

1 March 2022

Kia ora tatou

I hope you've had a good day. School has felt lovely today (as always, really): lots of hard work going on, great lessons and happy children.

As usual, I have some updates for you. I'll keep things as concise as possible.

New cases

- Yesterday evening, one of our Year 11 students tested positive. He was probably infectious in school yesterday only and he is currently well. He has a sibling in Year 9 who was probably not infectious at school. Both students are isolating with their family for 10 days.
- Before school this morning, one of our Year 2 teachers, Mrs Murray, tested positive, Mrs Murray has been tested regularly, and she was tested as part of our P8 monitoring after the case yesterday. She is unlikely to have been infectious in school and she is currently well. Mrs Murray will be teaching from home for the next ten days (she and her family will be isolating). All P8 students will be learning at home for the rest of this week.

This brings the number of cases amongst staff and students to 13, a number which includes 3 sets of siblings. It's a slow, steady increase, but it seems clear that we do not have widespread infections within the school. Most of the infections can be traced clearly to social events or connections in families. We do, though, think that there are 2 or 3 infections associated with school: this is consistent with our expectations and, although we would obviously prefer not to have any transmission in school, I'm satisfied that our health and safety measures in school do seem to be effective at minimising infections.

RAT testing

Because of the Year 11 student who tested positive last night, we tested all Year 11 students this morning. All tests were negative. We will be testing some Year 11 students again tomorrow morning before school, so please ask all Year 11 students to come to the dance studio from 8 am tomorrow morning. We will be testing around 66 students who may possibly have had contact with the student who tested positive. Please do not be alarmed by this! I know it will feel that we are constantly testing Year 11 students, but we are simply acting out of an abundance of caution, as we said we would, and making sure that the students stay safely in school.

We also tested siblings of students in P8 and P9. All siblings had negative test results.

We will continue to test widely, and we run many tests during the day if a student presents with symptoms. All student tests that we ran today were negative.

Online learning

Thank you to all Primary parents who completed our hybrid learning survey this afternoon. Right now, we have 375 responses, which means that we have around 30 still to come in. If you haven't

already done so, please complete the survey as soon as possible, as we cannot allocate you to a physical class or an online class until you do so.

The Primary team will let you know which classroom to come to, or which online Team your child has been allocated to, this evening. The decisions you have made today are for this week only. We will ask you again on Friday what you wish to do with your child next week. As I said earlier, we would like to have every child in school, but we do understand that each parent needs to make their own decision about this.

In College, a reminder that we cannot offer the same hybrid approach, and that we expect all students to be in school. If you are having to self-isolate, your child is able to join the relevant Team for each lesson, and all work to be completed will be accessible on Schoolbox. I know some parents feel that they would like to have a full online option in College, but I am afraid that it is simply impossible for us to do this and continue to offer a high standard of education. Our view is that all of our College students should be in school.

In-school sports and other activities continue for all students.

Staff Absence

In common with all other schools (and every workplace!), we are managing increased absences because of staff who are self-isolating. We are enabling staff, where we can, to teach from home, and have so far not experienced significant issues with covering staff. I'm aware of other schools where this has already become a major problem. Please bear with us if we do run into difficulties: we are using every member of staff who is available, and they've been brilliant at covering for each other.

I hope that gives you a picture of the current situation. It's busy, of course, but also always a real pleasure to work with our whole community: students, parents and our amazingly resilient, adaptable staff. I am immensely grateful to you all.

My best wishes
Alex

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