



Tauraroa Area School

TE KURA TAKIWA O TAURAROA

Principal: G Burns B.Ed, Dip.Tchg

Newsletter 12 May 2020

Kia ora koutou,

It is likely that, by now, you have heard that our country is moving from COVID-19 Lockdown Level 3 to Level 2 later this week, with schools open to all students from next Monday, 18 May. I have heard many success stories related to remote learning since regular school closed but I know many students (and parents) are looking forward to the resumption of school attendance.

The overriding principles for Alert Level 2 are:

1. minimise the risk of virus transmission through physical distancing and handwashing
2. ensure effective contact tracing

This newsletter contains important information for students, parents and teachers about returning to school.

I want to provide reassurance that our school is a safe place for your child and our staff to be. COVID-19 is not an illness that impacts heavily on children and young people. An article by Dr Gary Payinda in the [NZ Herald](#) highlights this:

- The young are less likely to get infected, less likely to get seriously ill, and less likely to spread the infection to others.
- When kids are affected, the illness is almost always mild. Luckily, unlike flu or many other infectious diseases, children with Covid are not super-spreaders.
- Covid's not measles or chickenpox; it doesn't hang in the air for hours waiting to infect passers-by. It travels on invisible drops of spit. You don't have to cross the street to avoid anyone. Just avoid getting in their 'moist breath' zone.
- Make hand hygiene a habit - more than being scared of runners passing by, touching groceries, or standing in queues at the supermarket, we should be afraid of our own hands.

Staying home if sick, physical distancing, good hand hygiene, not touching your face, good cough/sneeze etiquette and regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces minimises any potential spread of the virus. Our school's health and safety system is all set up to ensure this happens.

It is safe for students and staff to return to school in Alert level 2 unless they are unwell or have serious underlying health issues.

Buses

To ensure health and safety on our buses, the following steps are being taken:

- The interior of each bus will be cleaned after each trip, with particular attention to touched surfaces
- Students will use hand sanitiser when getting on and off buses
- A register will be kept of students on all bus trips
- To assist with reducing the crowding on buses, we ask that parents, where possible, transport their children to school during Level 2 lockdown.

Laptop computers and Chromebooks

- Students who have borrowed devices from TAS for the lockdown are to return these to the school library between 8:20 and 8:40am on Monday, 18 May.
- Students who have devices supplied by the Ministry of Education are asked to bring these to school for their continued use during Level 2 conditions
- To reduce the sharing of devices, we ask that ALL students in Years 7-13 **bring their own laptops or Chromebooks** to school during Level 2 conditions.

Students are asked to also **bring their own drink bottles** to school to reduce the use of drinking fountains.

Visiting the school

We ask that parents/caregivers refrain from coming onto the school property. Drop off is easy, just kiss and wave from the bus bay or car park. We will arrange for teachers and assistants of our youngest children to greet them or bring them to the school gates at the end of the day to ensure no one is lost or left behind.

If you need something from the office please email us: general@tauraroa.school.nz or give us a call: 09 432 2643. Please adhere to the health and safety signs.

Hygiene

As with Level 3, we will continue our hygiene programme whereby the school will be disinfected throughout the day. Across all alert levels, there are health measures we need to maintain:

- Hand washing and drying / sanitiser use
- Good cough and sneeze etiquette
- Staying home if sick

Hand hygiene is most critical – our hands carry considerably more bacteria than the risk of groceries or standing in queues. Easily available hand washing/sanitising facilities are available throughout the school.

Social Distancing

Students/Tamariki and staff/kaimahi should be far enough away from each other so that they are not breathing on or touching each other, coupled with good hygiene practices and regular cleaning of commonly touched surfaces. There does not need to be a specific measurement, but where practicable 1m should be used as a guide.

Mid-term break

To support our efforts to re-establish continuity in our programmes, school will be open as usual on Friday, 29 May, with only Queen's Birthday Monday being a holiday.

Finally, teachers are aware that the needs of students attending school next week will vary. Whanau have been affected in different ways by this shutdown, including with the stress of redundancies, economic uncertainty and forced living in close quarters. Many students will be looking forward to the routine, challenge and fun of school, while others will be feeling nervous and concerned that they may have fallen behind in their work. As a school, we take the wellbeing of our students and staff seriously. We will be sensitive in balancing the need to quickly get back 'up to speed' with learning with the need to address the disruption and uncertainty these past few weeks have brought about. Please let us know if you have any particular concerns about your child. We want to support everyone to 'Be the best we can be' and know that there will need to be a period of re-adjustment necessary for this to happen.

Ngā mihi nui,

Grant Burns
Principal