



Thames High School

Te Kura Tuarua o Te Kauaeranga

Whānau Pānui

28 August 2020

Kia ora e te whānau

In this Pānui

COVID-19 Update – still Alert Level 2.....	1
COVID-19 information	2
Sports Awards 2020 Cancelled	2
Northcote Sport Exchange cancelled	2
Spirit Week: 31 August – 4 September	2
Mufti day Friday 4 September.....	2
Enrolments 2021	3
Exit passes	3
Shoes	3
Catch up time	4
Current Vacancies	4
Vaping – we need to stop it, it is serious	4
Some other articles for reference	5
Key dates	5
2021 Start dates (tentative)	5

COVID-19 Update – still Alert Level 2

As you will be aware the whole of Aotearoa/ New Zealand will be at Level 2 from midnight Sunday.

Attendance

Remember that means that schools are open, and all children must attend (unless sick). Please note that students who do not attend school for extended periods and that are not legitimately engaged in home study if particularly vulnerable (with medical evidence) must be removed from the roll. This is a Ministry of Education requirement as we can only get funded for students that attend school.

Please discuss with our Kaihautu / Deans if there are special circumstances, or contact Deputy Principal, Mrs N O'Neil (attendance).

Level 2, for our school it is a continuation of the precautions we have taken to date.

- Stay home if you are sick
- Seek medical advice if you have a fever, dry cough, sore throat, etc.
- Contact tracing – schools have attendance rolls, and visitors can use the QR code posters along with our regular sign in register.
- Wash and dry your hands regularly and/or use hand sanitiser, if you cannot access washing facilities.
- Bring your own sanitiser or there is sanitiser still in locations at school.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or tissues (and dispose of properly).
- Physical distancing (not touching and not breathing on each other at Alert Level 2).
- Regularly cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces.

Schools are not classified as gatherings and a range of events and activities can go ahead, but we observe all public health guidelines.

Face coverings are not required at school or on any school transport, but we support any choice to wear these.

Some events may need to be cancelled or postponed while we remain at Alert Level 2 due to restrictions on numbers of visitors. That is why we, sadly, had to cancel the Year 8 Open Evening and Report interviews.

School ball

There is a possibility that we remain at level 2 for the school ball (Saturday 17 October). At Alert Level 2 a school ball is considered a gathering as the purpose of the event is not education. It is a social event. Therefore the above advice for gatherings would need to apply, i.e. limit of 100. We will advise as soon as we can about this event, as we are checking out the financial implications of a late cancellation. To minimise losses we are likely to need a decision soon.

Field trips, school camps

So long as the guidelines on physical spacing and hygiene are adhered to these can go ahead. These are assessed on a case by case basis. Inter-regional travel is allowed but, again, good protocols must be in place for buses.

School plays/music events

The limit here is 100 in the audience, so long as the performers are well separated from the audience.



Food technology, science activities

These classes can go ahead with appropriate food safety practices in place, coupled with adherence to the public health measures.

Can parents and caregivers come onsite at Level 2?

Yes – however physical distancing of 2 metres is recommended for parents and caregivers from people they do not know (to align with public health measures outside the school grounds).

Parents and caregivers who come onsite need to be noted in the visitor register and you can use check in using the NZ COVID Tracer app via our QR code poster.

COVID-19 information

The Ministry of Education [parent website](#) has information about COVID-19 alert levels for parents and whānau. It will be regularly updated.

Helping children and young people while they are learning at home or coping with changing alert levels

Helping children and young people cope with the changes caused by COVID-19 means providing accurate information, discussing facts without causing undue alarm, and re-establishing routines.

More guidance for parents, caregivers and whānau is available [here](#) and online at [Te Rito Toi](#).

There is advice for parents on looking after their wellbeing, and the wellbeing of others, on the learning from home website. There are also [three COVID-19 Wellbeing Guides](#) available providing further advice to parents and teachers.

COVID-19 Testing

COVID-19 related care – including diagnosis, testing and treatment – [is provided and free of charge to anyone who requires it, who has symptoms](#).

This is irrespective of citizenship, visa status, nationality or level of medical insurance coverage. The only time a person should be charged is when they ask for a test to enter another country.

Sports Awards 2020 Cancelled

Due to Covid-19 limitations of competition and gathering restrictions we have made the decision to not hold a Sports Awards event this year.

Sports have been limited and some cancelled due to lock down and the alert level restrictions. Sports that has operated will be recognised through our website and at assemblies.

