



WET Traffic Light Covid-19 Management Plan

Policy Statement

1 Background

1.1 This policy statement is part of the Wangapeka Educational Trust (WET) Traffic Light Covid-19 Management Plan, which is part of the Health and Safety Policy of the Wangapeka Study and Retreat Centre. The whole plan is available on the WET website and comprises:

- This Policy Statement
- Instructions for Course Managers
- Information for course participants
- Information for solo retreatants

The plan applies from Friday 3 December 2021, which is when New Zealand moves into the traffic light system, or Covid-19 Protection Framework, for managing Covid-19.

1.2 The aim of the policy is to ensure that WET can continue to host courses and retreats for as many people as possible, while safeguarding them from Covid-19. The policy aims to reduce as much as possible the likelihood that anyone comes to the Centre with Covid-19, to limit the risk of transmission if, despite our protective measures, someone does have Covid-19, and to manage an outbreak if one occurs in a way that is safe and complies with the law.

1.3 The policy is based on:

- Public health guidelines and related government requirements for how to operate under the traffic light system
- characteristics of the courses and retreats offered at the Centre
- the physical and practical limitations of the Centre

Public health guidelines

1.4 The Public health guidelines for limiting the spread and effect of Covid-19 recommend vaccination against Covid-19 (at least 2 shots) as the chief protection against Covid-19. Vaccination reduces (but does not eliminate) the risk of catching and spreading the virus and it significantly reduces the likelihood that an infected person will become seriously unwell. Public health guidelines

also recommend mask-wearing in public, ventilating indoor areas, regular hand-washing, sneezing and coughing into the elbow, and maintaining social distance (1 m).

1.5 Under the traffic light system many businesses and operations that involve interaction with the public are required to elect whether to operate as vaccinated-only venues that require customers to show a vaccine certificate, or to allow unvaccinated people access. Those that chose to allow unvaccinated people are subject to restrictions on numbers and must operate a policy of social distancing. Operations opting to be vaccinated-only venues must operate a 1 meter distancing rule if the region is at Red level, but can operate normally at Orange and Green. (It is not clear whether the Centre would be caught by these rules, but we must at least take them into consideration.)

1.6 When someone tests positive for Covid-19 the contact-tracing system kicks in. Close contacts of the case are required to immediately get tested and self-isolate from others. The duration of self-isolation for close contacts ranges from 7 to 10 days, and the number of subsequent tests required varies from 2 to 3, depending on the degree of contact with the case and the contact's vaccination status.

Courses and retreats

1.7 The Centre offers both group courses and solo retreats.

1.8 Group courses vary in duration, numbers attending, and general characteristics. Some involve interpersonal contact or group work, while others are more solitary. All group courses involve gathering for group teaching or meditation and require participants to share in the preparation and clean-up of meals and in general housekeeping.

1.9 The nature of a group course means that everyone on a group retreat would be classed as a close contact of anyone in the group tests positive for Covid-19. It's unclear whether they would be classed as a "close household contact" or not.

1.10 Solo retreats also vary in duration and characteristics, though most involve a high degree of self-sufficiency and very little contact with others at the Centre. It should be possible to do a solo retreat without anyone at the Centre becoming a close contact.

The Centre

1.11 The Centre is in an isolated rural location, occupies challenging terrain and is sometimes subject to fierce weather. There is no public transport close by. The nearest medical facilities for someone who is not registered locally is at Nelson Medical Injury Centre, at least an hour's drive away. Medical equipment and expertise at the Centre is focussed on dealing with accidents rather than sickness.

1.12 Most accommodation for course participants requires the use of the communal bathroom, laundry, dining, and snack-making facilities. There are only 2 or 3 huts that are sufficiently self-contained to allow self-isolation, and these are often in use by Teachers, solo retreatants, or individuals with special needs.

Implications

1.13 We can take steps to minimise the risk that someone with Covid-19 comes on a group course, but we cannot eliminate that risk. Some courses should take steps (such as requiring masks or maintaining social distancing for an initial period of, say, 4 days) to minimise the risk of spreading infection if someone on a course is unknowingly infected. If someone develops symptoms, we can probably isolate that person before they get tested and while they await the result. If the test result is positive, the Centre does not have the resources to feed and care for everyone who will be required to self-isolate.

It is against this background that the following Policy has been developed by the Board.

2 The Policy

Group retreats

2.1 To minimise the risk that anyone coming on a course has Covid-19, everyone on the course must be fully vaccinated (at least 2 shots) and confirm that they have self-screened (for health and recent contact with Covid-19) before arrival at the Centre. This applies to all registered course participants as well as the Teacher, cook, and any other helpers or Centre staff directly involved in the course. In this Policy, all these people are referred to as participants.

2.2 Everyone who comes on a course must also have an “isolation plan” for how they would leave the property and go somewhere to self-isolate if mandatory self-isolation is required. This plan must be prepared before the course begins and be agreed with the Course Manager. A Course Manager may refuse to accept an isolation plan that does not appear to be viable. It’s unfortunately not possible for the Centre to act as a managed isolation venue if people have to self-isolate.

2.3 If anyone on a course develops Covid-19 symptoms, they must immediately tell the Course Manager and self-isolate. Everyone else must be told, and then follow whatever guidance the Course Manager provides after the Course Manager consults with Health Services (Healthline, 0800 358 5453).

2.4 If the person with symptoms returns a positive Covid-19 test result, the course must stop and everyone must implement their isolation plan.

2.5 The details and practicalities of how this policy is implemented is set out in the Instructions for Course Managers and Information for Course Participants (these documents can be found [here](#)).

Solo retreats

2.6 Solo retreatants do not have to be fully vaccinated, but must undertake to remain strictly isolated from anyone on a group course (including the Teacher, cook and staff) and anyone else who may be on the property at the same time. They must also self-screen before arrival, have an isolation plan for leaving the property, and maintain a charged phone at all times so that they can contact the caretakers if they become unwell.

2.7 The details of how to implement this policy are set out in the Information for Solo Retreatants (this document can be found [here](#)). These details should be read alongside the Checklist for Solo retreats that will be sent to you by the Office Caretaker.

Others on the property

2.8 Caretakers and others on the property are only required to be fully vaccinated if they will interact with group participants or share an indoor space with them. Any people on the property who are unvaccinated (eg, staff, volunteers, tradespeople) must keep away from group participants and solo retreatants, not share indoor spaces, and must wear a mask if there is a risk of being near them.

2.9 If a vaccinated caretaker who interacts with group participants shares Bellbird with any unvaccinated people, the vaccinated caretaker must wear a mask when interacting with group participants or sharing an indoor space with them.

2.10 It is up to the Caretakers, as part of their normal duties, to manage volunteers, tradespeople and others who might come to the Centre, but they must ensure that no-one joins or has contact with people on a group course, or with solo retreatants, unless they are fully vaccinated and comply with the standard requirements for course participants – i.e., have self-screened before arrival and have an isolation plan.

3 The future

At the time this Policy is developed, rapid antigen testing for Covid-19 is not readily available. Once it becomes available to use at the Centre it will be added to our toolbox for keeping people safe while on courses and retreats.