

## Back to School 2022 – Let's be ready



Kei aku nui, kei aku rahi, tēnā koutou katoa i roto i ngā āhuatanga o te wā.

Welcome back after what we hope has been a wonderful summer for your whānau.

Our team is feeling refreshed and ready to go for the 2022 year and can't wait to welcome everyone back onsite.

In regard to COVID-19 we have moved fully into the new traffic light framework for all our school and kura activities and events this year. You will be familiar with all the health measures we will have in place and it is good to know that at Red setting, we are able to support everyone learning onsite.

### **Events and activities**

Large hui and gatherings especially when indoors continue to be one of the riskier activities we can undertake. We have therefore reviewed all our events and activities for the upcoming term to ensure we meet the health guidance for Red. An example of this will be our new format of Digital Assemblies (Watch this space).

### **Ventilation**

We will use the Ministry of Education self-assessment tool to review all our ventilation in readiness for the start of the year. Providing good old fashioned fresh air remains the most important thing we can do in our learning spaces to minimise risk for ākonga and kaiako (and the same goes for you at home). We will also be receiving a CO<sub>2</sub> monitor in the coming weeks to further support our ventilation plan.

### **Omicron**

We have all seen the very large numbers of cases overseas and we will very likely see much larger numbers of cases in Aotearoa than we have previously experienced in the last two years. While Omicron is more transmissible than previous strains, most people who get COVID-19 will have a mild to moderate illness and will fully recover in their own home.

However, some of our community who are immune compromised, are ill or have other vulnerabilities, even when they are fully vaccinated, could be more affected by Omicron. So, we all need to continue to play our part to minimise the spread of the virus.

### **Face coverings**

Staff and children in Years 4 – 13 must wear face coverings when inside at school when we are at Red.

Public health advice is that an appropriate face covering will fit snugly and seal well around facial contours. This can include single use, disposable masks (medical masks) and re-usable fabric masks with three layers.

Don't worry if you don't have these specific types of face coverings, as public health experts also say that any face covering is better than no face covering.

The Unite Against COVID-19 website also has information on [how to make a face covering](#).

### **Exemptions**

For students or adults to have exemptions from wearing face coverings a supporting letter from your doctor is required to verify your exemption pass. This letter must be signed by Mr Russell. Once signed there is no problem and those with valid reasons for not wearing masks can continue as normal.

### **Vaccination for five- to 11-year-olds**

Vaccination including a booster shot, remains an important tool to help prevent the most serious harm from the COVID-19 virus. If children and young adults who have been vaccinated do develop COVID-19, they are far less likely to get seriously ill and less likely to transmit the virus to others.

Sonrise Christian School will **not** be providing onsite vaccinations, as there are many options and opportunities for families who wish to be vaccinated to go and make this considered decision around town.

### **Managing cases in our school**

We have a good contact tracing system in place so that if there is a confirmed case who has been at school while infectious, we can quickly identify who was a close contact of that person. We will then quickly advise those contacts of what they need to do.

Only if the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education advises to do so, would we consider closing a physical onsite school and moving to distance learning for everyone. At Red we will keep everyone learning onsite for as long as we can.

Please make sure your contact details we have on file are up to date, so we can get in touch with you if needed.

### **Preparing for COVID-19**

You can also prepare for COVID-19, making sure you and your household have a plan and know what to do. This will mean your whānau and community can help each other if needed. Find out more here:

- [Be prepared for COVID-19](#)
- [Download the COVID-19 Readiness Checklist \[PDF, 121 KB\]](#)
- [What to expect when self-isolating at home](#)

### **Self-isolating at home because of COVID-19**

Many people will be able to manage self-isolation with help from friends and whānau, but there is help available if you need it – both with health support and access to food and other essentials.

- [What to expect when self-isolating at home | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)
- [Getting extra support if you have COVID-19 or are self-isolating | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)
- [COVID-19 positive – managing your symptoms | Health Navigator NZ](#)

If you know anyone in your community affected by COVID-19 and who may need help, such as food and other financial assistance, Work and Income has a range of [supports available for individuals, families, employers and self-employed people affected by COVID-19](#).

### **Work and Income support**

The beginning of the year can be a tough time for parents who are faced with many costs and it is important you are aware of what assistance you may be able to get from Work and Income. These are available to people on a low income as well as those on a benefit.

Check what you might get here

- [School costs](#)
- [Out of School Care and Recreation \(OSCAR\) Subsidy](#)
- [Other Childcare Assistance](#)
- [School and Year Start-up Payment \(for people getting Orphan's Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit\)](#)
- [Help with living costs \(including food and rent/mortgage\)](#)

Use the links above or call 0800 559 009 to find out more, or to apply.

MoneyTalks can assist with [free budgeting and debt help](#)

You can also contact your local community provider. [Please find more information here.](#)

### **Getting ready to return to school**

The Ministry of Education has some helpful information on their [Parents and Whānau website](#) to support your tamariki to get back to school. There is also a very important reminder about how you can [take care of yourself](#).

While this might all feel a little overwhelming at times, we know that all these measures will help our children return to school, reconnect with whānau and friends and do what they enjoy.

We are also here to help. Please get in touch if you have any concerns or need help in any way. You can ring the school office on (06)868 9841.

See you soon!

### ***Andrew Russell***

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