

## **Important information regarding school at level two**

There is a great deal of information in this newsletter and I ask that you take the time to read it and discuss it with your child/children. As always if you have any questions please contact us.

### **School Reopening**

School will be open to all students from Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May. We understand that some parents/caregivers may still be feeling anxious about sending children back to school at this stage and we accept that. We will be reassessing the situation in another two weeks and depending on what has been happening regarding Covid-19 we will let you know when we will expect all students to be back.

### **Buses**

School buses will be running as usual from Monday morning. Students will be required to use hand sanitiser before they enter the bus, this will happen again at the end of the day when children leave school.

Bus companies are asking that the seats directly behind the driver are kept empty for the drivers' protection.

As I am sure many of you are aware the Taipa bus is quite crowded and students are often seated 'three to a seat' The Ministry of Education and the bus company have assured us that this is not a risk. However, if you are concerned with this you would need to arrange alternative transport to and from school for your child/children.

**Below are some of the questions which have been asked regarding buses and the answers from Ministry.**

***You're keeping the seats behind the driver free, but doesn't that mean the students will be closer together?***

*Our services can only operate where we have drivers, many of whom are in the high risk category for COVID-19. Their employers will be taking extra measures to make them feel safe in their workplace, such as leaving seats in close proximity to the driver free. Physical distancing isn't practicable on school buses, however, it's a controlled environment where contact tracing can take place if required.*

***What steps are you taking to keep kids safe?***

*The Ministry is supplying hand sanitiser for students and drivers to use on every journey, and increased cleaning and sanitisation practices will be made after each trip.*

### **Physical distancing at School**

We will be encouraging students to 'keep their distance' from others wherever practicable at school. I am sure you will appreciate the fact that this may be quite difficult, especially with younger children who will be very excited about seeing their friends and teachers again after their time away. All teachers will be talking with students when they return to school about what this will look like and keeping out of others 'moist breath zone'

## **Cleaning**

All classrooms and toilet areas have had a thorough clean before the children will return to school on Monday. All table surfaces in classes will be cleaned by teachers at every break time and a full clean of all areas will be completed every afternoon when the children leave.

## **Hand washing/sanitising**

All students will be required to wash their hands and use hand sanitiser before entering the classroom, this includes after each break time. Toilet areas will have a supply of soap and paper towels for hand washing and all classrooms will have hand sanitiser. The hand sanitiser we are currently using is Ministry supplied, it is 75% alcohol and is said to kill 99% of germs.

## **Monday Morning**

On our first morning back at school students will go straight to their classrooms when they arrive at school. Once all buses have arrived and all students are at school teachers will explain to the students how school is a bit different at the moment. Teachers will outline expectations and guidelines for students when they are inside the classroom as well as in the playground. These expectations will include hygiene expectations and coughing or sneezing into you elbow.

## **Student Wellbeing**

Over the last couple of days' staff have been involved in Professional Development regarding students wellbeing for their return to school. We have been involved in webinars run by experts who have been involved in the Christchurch Earthquakes and the Bushfires in Australia dealing with how children can be feeling after such events. The advice we have been given is to "not focus on 'catching up' focus on students wellbeing, ensuring they feel safe, cared for and loved, rebuild relationships, and have fun." We have a range of resources that we will be using in the first few days back at school to support this.

## **Parents visiting school**

Any parents/caregivers as well as any other visitors will need to sign in at the school office if they enter the school grounds. Parents/caregivers may drop children at the front gate in the mornings, however if you come through the gates you are required to sign in. This is for contact tracing purposes. In the afternoons parents/caregivers may wait at the gate for students.

## **Drinking Fountains**

Drinking fountains have been turned off. Students are not permitted to use drinking fountains at school. All students will need to bring their own water bottle from home. We will ensure students re able to refill these at school if needed. Water bottles will need to be taken home each day for cleaning.

## **Sick Children**

If your child is sick they MUST stay at home. This includes having a runny nose sore throat or cough. If any child arrives at school with any of these symptoms their parents/caregivers will be phoned and they will be required to collect their child from school promptly.

## **Guidelines regarding behaviour both at school and on Buses**

As some of the expectations and guidelines around behaviour may have changed slightly students will be informed of these when they return to school. Any child who behaves in a way that may

cause fear or anxiety to others will be sent home. If this type of behaviour occurs on the bus students will be excluded from travelling on the bus.

### **Learning from Home**

We understand that some parents/caregivers are choosing to keep their children learning from home whilst we are in the early stages of Level two. For the next two weeks we will be supporting this with online learning for the students in Kauri, Totara, Manuka and Nikau rooms. This will not be in the same format as it has been as teachers will be at school teaching their classes so there will be no google 'meets' in the mornings or afternoons. Students will access their learning from the class site and email their teacher if they have any questions, they may set up 'meets' with their teacher, however this will be by making an appointment. Class teachers may provide further information regarding online learning for individual classes.

Students in Kowhai, Rimu and Puriri rooms may be able to access some activities from their class sites however most of the learning will not be set up here. Parents/caregivers will be able to collect hardcopy learning materials and readers from school over the next two weeks.

The school library will be open for parents/caregivers to return and collect library books tomorrow Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May from 10.00am – 12.00pm. Library books will also be able to be issued to parents/caregivers collecting learning resources for students if required.

After these two weeks we will reassess the situation regarding Covid-19 and take the directive from the Ministry of Education regarding the requirement of students returning to school.

[We have also added a resource for parents to our website called 'Getting kids ready for school after Lockdown' which has some great tips.](#)