



Thames High School

Te Kura Tuarua o Te Kauaeranga

Whānau Pānui

25 April 2020

Kia ora e te whānau

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Tumuaki/Principal's Message: My first week and please get in touch

As Tumuaki/Principal for just over a week I am very impressed by the hardworking and positive attitude of kaimahi/staff and taiohi/students. It certainly is not the start of a new journey that I would ever have imagined, but we are all in this together. As my introduction (on appointment) to the school said, I am certainly looking forward to working with everyone in a school with a great history of serving its community and being the absolute best at everything we do.

While working with the Senior Leadership Team on the planning for Term 2, and the move to Alert Level 3, I have also had the opportunity in the past week to talk with Heads of Department and Deans about the school. Common themes I have heard are that we have a great caring staff and wonderful students that accept and respect others. Caring for others is a hallmark of a great school and I am looking forward to hearing from more from staff, students and parents/whānau.

I have plans to have a regular opportunity to meet and share with me in the normal operation of our school. In the meantime, I would like to extend an invitation to contact me by email or phone and tell me what is on your mind. I am very happy to accept positive feedback and I am equally keen to hear of any concerns or suggestions you have. Please contact me at michaelhart@thameshigh.school.nz or you can (from next week) call the school number on 07) 868 8688 and ask for me.

ANZAC Day

I reflected with staff yesterday that this time of the year we would normally hold an ANZAC remembrance assembly and attend services that commemorate ANZAC day. It helps provide a poignant reminder of the importance of respecting our past, and focusing on how fortunate we are.

I hope that this ANZAC weekend you can spend some time with your whānau. Perhaps you have started the weekend by remembering the Australians and New Zealanders who sacrificed their lives during WWI and all in conflicts since:

*They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn;
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,
We will remember them.*

After the long weekend, we will be in Alert level 3 for at least two weeks. I want to congratulate and thank staff and our community for the immense amount of work carried on during alert level 4 and for remaining positive and continuing to put out taiohi/young people first.

Moving to Alert Level 3

You will recall that from Wednesday 29 April, like all schools, Thames High School is open for students up to Year 10 that **need** to attend. In order to determine that need we asked parents of Year 9 and 10 taiohi/students to complete an indicative survey. Many thanks to the majority who completed the survey and to the staff who followed up with the remainder by phone. I also appreciated that many parents/caregivers took the opportunity in the survey to thank staff for doing a great job of providing online learning opportunities. Most whānau have advised us that they can stay at home or have other



suitable supervision for young taiohi at home as they continue with their online learning programme. At present we expect to have one large classroom with one bubble with fewer than 10 students. As far as we are aware none of these students require bus transport and we have advised the company of that yesterday.

Your circumstances at home may change as level 3 continues for at least 2 weeks (i.e. at least until Monday 11 May). If that does happen and you decide you need to send your child(ren) to school, please inform the school attendance officer, by email at attend@thameshigh.school.nz or you are also invited to call the school to discuss your plans. We are here to support your decisions and are here to help. When there is a move to level 2, there is likely to be a transition time built in, or perhaps a staggered transition, but we need to await government decisions on that.

To prepare for the return of people to school, we have had permission in Level 4 to ensure we are ready. This week the school site has been thoroughly checked by our property team, using a Ministry of Education checklist, and that has included completing maintenance of the ground, field and a thorough cleaning of classrooms and workspaces. The site has also been prepared for the return of staff and taiohi/students by ensuring that we have signage, supplies of hand sanitiser, and other systems required at level 3, such as a contact trace register.

Staff only day: Tuesday 28 April

The last part of our preparation for moving to level 3, and to ensure we can maintain the home learning programme, the Ministry allowed one 'teacher only day' on Tuesday 28 April. Staff will be using this time to pick up any resources they need or prepare resources for taiohi/students (some require hard copy resources). No one else is allowed onsite.

As a staff only day, work does not need to be set for classes for the day. Taiohi/students may use the day to continue or complete tasks set. There should be no live sessions (classes). They could also use the day to practise more of the ways to promote wellbeing!

