

11 March 2022

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

I hope this email finds you all well. For those of you who are either isolating due to a close contact or have COVID, I hope that you and your family have support and are managing to cope through this interesting time. Once again, I would like to say to you that if you need support in any way, please do reach out to the school and we will do what we can to make sure our families are well looked after.

In fact, I am writing this email whilst in day three of isolation at home. This is most definitely a result of having three children aged between 17 and 24 who live at home and still have a social life. Currently our school is experiencing a movement down in the number of cases that we are seeing, both with staff and students. It appears that whilst we started early, the rest of Canterbury has certainly caught up and in fact passed where we are with cases in their community. Our thoughts certainly go out to those schools that are experiencing surges in numbers at this time.

The Ministry of Education is still refusing to support schools with access to rapid antigen tests (RATS), unless they are about to close. I cannot understand this stance at all, especially now that they are so readily available. Our school has invested our own funds in buying these tests and has a good supply to make sure we can staff our school. The movement from 10 days in isolation to 7 will help a great deal, especially for those that are isolating and returning negative results. This kicks off at 11.59pm tonight and includes those people who are already in isolation. I know that I am very much looking forward to returning to school next week.

Attendance at school is similar to the middle of winter, and we are still focusing on teaching face to face. Those students who are in isolation do have the opportunity to email their teachers with any questions. We do not feel the need to shift to an online learning environment and will endeavour to keep school functioning as normal as possible for as long as possible, including sports and cultural events.

As we head into another weekend, please do have a chat to your children about attending parties and sharing drinks or vapes. We are in the middle of a pandemic and we need to make sure that we limit the possibility of catching this virus by thinking about how we interact with people, and by getting our vaccinations/boosters as soon as we can. If you feel unwell, please stay at home and get tested.

I have a feeling that we are nearing the peak of this pandemic, and hopefully we will soon see falling case numbers.

Mā te aroha ka tutuki
Bruce Kearney