



COVID - 19 UPDATE 20th March 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Thank you everyone for your support and cooperation with everything going on in the school at this time. There is a lot of work and planning going on behind the scenes at the moment as we both respond to and prepare for events that are happening so quickly.

At this point in time, schools in New Zealand remain open for instruction. The decision to close our school rests with the Ministry of Health, not the school or Ministry of Education. As a school, we're preparing for a range of scenarios and will support the decisions made by the government as the COVID-19 situation develops.

A number of parents have inquired about assemblies/huis at school. At this stage, we will be holding assemblies outside on the court where children can sit spread out if the weather is fine. If not, then they will be having classroom 'assembly' where certificates are handed out and I will go to the classes to acknowledge the achievements. We believe, for kids health and wellbeing, that it's good to have times when we are all together, but in a safe environment.

With so much information and misinformation swirling around about COVID-19, I wanted to share with you what will happen if we were to have a case in our school community. We have been planning for this and are in a position to respond quickly.

- As soon as a case is confirmed in our immediate school community (eg. a student, staff member, or member of their household), the Medical Officer of Health and Ministry of Education will inform me about this, and we will work together to get quick and clear messaging out to you
- If there was a case confirmed of someone in our school, we will likely be asked to close temporarily by the Medical Officer of Health. This will allow time for close contacts to be traced, appropriate testing to be undertaken, and a careful clean of the school to be undertaken.
- If our school does need to close temporarily, we have a plan in place to support student's learning.

We know COVID-19 feels scary and of course people are concerned for the wellbeing of our children. Please be assured that with no case confirmed in our school, your children are safe here.

Good hygiene is a priority at our school, and we are reinforcing this regularly with all students and staff. We know that practicing good hygiene is still the best thing we can all do to prevent illness.

We are getting the most up to date advice and guidance so that we can confidently make informed decisions about the safety and wellbeing of our school community.

Thank you to everyone who has filled out the survey around online learning capacity and who have updated their contact details to the office. As I mentioned before, the staff have planned and are currently setting up both digital and non-digital programmes for the students should the school close for instruction.

We are currently requiring all visitors (music teachers, speech and language teachers, contractors etc) who are staying for longer than 5 minutes to wash and dry their hands on arrival. This excludes whanau who are dropping off and/or picking up their children. However, we do ask that you do not take any longer than 15 minutes when doing this as a way of minimising risk.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend our aroha and thoughts to the families in our Newstead Community who are already going through challenging and stressful times due to COVID-19. We are a close knit community and we have a long history of caring for one another. Let's keep it going.

Ngā mihi nui

Drew Campbell - Principal