the contact-tracing process.

I will send further updates to you when they come to hand.

Finally, please continue to follow the recommended guidelines for staying healthy, and if you have any concerns about your health, or the health of someone else, please ring Healthline on **0800 358 5453**. The number is free to call, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and interpreters are on hand to help with translation.

Reassuring sign off

From Dean

APPENDIX 3 – [VC's message to SLT/VCDD]

Dear colleagues

The University of Auckland has confirmed that a student/staff member in our faculty has tested positive for COVID-19.

The student/staff member is in the [xx] department/team.

I understand that you will be concerned by this news, but please be assured that we are working closely with Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) and following their protocols to support our student/staff member and to protect the wider University community. The student/staff member in this case has taken all the correct steps and is now being treated in hospital/in isolation at home.

At the moment ARPHS is contact-tracing the people that this student has been in contact with recently, and will communicate directly with them on what they should do.

The University has detailed contingency plans in place to respond to this situation, and we will be working closely with the public health service on next steps.

The University is informing all key stakeholders, including the media, about this situation, and details are also likely to appear on social media. We urge you to please respect the privacy of our student/staff member and anyone involved in the contact-tracing process.

I will send further updates to you when they come to hand or the intranet will have updates?

Finally, please continue to follow the recommended guidelines for staying healthy, and if you have any concerns about your health, or the health of someone else, please ring Healthline on **0800 358 5453**. The number is free to call, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and interpreters are on hand to help with translation.

Reassuring sign off

From VC

APPENDIX 4 – [VC's message to all staff]

Dear colleagues

The University of Auckland has confirmed that a student/staff member in our community has tested positive for COVID-19.

The student/staff member is in the [xx] department/team.

I understand that you will be concerned by this news, but please be assured that we are working closely with Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) and following their protocols to support our student/staff member and to protect the wider University community. The student/staff member in this case has taken all the correct steps and is now being treated in hospital/in isolation at home.

At the moment ARPHS is contact-tracing the people that this student/staff member has been in contact with recently, and will communicate directly with them on what they should do.

The University has detailed contingency plans in place to respond to this situation, and we will be working closely with the public health service on next steps.

[

The University is informing all key stakeholders, including the media, about this situation, and details are also likely to appear on social media. We urge you to please Any other deets needed here?]

- Self-isolation
- Any faculty closure info
- Online teaching
- Hygiene response in their faculty

respect the privacy of our student/staff member and anyone involved in the contact-tracing process.

I will send further updates to you when they come to hand and the intranet will have updates?

Finally, please continue to follow the recommended guidelines for staying healthy, and if you have any concerns about your health, or the health of someone else, please ring Healthline on **0800 358 5453**. The number is free to call, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and interpreters are on hand to help with translation.

Reassuring sign off

From VC

APPENDIX 5 – [VC's message to all students - Ditto] to be done with Campus Life involved

Dear students,

The University of Auckland has confirmed that a student/staff member in our community has tested positive for COVID-19.

The student/staff member is in the [xx] department/team.

I understand that you will be concerned by this news, but please be assured that we are working closely with Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) and following their protocols to support our student/staff member and to protect the wider University community. The student/staff member in this case has taken all the correct steps and is now being treated in hospital/in isolation at home.

At the moment ARPHS is contact-tracing the people that this student has been in contact with recently, and will communicate directly with them on what they should do.

The University has detailed contingency plans in place to respond to this situation, and we will be working closely with the public health service on next steps.

[Faculty to add special messages they have in place and any general messaging we can provide] e.g.:

- Self-isolation
- Any faculty closure info
- Online teaching
- Hygiene response in their faculty

The University is informing all key stakeholders, including the media, about this situation, and details are also likely to appear on social media. We urge you to please respect the privacy of our student/staff member and anyone involved in the contact-tracing process.

I will send further updates to you when they come to hand or watch the emails/web

Finally, please continue to follow the recommended guidelines for staying healthy, and if you have any concerns about your health, or the health of someone else, please ring Healthline on **0800 358 5453**. The number is free to call, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and interpreters are on hand to help with translation.

Reassuring sign off

From VC

APPENDIX 6 – [Media statement]

Response only to media enquiry

The University of Auckland has been advised that one of our **staff/students** has tested positive for COVID-19.

The case is being managed by the Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS), according to their protocols. The University is following their direction.

In the meantime, the areas attended by the **staff/student** have been identified and are currently undergoing a deep sanitation which is in accordance with University contingency plans for this situation.

Other members of the University who have come into contact with this person are being contact traced and the affected **staff/student** is in self-isolation.

The University has detailed contingency plans in place to respond to different situations that may arise as a result of COVID-19. They will be actioned depending on the circumstances and any directives from the Ministries of Health and Education.

APPENDIX 7– Internal note for intranet

University of Auckland confirms case of COVID-19

The University of Auckland confirms that one of our **students/staff on the [xx] campus** has tested positive for COVID-19.

The case is being managed by the Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) according to their protocols. This includes engagement with the person affected and contact-tracing the people they have been in contact with.

[Details here on where, when, how etc. [Link to media statement](#)]

We will provide more updates here as information comes to hand.

APPENDIX 8 – Main website FAQs

NB: to be shared with [REDACTED] (Staff Services) and [REDACTED] (Student Services)

What are the details of this case?

[Details here on where, when, how etc.]

What does contact-tracing involve?

The public health services use contact-tracing to identify people who may have been exposed to an infectious disease by being in contact with a confirmed case. There are two types of ‘contacts’ – close contacts and casual contacts. A close contact is defined by the Ministry of Health as “anyone who has been close to someone with COVID-19. This can mean living in the same house or spending more than 15 minutes close to someone with COVID-19 such as on a flight, bus or train or in your workplace”.

The public health services will give advice to individuals experiencing both contact types on what they need to do. For more information on this process, visit the [MoH website](#).

What should I do if I suspect I’ve had contact with the confirmed case but haven’t yet been contacted as part of contact-tracing?

First, you should [self-isolate](#) and then ring Healthline on **0800 358 5453** for advice. Information for people who have had close contact with a suspected case of COVID-19 can be found on the [Ministry of Health website](#).

What is the University’s hygiene response and associated actions now we have our first COVID-19 case on Campus?

The University will immediately evacuate the affected area(s) and commence a deep sanitising clean. The area(s) will likely be closed for up to 72 hours, but this will be dependent on the size of contaminated area(s). The University will arrange alternative work and study spaces for staff and students affected by a closure of this kind if needed. Staff and students will be contacted to explain these changes.

The University will follow Auckland Regional Public Health direction for any deep sanitation that is required. This will very likely include a track and trace process to identify those who may have had close contact with anyone affected by COVID-19. The University has specially trained and experienced contractors who will lead on this effort. They will use Centre for Disease Control approved disinfection products which are held in stock ready to deploy. The sanitation cleaning process will provide complete coverage of surfaces that are often missed or difficult to disinfect including monitors, keyboards and all other high touch areas in an area. This same process has been used for sanitation cleans in Auckland public hospitals for a number of years.

Anyone directly affected by such an incident will be provided with regular updates by their faculty, service division or through other channels in the University communications system as appropriate.

Additional University related COVID-19 information can be found here:

www.auckland.ac.nz/coronavirus

and on the staff intranet here:



If you have any other questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact coronavirus@auckland.ac.nz. We will get back to you as a priority.