



8 May 2020

Kia ora koutou

As we end another week in Alert Level 3, I hope that all continues to go well in your bubble. Alert Levels 4 and 3 have not been easy and I thank the Waimea community for your ongoing support.

I am sure you have followed with interest the announcements made by the Prime Minister. During her announcement yesterday about what Alert Level 2 would look like for New Zealand, the Prime Minister advised that in Alert Level 2 schools are safe environments for children, young people and staff and that additional public health control measures are in place to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and to support contact tracing.

This is positive news and we are looking forward to welcoming all our students and staff back to school. We know from the Prime Minister's announcement that school will return on the Monday following the announcement to move to Alert Level 2. This means that we will continue in our distance learning mode for at least one more week.

Alert Level 2 at Waimea College

Waimea College has safe and sensible practices to maintain the health and safety of everyone on the school site. These practices will support the key Public Health approach which is to:

- minimise the risk that someone contracts Covid-19.
- ensure we can identify and contact anyone who has been in close contact with a person, should someone in a school contract Covid-19.
- For more information about the public health measures at Alert Level 2, you can visit the website: <https://covid19.govt.nz/>

Hygiene and Physical Distancing

The most important things we can all do are to maintain good hygiene practices (coughing into your elbow, handwashing and drying) and regular cleaning of commonly touched surfaces. To support this hand sanitiser will be available in every classroom and in other areas frequented by staff and students. In addition, when returning to school under Alert Level 2 we recommend that students bring their own sanitiser and drink bottle for personal use outside these times e.g. lunchbreaks etc.

Our cleaning routine has been intensified to ensure that high use areas such as door handles, push plates, counters, railings, light fittings, washbasins, taps, shared telephones and keyboards in common areas are treated with disinfectant throughout the day.

Physical distancing is a good precaution to prevent the spread of any illness or disease. The Ministry of Education have advised that **"in schools, physical distancing means children, young people and staff maintaining enough distance so that they are not breathing on or touching each other"**.

The Ministry of Education information also rightly advises that there are situations where physical distancing of any sort is not possible, such as some sporting activities. In these situations, extra emphasis on handwashing and drying (or cleansing with hand sanitiser) before and after activities and regular cleaning of equipment is very important.

Mass Gatherings

We have been advised that educational facilities, and school transport, are not considered mass gatherings because they are managed environments.

While there are no restrictions on numbers of people indoors or outside at schools other than what other public health or health and safety measures require, we will carefully consider the need to hold large events at Waimea College during Alert Level 2. This means that we will not be holding events such as full-school assemblies at this time.

Attendance

The key message is that if your teen is unwell, for any reason, they must stay at home. Please contact us via the regular channels if this is the case. If students become unwell during the day, we ask that they report to the Student Office. We will contact you and ask you to collect your teen as soon as possible.

It is essential that our information about who is on site is accurate, so students will need to sign in and out, and cannot leave the premises during the day without doing so.

Students/Families with Health Concerns

There will be some students and families with health conditions meaning they are vulnerable to serious illness or have a compromised immune system. In this event please contact the school and let us know if your teen will not be attending school during Alert Level 2. You may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

Our experience pre-lockdown showed us that it is very challenging to provide lessons both at school and in an online/distance format. Teachers will prioritise their efforts on delivering lessons to the students onsite, however we will do our best to make work available online for those who can't physically attend. It is likely that this would be continuing with the Teams platform currently in use.

School Bus Service

We understand that the school bus service will be operating under Alert Level 2. Hand sanitiser will be provided for students to use as they enter and exit the bus. It is essential that you advise the school if your teen has changed their bus route. Please contact the Bus Controller [Kerry Parkes](#).

Special Education

Our Special Education department will be open and welcoming students under Alert Level 2. The staff of the department will be in further contact with families directly to pass on more detailed information.

Internet Connectivity Update

For those families who have let us know that they do not have a stable broadband internet connection at home, we would like to reassure you that we are continuing to work with the Ministry of Education to remedy this. We have passed contact details on to the Ministry who are now working with telecommunication companies to ascertain the most suitable solution for each household. While it is our understanding that the Ministry are dealing with a high level of demand, we are hoping to have all our families connected over the coming weeks.

Low Cost Internet Solutions

For our families that may be struggling to meet the costs of maintaining a broadband internet connection, Spark have launched Skinny Jump - a **subsidised Wi-Fi internet scheme**. For further information on eligibility, coverage and how to sign up, please visit

<https://www.skinny.co.nz/jump/home/>.

Returning Devices to School

If you have been issued with a Chromebook or other digital device, either from Waimea College or directly from the Ministry of Education, we ask that these devices be **returned to the school Library on the first day that school resumes**. This will allow us to continue with our teaching programmes as early as possible.

Please note: Devices sent directly to homes from the Ministry of Education are the property Waimea College.

Contact Details

If you haven't already, please ensure we have the most up to date contact details (including an alternative contact) for your family. This will be vital, should there be a need for contact tracing.

We know you will have many questions as we move to the next stage. We will keep you informed with more detailed information following the Prime Minister's next announcement on Monday 11 May. For now, keep taking care of yourselves and we look forward to seeing your teens in person during Alert Level 2.

He Waka Eke Noa – A Waka that we are all in together.

Ngā mihi



Scott Haines
Principal