

15 February 2022

Kia ora koutou,

I thought I should send a quick update regarding Covid-19 and how we're going to manage positive cases, household contacts, close contacts and casual contacts at Pinehurst in the coming weeks.

The first thing to say is that **we have not yet had any positive cases in our school**. It is, though, inevitable that this will happen at some point. The reason we have so many cautious health measures in our school is to reduce the chance of the virus being transmitted when it enters the school. The masks all of us wear are our best defence, supported by all staff being vaccinated (most now with a booster as well), most students being vaccinated, the air purifiers and open air that is circulating around our classrooms, and the other safety measures we have in place. These are all in our document on the website.

We are now moving into "Phase 2" of the response to the Omicron outbreak. What this means is that:

- If you test positive, you will have to self-isolate for ten days
- If you are a household contact, you will have to self-isolate for ten days, testing on Day 3 and Day 8
- If you are a close contact, you will have to isolate for seven days, testing on Day 5

It also means that you may receive just a text message to tell you that you are positive or a close contact, and you may be asked to report close contacts yourself: the Ministry of Health will (to some extent) be relying on all of us to do this from now on.

There are some other changes, but the reduced isolation times and the increased responsibility we have to manage ourselves are the biggest changes.

What does this mean for the school?

1. We will not be changing our arrangements to keep our children, staff and families safe. All of our in-school measures will stay the same.
2. If you or a member of your household test positive, please contact me **immediately** on 021 194 8584. If you email me instead on [alex.reed@pinehurst.school.nz](mailto:alex.reed@pinehurst.school.nz), that is fine, but I will probably need to talk to you as well.
3. If you or a member of your household becomes a "close contact", please contact me immediately in the same way.
4. If you are a friend of a close contact, or are connected through someone else to a positive case but are not positive yourself, are not a close contact, and nobody in your household is a close contact, you do not need to inform me.

If someone tests positive and has been infectious in school, we will tell the whole community (without breaking privacy rules). If someone is a close contact, we will probably tell only those students and families who might be affected (again, being very careful with privacy).

What will we do if someone tests positive and has been infectious in school?

1. We will, after talking to the student or member of staff, identify everyone we consider to be a close contact, generally following the Ministry guidelines but being a little more cautious. Close contacts will have to isolate for seven days and get tested on Day 5. We will inform the Ministry who these students are.
2. We will also identify students who would not qualify as close contacts, but who have had reasonably substantial contact with the person who has tested positive. These students may be asked to isolate for a shorter period of time, or may be asked to take one of our Rapid Antigen Tests before school for a short period of time.
3. We may ask whole classes or year groups to isolate for short periods of time, then to have a Rapid Antigen Test at school before returning.
4. We will tell all parents, staff and students that there has been a positive case, and we will explain which year or class he or she is in.
5. All of our decisions will be based on the exact situation, which means that we will keep our options open.

What will we do if someone is a close contact or a household contact, and has been in school after they were possibly exposed to the virus?

1. We will inform the staff, students and parents who may have had contact with the close contact and ask them to check for symptoms
2. We may possibly ask a small number of people to have a school Rapid Antigen Test if the close contact is waiting for a test result, or if the contact with the close contact is especially close - for example, if they have been together for a substantial period of time outside school and they were not wearing masks.
3. All of our decisions will be based on the exact situation, which means that we will keep our options open.

In all cases, if a student is isolating, we will run online learning for them. If a small number of students are isolating, online learning will work as it does right now. If whole classes or year groups are isolating, we may run online classes as we did when we were at Level 4 last year.

I do realise how complicated this is, but I wanted to try to explain both what we need you to do, and what we will do in specific circumstances.

As ever, please let me know if you have any questions at all.

Kind regards  
Alex

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Executive Principal

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