



Thames High School

Te Kura Tuarua o Te Kauaeranga

Whānau Pānui

1 June 2020

Kia ora e te whānau

In this pānui

1. Update at Alert Level 2
2. Attendance
3. Year 13 Lunch and Study
4. Sport is coming back
5. Expectations – uniform and presentation
6. Support for uniform and other needs
7. Sport on the horizon
8. Healthy Lifestyles
9. The 60 Second Sell

Update at Alert Level 2

I would like to thank all taiohi for the way they have returned to school and embraced getting back into their learning and social routines. I would like to thank all whānau for supporting such return.

Part of the transition back was the online survey regarding how taiohi coped with online learning during Covid-19. Many thanks for the many responses received. The information shared will assist with teaching and learning for taiohi going forward, including improving the ongoing use of online support for learning, to build on the great progress we have made as a school.

There is a small number of families who have yet to return their children to school due to their concerns about COVID-19. We know some of our families are still feeling a bit anxious about sending their children back to school, which is understandable given everything we have been through these past two months. If this describes your circumstances, please work with us to support your child back to school. Our deans and counsellor can work with taiohi and make a transition plan that will ease your child back into school.

It is important that children do return to school, not just for their education, but also for their health and well-being too. As you know the country has managed to achieve a very enviable status where cases of COVID-19 have declined, and now we are seeing an increase in the number of people allowed in gatherings outside schools, although physical distancing and good hygiene practices are still required. In the Waikato the last case was reported on 10 May. We're aware of concerns out there that people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus. The Ministry of Health has advised us that there is no instance in New Zealand of someone spreading the virus without ever having symptoms.

Our schools are safe. Even though there is such a low risk of the virus getting in the school gates to start with, we will be keeping up our hygiene practices and other public health measures for as long as we are in Alert Level 2. If you wish to ask any questions about to reassure your about how safe school is, then please call the school on (07) 868 8688.

It is great to report that the guidelines in place have been followed well. The support of kiako and senior

students in helping to remind taiohi of these has been most appreciated. Please be assured that our level 2 plan follows Public Health guidelines. As communicated earlier the main approaches are:

- ensuring good contact tracing, including class attendance, and signing in in and out at the office, and limiting the privilege of Year 13 taiohi to leave school during the day
- appropriate physical distancing, including limiting numbers and activities in library and Year 13 commons room, and ensuring extra spacing at any assemblies held.
- encouraging good hygiene practices, including the supply of hand sanitiser where hand washing and drying isn't convenient
- not providing water fountains, encouraging the use of water bottles in class (refills are possible through taps where contact at the spout is restricted)
- signage around the school to remind all people of these requirements.
- roll checks on those exiting and boarding buses
- we have also reinforced that spitting and gum chewing are both not allowed at school as these are known ways to pass on many diseases. Mints are a great way to have fresh breath and not leave a residue on the ground or on desks (which sadly is too common for gum).

Attendance

While it is pleasing to report that attendance levels at Thames High School (just below 90%) are higher than the average for the Waikato (around 70%), we still need to get attendance levels to an average of at least 95%. That is the minimum attendance level required to support good learning and progress.

The Ministry of Education has announced a national plan to bolster attendance monitoring and support in the region. We are now required to send student attendance data to the Ministry weekly, from 29 May. The purpose is to:

- report to the National Crisis Monitoring Centre and government on levels of attendance during the COVID-19 period
- inform and support Ministry planning for students and schools returning to normal operation, and
- evaluate and report on the effectiveness of initiatives implemented by the Ministry to respond and manage its response to COVID-19.

If our Rōpu, Whānau and Dean Kaitaiki have not had success in re-engaging taiohi we will continue to refer to Attendance Services. Attendance Service (contracted to CAPS) will contact whānau whose children are not coming to school and work with them to get them engaged again.

For taiohi 16 years and over we also encourage them to attend school by limiting access to optional activities that are provided for those that regularly attend school. By Ministry of Education guidelines, the minimum attendance level for 'regular' attendance is 90%. Taiohi below that level may not be eligible to



attend events that are optional in the school. This is decided on a case-by-case basis, and taiohi and whānau will be informed.

Year 13 Lunch and Study

As notified in an earlier panui the use of lunch and study passes were to be reviewed as we continue in Alert Level 2 and beyond. In the first such review, I have advised Year 13 students that their privilege to go to town for **lunch** will be allowed, on a more limited basis, starting this coming Thursday 4 June. If they can assure that they follow the expectations that their presentation, behaviour and punctuality back to school is as it should be then we will extend the privilege further, and that will be announced at the start of the week beginning 8 June.

The use of last period study passes will also be reviewed by the end of this week. Now that we have encouraged excellent attendance and engagement, those Year 13 students who have the expected minimum attendance, who are great role models with correct uniform and behaviour will be granted more flexibility in the use of that time. During the day study (for example, period 2) will remain onsite.

I expect that as we have more confidence in the continued lack of community transmission, regular attendance and great behaviour, we can resume privileges that we really would like Year 13s to enjoy.

Sport is coming back

As winter sport makes ready to get underway in the coming weeks, morning and afternoon trainings across the sporting codes will also be starting.

We share your excitement that Secondary School sport is resuming. All sports will be managed carefully, and I appreciate the work being done to get this organised. Our Sports Coordinator (Mrs S Barriball) and TIC Sport (Mrs C Green) are currently finalising plans for all the codes on their way back.

The plan is to prepare each sport this week (starting Tuesday 2 June) for getting back to training from Monday 8 June. Competitions – many in a reduced format – are expected to resume in Term 3.

