

Kia ora koutou

Covid - Returning to school

Health professionals have provided us with valuable information based on overseas experience about risk assessment for Covid in schools. Studies from overseas have shown that there is low transmissibility between children and when it does occur Covid is a mild disease in children. However, it is in the community and you will have seen in the media that some schools have already been affected. There has been a lot of change and reframing from the Ministry of Health around how to manage Covid. Keeping children safe will be a priority with mitigation strategies in place that aim to reduce the risk of transmission between students and staff. These strategies include:

- All staff being vaccinated
- Staff and students staying home if unwell
- Optimal ventilation in learning spaces bringing as much air inside as possible
- Being outside as much as practicable
- Students (Y4 and above) and adults on site wearing masks – this is a legal requirement. Information on face covering exemptions can be found on [the Unite Against COVID-19 website](#).
- Physically separated groups of students and staff
- Good hygiene practices
- Minimizing mixing between groups of students, including staggered play times

Our Plan

From the survey that was completed recently we know that over 75% of our families are happy for their children to come back to school with 50% - 100% of the roll on site. We are also aware that most parents with more than one child at school would prefer their children to all come to school on the same day. Taking these things into consideration, and the fact that our site is small, meaning it would be impossible to safely provide the appropriate distancing of 1 metre when learning if all children were to come back, we have decided to open the school part-time. Therefore on any given day there will be around 50% or less of our roll on site. Children will be able to return every second day as follows:

Wednesday 17th Nov - children with surnames from A - I inclusive may return to school

Thursday 18th Nov – children with surnames from J - Z inclusive may return to school

Friday 19th Nov – children with surnames A - I

Monday 23 Nov- children with surnames J – Z and so on

On the days children are not at school distance learning will be able to continue at home.

Drop off and Pick up times are 8.45am for drop off and 3.15pm for pick up

Learning Community One (Yr 0-2) children should be dropped off and picked up outside the office doors.

Learning Community Two (Yr 3-4) children should enter and exit school through **the main gates on Speight Rd by the library.**

Learning Community Three (Yr 5-6) children should enter and exit through the gate on Hanene St and walk in on the path alongside the field.

Staff will be at the entrances to welcome the children to school and send them out to you at the end of the day. Please avoid staying at the gates to chat or congregating in groups directly outside school.

We will continuously review our plan and the set up at school and, if necessary, make changes to it.

I understand that there are a number of you who may not be comfortable with your children returning to school at all this year or have been advised by doctors to keep your children home. Your children will still be able to continue to learn at home with on-going learning provided for them.

Wellbeing

The wellbeing of students is extremely important to us. Research has shown increased rates of anxiety and depression occurring alongside longer lockdowns for children. Protective factors from this include larger family bubbles and actually being at school, so it is a good thing for children to come back if they can.

A key to wellbeing is resilience which is supported by the following factors:

- Relationships
- Reassurance
- Routines
- Regulation

Our aim is to support children returning to school in all these things. They will be learning with their kaitiaki teacher who knows them well. The initial focus will be on reconnecting with their teachers and other learners. We know that children need to feel happy and safe to be able to engage in their learning and teachers will help enable this by providing activities such as prayer, mindfulness, exercise and Circle Time.

Visitors coming to school

Parent volunteers will not be coming into school this term.

Parents will need to drop children at the entrances and not come onto the grounds unless there are exceptional circumstances such as the need to settle a child. Parents of Year 0/1 children who may need to do this will be required to sign in, wear a mask and keep a 2 metre distance from other adults and children.

Uniform

Children are to wear their active wear and regulation sandals. Please make sure they have their school hats. If you need to purchase one just email office@stignatius.school.nz and we will send one home with your child.

School buses

The school bus will run as usual after school. Please email the office if your child will be catching the bus and let us know what days. Students of all ages are encouraged to wear a face covering on the bus.

Devices

Can we please have devices that were borrowed during lockdown returned to the school by no later than 3 pm Tuesday 16th of November as these will need to be cleaned and distributed back to learning spaces. There will be a box outside the office door for these to be returned to. The box will be outside from today. We do ask that you place the charger and the device together in a bag of some kind when returning.

Parents, you have all done an amazing job with your children during this very long lockdown in what has often been difficult circumstances. Thank you!

We are all looking forward to welcoming the children back to school next week and making the most of the precious time we have with them between now and the end of the school year. Please check Heads Up this week additional information.

Ngā mihi

Jane Penney

Principal

St Ignatius Catholic School