From Wednesday 29 April

For most taiohi/students, they will continue with their home/online learning programme. Thank you for supporting our taiohi/students, encouraging them to do their best to engage with their learning. I am sure you will have established routines by now that means there is a good blend of active learning time and break time. From the outset most experts in wellbeing have emphasised the need for routine and positive expectations for young people as it provides purpose and direction. Please contact the school if you have any concerns about your child's understanding, progress or engagement. Our Kaiako/teachers, and teacher aides are keen to help.

Here is how we will operate from Wednesday 29 April. While these routines will only affect a few, they are being shared to reassure that we have clear protocols for Level 3.

- In order to ensure the safety of those taiohi and our staff who do come to school, we will be operating with strict enforcement of health and safety measures. This includes a register of who is onsite, physical distancing, the use of hand sanitiser, good cough and sneeze etiquette and regularly cleaning surfaces. These continue to be a key defence against the spread of coronavirus.
- If your child is sick, do not send them to school. Please advise the school in the normal way.
 - Report flu-like symptoms to the relevant health professionals. Symptoms to monitor for are any respiratory symptoms such as a cold, a head cold, blocked ears, cough, sneezing, chills and a fever. Anyone with those symptoms should stay home and contact Healthline for advice, which may include getting tested for COVID-19.
- **School will open from 8.45 am to 3.10 pm.**
- Anyone who comes onsite must complete the contact trace register. For students this will be done by having an attendance record kept in class.
- Taiohi/students will arrive at school to be on time for class starting at 9.00 am. They must be in full correct uniform.
- They must come to school (if possible) with their own device and earphones. Earphones are needed as learning will be individual and may involve several online lessons at once. If a device is not possible, then one will be provided.
- There will be no provision of a canteen, so taiohi/students must have their own morning tea, lunch and water bottle.



- Entry to the school must be by the main gate, and there will be a senior staff member present at the gate.
- Drop off by parents must be away from the school gate, and physical distancing must always be maintained (2 metres, outside).
- Taiohi/students are directed to go to C block to enter the classroom via an open external door.
- Hand sanitiser must be used on entry.
- Desks will be arranged to maximise physical distancing and will certainly meet the minimum requirement of 1 metre for inside.
- The classrooms in C block are heated by heat pumps, not requiring the large heating capacity of the boiler (that is uneconomical to run for small numbers of taiohi and staff).
- Taiohi/students will be reminded about good hygiene practices of which we should all be familiar. Signs will remind them of the requirements.
- During the school day, access to toilet facilities is readily available and good hygiene is promoted (wash hands thoroughly with soap and dry them).
- Any time people re-enter the room they will use hand sanitiser.
- Breaks will be scheduled at the normal times, and will allow movement to the main quad area, maintaining 2 metres physical distancing. There will always be staff supervision.
- They can walk around, sit down, and eat their own morning tea / lunch and drink from their own water bottle. No sharing is allowed.
- There will be no access for photocopying/printing by taiohi/students. This should not be needed as lessons are online
- At the end of the school day, exit will be via the main gate, and any pick up from school must be away from the gate.

Students who require hardcopy resources

ONLY IF INSTRUCTED by Kaiako/teachers, some parents/students may be allowed to pick up a hardcopy pack of resources to continue their learning. This is allowed under Level 3 but must follow the strict protocols.

- Pick up at the specified time and collect only the named pack.
- Enter by the main gate only.
- This will be a contactless collection from outside near Reception (weather permitting) and physical distancing must be maintained.
- As packs will be named, collection of a pack will be evidence of being onsite (for contact tracing purposes). Hand sanitiser will be available.
- Any person who receives a pack should wash their hands after opening the package and dispose of the packaging appropriately.
- If pick up from school is not the best option, the pack will be delivered to a home address (contactless delivery).

Some valuable links:

- [Advice from the Ministry about supporting learning at home](#)
- Learning from home: <https://learningfromhome.govt.nz/>
- Learning from home **wellbeing** guide: <https://learningfromhome.govt.nz/wellbeing>
- For those with younger children may find this guide useful: <https://sparklers.org.nz/parenting/>
- [Advice from Netsafe about staying safe online](#)
- <https://www.allright.org.nz>
- [25 Mental Health Wellness Tips during Quarantine from Eileen M Feliciano, Psy.D.](#) is a good list and highlights some things particularly important for children

Ngā mihi
Matua Michael Hart
Tumuaki/Principal

