

24 February 2022

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Now that the Government has informed us that we are moving into Phase 3 tonight at 11.59pm, I thought it would be wise to update how the school works under these conditions.

1. Our thoughts go out to those who are in isolation at the moment.

We have a number of families that are connected to the school who are in isolation due to either having tested positive or awaiting results. Not all these cases are connected to the school, however they are still part of our whanau. If this is you and you need support, don't hesitate to contact the school.

2. We will continue to focus on keeping the school open.

As the situation progresses, we may see a shift into online learning with students having the option to come into class if they need to. This will allow student learning to continue, and for us to be able to manage children who are not able to remain at home, or simply wish to be at school. Teaching would be conducted online, even if there is a teacher present. I have attached our online learning plan in case we need it. You will notice that I have underlined some key words as we are not there yet.

3. Our contact tracing will be reduced.

Close contacts will be defined as only household or household-like members. We intend to still contact trace where we can, and until we cannot. If we believe that you need to be informed, most likely from sharing a drink bottle or, dare I say it, a vape, we will call and let you know. The decision to isolate will be up to the parents, although if we believe it important enough to contact you, I would hope you would get your child tested.

4. Wearing masks is still very important.

Please, if your child can wear a mask, make sure that they do. It is the best thing after being vaccinated and boosted that we can do.

5. We do not inform the community when there is a case at school, unless we need to.

Currently under our system we contact trace and evaluate the risk to the school. If we decide that there are only a handful of close contacts, we notify those parents and move on. Receiving emails from the school every day just increases people's anxiety, and if we can quickly ringfence the case, then there is no need. Our school is still being notified of cases, and I expect that we will see more cases as some of those students and staff in isolation return positive results. Because they have been in isolation, there are no close contacts. Please do understand that if there is a need to contact all of our community we will do so.

6. We are approaching the end.

We have quickly shifted to Phase 3. Now we can expect to see cases rise quickly. What we know from overseas is that it should see us hit a peak soon and then case numbers fall away quickly. This is one of those situations where you have to push through short term to come out the other side. The light at the end of the tunnel is getting closer, we just need to get through some turbulence before we hit calm air again. Stay kind.

Mā te aroha ka tutuki
Bruce