



14 May 2020

Dear Parents / Family / Whanau

We are looking forward to welcoming back our students and staff to our school premises on Monday 18 May. While we are excited to reopen our school, I fully appreciate that there will be varying degrees of anxiety from students and staff, and so we will ensure that our first and foremost priority will be the safety and wellbeing of all. We can assure you that as a school we are following closely Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education guidelines and remain diligent in protecting you and us from the virus at all costs.

To this end, we will begin school on Monday with an extended form time so we can outline a consistent health and safety message to all students. I have listed some of these for your information:

Students will be reminded to:

- be kind to themselves and to their peers
- act responsibly
- stay home if they are sick
- cough or sneeze into your elbows *1
- keep left while moving through the school
- not touch and to keep out of the 'moist breath' zone of other students *2
- sanitise their hands on entry to every classroom and to use the soap and hand dryers when using the toilets*3 *Note: students will sanitise on entry and exit for practical subjects*
- bring their own water bottles to remain hydrated throughout the day *4
- follow the new school bells as the school day will be reorganised to reduce congestion *5
- not be too concerned about NCEA deadlines *6
- be careful with the drop off and pick up at the beginning and the end of the day *7

*1 Tissues will be available in every class.

*2 Where possible, classrooms will be set out exam style and students may be put into a seating plan.

*3 Hand sanitiser will be available in every class.
We have added to our cleaning staff to ensure that toilets are regularly disinfected throughout the day. Gloves will also be available for students to use in the toilets if they so choose.

All classroom surfaces will be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each school day.

- *4 The water fountains will not be operational, but students are able to fill their water bottles at designated water stations around the school. These water stations will be cleaned several times throughout the day.
- *5 Juniors and Seniors will have separate interval and lunchtimes to reduce any congestion concerns at pinch points around the school.
- *6 NZQA have notified schools that external NCEA examinations and New Zealand Scholarship examinations will be delayed so they start on 16 November instead of 6 November, allowing further time for teaching, learning and internal assessment in Term Four.
- *7 Wherever possible, please drop your children off on Windsor Road rather than coming into school, or even better, have your child bike, scooter or walk to school to avoid congestion.

The school has received a number of concerns regarding our bus students, and how the various networks will manage social distancing in such a confined space as a bus. The following advice is from the Bay of Plenty Regional Council:

Bus Services operating from Monday 18 May

All school services will be operating from Monday, 18 May. However, the Transport Advisor from the Bay of Plenty Regional Council has advised that they are still working with Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Health to obtain approval to operate all services with full seated capacity. If approval is not obtained, then some services may operate with significantly reduced capacity. They will be providing more information on this as soon as it becomes available to Council and will be posted to their website.

Contact Tracing

This is of utmost importance under Level 2. Schools have the list of which school bus services each student uses to travel to and from school, to facilitate contact tracing if required. Schools are not required to provide lists for the urban Bay hopper services – it only applies to the dedicated school services which all have three digit route numbers.

Loading capacity

All of our school services will be limited to seated passengers only. This varies between buses, but for NZ Bus services it means a maximum of around 36 secondary students or 55 primary/intermediate students. (For some vehicle types it is as low as 20 students). If necessary approvals are not received from MoT and MoH, then these numbers may be

School bus drivers have been instructed not to carry any standing passengers, and once they reach their seated limits, they will close the doors.

We have been asked to advise parents to wait at the bus stop with their child just in case they are unable to get on a bus and to make alternative arrangements to get their child home after school if required.

Bayhopper urban

A number of students use Bayhopper urban services rather than dedicated school services. There is a 1m physical distancing rule applied to these services (due to possible adult members of the public being on board), meaning that they are **only permitted to carry 40% of normal capacity**. Drivers will be unable to collect additional passengers once they have reached this limit, and passengers will need to wait for the next scheduled service.

Students who use Bayhopper urban services are required to register their travel on the Baybus website, www.baybus.co.nz.

Cleaning regime

All vehicles operating school services will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised daily which is additional to the “fogging” treatment that has occurred on all Council buses. Hand sanitiser will be available for students to use when they enter and exit the bus.

We understand that this is an incredibly difficult time for all. The COVID-19 crisis has had a significant impact on the public transport sector, and we acknowledge that Council’s ability to operate a service which caters for the whole community is limited. We appreciate your continued support and cooperation at this time.

I know that the next few days and weeks will involve a range of emotions as we seek to navigate our ‘new normal’. Please know that we are doing everything within our control to mitigate and minimise possible threats.

So, what would happen in the unlikely event of a possible Covid-19 case? Our school’s attendance records will mean that contact tracing could be carried out quickly and efficiently. The school would be closed for 72 hours while contact tracing is carried out, and the possible case is tested. Irrespective of the outcome, the school would be thoroughly cleaned during this time period. If the testing produced a positive result, school would then go into quarantine for 14 days.

The security for students and staff lies in the fact that we have no active cases in our community and, assuming good hygiene practices, and good self-responsibility, the chance of their being a possible Covid-19 case remains low. We are however prepared for any eventuality and so we look forward to welcoming your child(ren) back to school on Monday.

Sincerely



Russell Gordon