Before we do confirm dates, please rest assured that all guidelines will be adhered to, including the provision of sanitiser for personal use and disinfectant so that equipment such as rugby balls, used will be disinfected before and after activities.

Expectations – uniform and presentation

Respect for self and others, including the school, means taking pride in all that we do. This including presenting ourselves in accordance with our [uniform expectations](#). We value the support of caregivers/parents and taiohi to ensure the expectations are followed. I have been heartened by the comments that have mentioned that we seem to be getting it better. We have room to improve further.

The overall standard is that taiohi/students appear "neat, tidy and clean". The THS uniform can look very smart when worn correctly. Correct uniform is expected from the time of leaving home to the time of returning home. This is because – rightly or wrongly – we are collectively judged by our appearance. Getting used to dress and presentation standards is a very important part of getting used to workplaces that set such guidelines too.

As you know we have endeavoured to educate and encourage taiohi to meet these standards. In the last couple of weeks Rōpu and Whānau Kaitaiki have supported this by discussing with taiohi and contacting whānau. In the next phase, taiohi who have yet to meet expectations will be a focus for the deans. What we need to do is continue the move to reinforce our consistent presentation. That is what uniform means.

We want taiohi to be warm, but the look of visible thermals is unsightly. There for please only have thermals or undergarments that are not be visible whilst wearing the uniform. The torso is the most important area to keep warm, so vests are very effective in achieving both aims. For clarity:

- Navy blue or black thermal short sleeve singlets or thermals may be worn under the Years 9-12 uniform tops (as they are navy blue tops).
- A white singlet or short-sleeved thermal vest may be worn under the white polo short for Year 13.
- *If a long-sleeved thermal is worn it must be under the school **jersey** or **jacket**.*
- No hoodies are allowed either above or below uniform items.

Other [expectations](#) include:

- **Shoes** are 'plain black polishable lace-up shoes' (for all) or single strap shoes (for girls). The style expected is a shoe that is polishable and does not include a rubber toe cap or similar style that looks like a skater shoe, sports shoe/trainer, or similar casual shoe. It is meant to be tidy as per the prospectus, not casual shoes. See below for some examples.
- **Socks** – for **girls** these are to be white ankle socks. Ankle socks cover the ankle, they are not the little gym shoe liners that seem to be popular. For **boys** the THS long socks are required, and they are to be worn as long socks – pulled up, to at least above the calf muscle.
- In winter, **Black Stockings** (for girls) are allowed. They are particularly smart for senior students.



- The **THS navy blue skirt** is to be worn just above the knee. The skirt should not be adjusted to become a mini skirt.
- **Shorts and/or trousers** must be the THS navy blue styles.
- **Facial hair** – boys are to be clean shaven.
- **Make up** – should be minimal ('not extreme').
- **Hair colour** – should be natural ('not extreme')
- **Hair styles** – should be conventional, and long hair must be clear of the face and that may mean being tied back
- **Jewellery** – one **stud** in each ear is acceptable.
- Taonga – any taonga should be covered by a pass.
- Any (optional) hats must be plain black or navy blue without any logos.
- Only the school jacket is allowed with the school uniform, unless it is raining, and a full raincoat is being worn.

Shoes

(examples only, available at the Warehouse and/or Number One Shoes). These shoes are often at the around the same price as the casual shoes currently being purchased. In many cases the slightly more expensive ones will last longer as they have a better grade of leather.

Boys



Girls



In the guidelines it states: "Any matter related to dress or appearance not specifically covered by the uniform regulations and above guidelines is to be as directed by the principal." This is in order to make a consistent decision about what 'neat, tidy and clean' means.

Students who are temporarily unable to wear correct uniform items must bring a signed note from their parent/caregiver or please send a verifiable email to Rōpu or Whānau kaitiaki/teachers. The note or email must give a reasonable explanation, which includes an expectation about when the issues will be corrected. The school will contact parents/caregivers for clarification if needed.

We will review the current guidelines (that haven't changed for many years) in Term 4 in readiness for 2021, so that expected styles are much clearer. There will be further consultation in Term 3-4 also. The consultation will include taiohi, whānau and kaimahi voice, and is expected to lead to some changes, although the timeframe must include the ability to manage and change uniform stocks. Whatever happens there will be a transition period and there will be no expectation of changes for taiohi who have the current correct uniform items.

Support for uniform and other needs

If there is difficulty in obtaining correct school uniform items and other requirements for school (such as stationery and devices) please notify Rōpu or Whānau kaitiaki and/or the Year level Kaitiaki/Deans. [Contact details are on the website](#). Where a reason is accepted taiohi may be issued with a pass to advise staff that the matter is being addressed. In some circumstances uniform items may be borrowed or issued by our Student Support Officer / Kaimahi Tautoko. Requests for such items should be made with the Rōpu or Whānau kaitiaki or Dean or our Counsellor / Kaiāwhina who can make the appropriate arrangements.

There are other sources of support for the provision of school uniform and other requirements for school (such as stationery and devices), for instance the [Ministry of Social Development \(MSD\) - Work and Income](#).

As with all expectations of behaviour there are clear consequences for those who do not follow the guidelines. These consequences range from correcting the item immediately (e.g. removing an extra earring), being asked to the correct the issue by a certain date (i.e. the next day), contact home to discuss, or arranging a conference to discuss the issue.

If taiohi repeated wear the incorrect uniform then items may be confiscated (refer to the [guidelines](#)) or other consequences may follow. This is because the issue is likely to now be about disobedience or defiance and therefore will be treated as such.

Thanks again to everyone for supporting us in meeting these expectations. Any concerns may be referred to Deans/Kaitiaki, Deputy Principals or directly to me.



