

## Children and Young People's experiences of COVID-19:

### Reflections on the time in lockdown & feelings about Level 2

On 13 May 2020, the last day of New Zealand's COVID-19 Alert Level 3, we polled a small group of children and teenagers to find out how they are feeling about the situation we are in. We polled them through our Barnardos 0800 WHATSUP Instagram, so they know that help is there for them from our trained counsellors if they want a safe place to talk about anything at all. In our poll, we asked how they felt about Aotearoa moving to Alert Level 2, about their time in their mirumiru (bubbles) under lockdown, and what they were looking forward to as the COVID-19 recovery journey begins.

Here's what this group of tamariki and rangatahi told us.

### Feelings about going into Level 2:

**59%** told us they're feeling good about going into Level 2.

**41%** told us they're not feeling good about it.

### Feelings about going back to school:

**36%** told us they're looking forward to going back to school next week.

**64%** told us they're not looking forward to it.



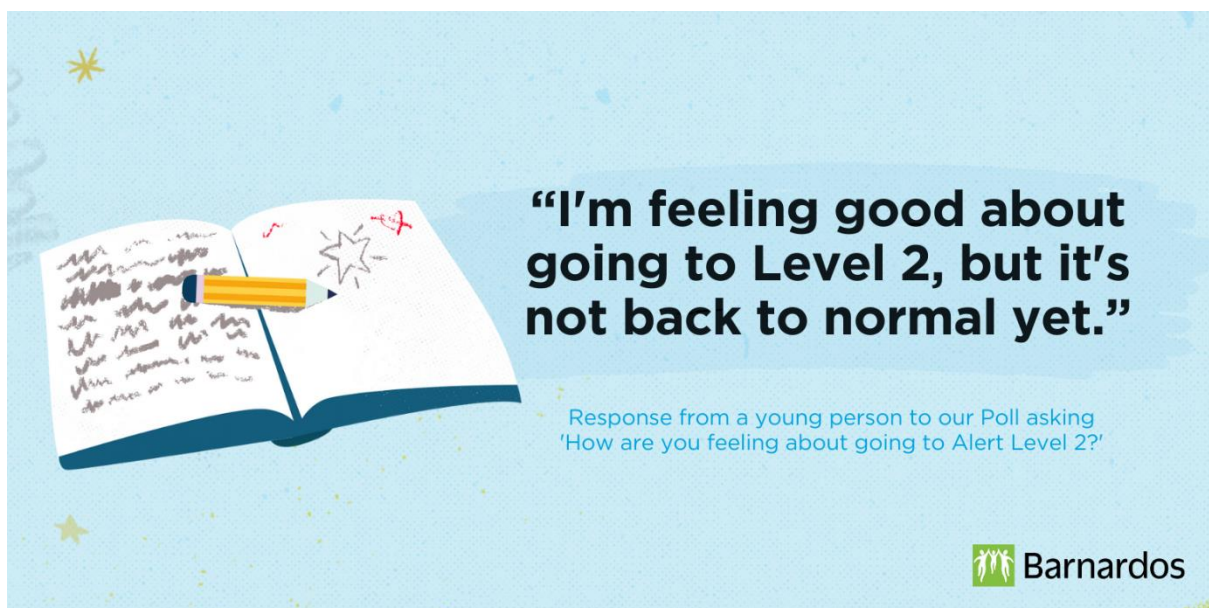
## We asked children and young people about how they are feeling about the move into Level 2

It's clear from those who responded that there are a range of feelings being experienced about moving to Level 2. Some responded positively:

- "Pretty nice"
- "Happy"
- "I'm excited! Mostly, I can see my friends and it's so much easier to get work done"

Some children and young people aren't feeling good about moving to Level 2, or are feeling a range of things:

- "I really liked it when everyone was at home during Level 4"
- "There are no cases in my area but it's still weird"
- "Anxious because I have surgery coming up and really don't want to get sick from going out"
- "Mixed feelings"



It's also clear that for some, they are finding the experience very difficult:

- "Super scared, I haven't been around people for so long, but my family is suffocating me... really tough..."
- "To be honest scared and sad and stressed"

## **We also wanted to understand children and young people's experiences of this collective experience we have all been through, living in our mirumiru during lockdown**

When we asked "What's been good about the time in your bubble?", they told us:

- "Being able to focus on myself and work at my own pace for my school work"
- "Connecting more with my family. Learning to cook better"
- "Family gets on"
- "Sleep-ins and lots of relaxing"

When we asked "Has there been anything hard about lockdown? What kind of things?", the children and young people who responded said:

- "Not being able to see my friends and not being able to go to youth festival"
- "Not being able to get away for a break..."
- "Not being able to see anyone"
- "Being isolated"
- "Working with others calling mates"
- "Dealing with harming thoughts and having no one to talk to"
- "Mental Health zero"

**It's clear from these responses that for some children and teenagers, being isolated from friends and peers during this time has been really hard. For some, their mental health challenges during this time have been significant.**

**Listening to what tamariki and rangatahi are feeling and experiencing is always important, but will be extra important over the coming weeks, months and years following the pandemic. Our final poll question encouraged children and young people to think about the things they are looking forward to. We asked "What are your hopes for the next few weeks and months?"**

The children and teenagers who responded said:

- "That we stay on track with the levels and that I can get back into the routine of school well"
- "To get back into a good routine"
- "Extracurricular activities back"
- "Keep positive, help my family"