

02/02/2022

WELCOME BACK AND COVID UPDATE 2022 #1

Kia ora Parents, Caregivers and Whaanau,



2022 is upon us and we are excited to be welcoming the students back to our kura / parents in spirit.

As you will be aware we have found ourselves in the RED COVID traffic light which is not ideal but is what we have to work with.

As you are aware all of New Zealand is in a RED covid traffic light setting, while this is not ideal, we have been given guidelines that we will work within.

Many of you will have questions about what this means for your children when they are at school. As a school we are bound by legislation. We have generated our plan of action based on this legislation and the advice from the Ministry of Education and Health. ***We are doing our best to maintain a safe and healthy environment for our students to learn and our teachers to teach. We ask that you work with us to keep not only your children as safe as possible but the children of others in our community and those who may be more vulnerable.***

All of this information is based on these guidelines and how we see this best fitting in our space. We are receiving information from the Ministries of Education and Health regularly. Please note that the situation and the advice is changing rapidly. It is our continued aim to keep you as informed as we can

Under RED our school remains open for learning. We will be regularly reviewing our school plans as the environment changes. This status may change as the realities of COVID may impact many factors including the availability of our workforce. We are planning for a range of outcomes that do include students learning at home for periods of time if needed. We will be keeping you informed throughout.

Learning at School

- We have grouped our students according to the team they are in. WE have also allocated play areas for each group. The purpose of this is to minimise interactions of large groups of students and minimise transmission. This also helps with contact tracing requirements of students if COVID enters our school community.
- We are taking a proactive yet precautionary approach to learning. Our teachers will be utilising the environment to ensure the children are spending as much time outside as possible.
- Our classes will be as ventilated as possible with all doors and windows open during the school day.
- Our events at school are likely to look very different, with the aim of minimising groups of students being together. We will keep you up to date with this as we progress.

Mask use at school

The New Zealand Government has made it a legal requirement for students who are able to in Year 4 to Year 8, to wear appropriate masks when indoors, unless they have a mask exemption. This is part of the Covid Protection Framework. For students in Year 3-4 classes we encourage the Year 3 students to wear them too but this is not required.

School staff when in public facing roles and teachers and support staff of students in year 4 and above are also required to wear medical grade masks in class.

Whenever masks are required to be worn (for example, by Year 4-13 students when indoors at school, at supermarkets, retail stores, cafes, public transport, school transport) they must be the type that attaches to the head either through an ear loop or a head loop.

Please support your students by in this endeavour by;

- providing an appropriate mask for your child to use and ensuring they know how to wear it.
- because it is a change and they may have questions that you can answer before they come to school on day 1.
- Naming the mask so that the owner can be found.

Based on the information I have, while it is recommended that students wear medical grade masks, they are permitted to wear proper cloth masks that are at least three layers. Bandanas, scarves or t-shirts pulled up over the mouth and nose are **no longer acceptable** to be used in the settings which require masks to be worn. Our school is unable to supply masks to families.

We know that this requirement evokes different emotions. We ask that you work with us to achieve the best outcome for all children and staff at our Kura.

If your child is unable to wear a mask due to disability or health conditions please seek an exemption or letter from your GP or other appropriate organisations listed on the [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz). Evidence of this can be emailed to Matua Rob (School Principal) at principal@whatawhata.school.nz

Access to School Site

In RED non essential visitors are not permitted on site. We understand that the start of the school year is an important time for whaanau and students that may require additional support. Therefore we will allow parents onsite when needed for the first week. However we ask that you follow these guidelines:

- You must wear a mask
- Please ensure that you sign in using the COVID tracer app.
- Please avoid entering the classrooms.
- Please do not linger on school grounds talking to other parents or students. Maintain physical distancing

From week two please utilise pick up and drop off zones on School Road.

Pick up and Drop Off

Drop off

- Please use School Road entries
- Please do not drop off before 8am
- Children need to go to class, put their bags away. If they wish to play before school it must only be in their designated area.

Pick Up

- Year 1 and 2 students will be exiting at 2:20pm. Teachers will walk these students to the gate. They can be joined by their siblings. This is to avoid congregating groups.
- Junior students who are at ASC will be collected



- Junior students who are on the bus will be kept in class until the end of the day.

After School Care

Will be operating under RED conditions with Health and Safety guidelines in place.

Buses

Buses will be operating as per normal. All students must wear a mask on school buses.

Health and Safety

- Drinking fountains will be turned off where possible. Please ensure your child has a drink bottle that they can use and fill up in the classrooms.
- A focus on basic hygiene will be a priority. This includes regular hand washing, sanitising as appropriate, cleaning of high touch surfaces, staying home when you are sick

Student Illness

We ask any students who are sick to remain at home. Students who display any covid symptoms that cannot be supported by GP will be asked to remain at home until symptoms have cleared for 24hours.

We understand that at this time of year there may be underlying issues such as allergies that may explain some symptoms. We ask that a medical certificate is supplied to support this so we can add to our record.

If there is a case of COVID at our Kura

If COVID enters our school community, our school will be responsible for identifying close contacts, this will then determine the next steps as outlined by the Ministry of Health. We are preparing a range of plans that will be adjusted according to circumstances that eventuate. We need our community to be prepared that there may be a need, at times, for students to learn from home. These processes and plans will be reviewed by the School Board based on the current Ministry guidelines, and will be communicated to you.

Vaccinations at School

Please be aware that our school is not currently hosting a vaccination clinic at school. Under no circumstances, will students be vaccinated at school without parental consent.

This year will be an exciting year. We thank our school community for your continued support and understanding

Ngaa mihi nui,

Matua Rob
Principal
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