While this is, of course, disappointing the Sport Department very much appreciates the support for this decision.

Northcote Sport Exchange cancelled

Northcote College, because of the loss of time due to being at level 3 for several weeks, have regrettably had to cancel this great event. We look forward (fingers crossed) to next year, to continue this annual celebration of sport.

Spirit Week: 31 August – 4 September

Many thanks to the senior leaders who have organised Spirit Week, designed to give us a lift and inspire House spirit. A range of activities is planned, and the week finishes with an Amazing Race where House Whānau teams complete mini challenges. Adams, Dorrington, Hoult and Rudman compete for points, but the emphasis is on participation, supporting each other and having a great time.

During the week, the day schedule will change so that there is a longer lunchtime to allow for the events.

Mufti day Friday 4 September

On the last day of Spirit Week, there is a mufti day, with a gold coin donation that will support SPCA this year. Many animals have been abandoned over COVID-19 times and we would like to help.

There are two themes operating. For Year 13 there is the 'dream job' and for others there is the encouragement to wear house colours.

The regular, sensible guidelines around mufti days still apply. These are:

Mufti Day clothing, although casual, **must be appropriate for a school workplace environment**.



This includes, but may not be limited to:

- No inappropriate language.
- No slogans referring to smoking, alcohol and drugs, any sexual connotations.
- Footwear is to be smart/casual. School shoes will be issued to taiohi/students who wear inappropriate footwear. Suitable footwear i.e. enclosed shoes must be worn for practical classes (Health & PE, Science and Technology).
- The normal expectations of hair colour apply, so please do not colour your hair for this day.
- Do not bring any props or costumes, that may be inappropriate or be distraction to learning in the classroom.
- No bandanas are to be worn.

Should clothing that is deemed as not suited to the school workplace, the school reserves the right to ask students to change either into provided school uniform, if available, or the item(s) may be corrected with the help of caregivers / whānau.

For consistency, decisions about what does and does not meet the standards above will be decided by members of the Senior Leadership Team. Parent and caregivers / whānau support is expected and appreciated.

Enrolments 2021

While we had to cancel our Year 8 Open Evening, we need to continue with our enrolments for 2021. It is essential for our planning that we have a clear idea of our Year 9 roll for 2021.

Our Year 9 team will visit our contributing schools in the next few weeks to fit in with the best time for schools.

We are holding two enrolment afternoons to complete an enrolment interview to help us get to know your child and his/her needs.

These will be held on **Tuesday 8 September and Tuesday 15 September** from **3.30 pm to 5.30 pm**. Interviews will be held by Deans and the Senior Leadership Team and should take around 15 minutes.

Please book make a booking at the office or call 868 8688.

Exit passes

If your son/daughter has an appointment then please ensure this is requested in advance, so an Exit Pass can be issued. This could be a legitimate appointment letter or slip, or present a note signed by parents, or parents can send an email to studentsupport@thameshigh.school.nz.

Taiohi / students must sign out and back in, as we all must when leaving the kura / school site.

Taiohi / students may not leave class at the right time without an Exit Pass.

Shoes

Thanks for the increasing number of parents who are providing the right style of shoes. If you are looking to replace shoes, please do not replace with the flat style skater shoe, especially those with the rubber toe. Not only are they very casual, they do not provide arch support. Sports trainers, Vans, Converse (or similar) styles are not allowed as they are too casual.

Shoes are meant to be tidy, black and fully polishable, not casual shoes. We welcome inquiries to check that shoes are suitable, rather than the disappointment of being asked to provide new shoes.

Boys styles of shoes (examples only)



Girls (examples only)



Catch up time

Lateness, skipping class and truancy must be caught up in some way. The first of the new deans' catch ups began this week. Promoting punctuality and the discipline of being present is being addressed at every level, from the classroom teacher/Kaiako, heads of department and deans. Having conversations about the disadvantages of missing time is a start, and catch up time is part of the solution. This is the first of many other approaches.

Current Vacancies

Please refer our [website](#) for details about two support staff positions that are currently open to applications.

Librarian (Part-time)

20 hours per week Term time only
Applications close: 4 pm Monday 7 September

Student Support Officer

Monday to Friday, 32.5 hours per week – 8.30 am to 3.30 pm term time only)
Applications close: 4 pm Monday 31 August 2020

Vaping – stop it; it is serious



As for many schools, nationally and internationally, we have experienced an increased incidence of our students (in uniform) being reported as vaping in public, bringing or using vapes in school. These behaviours are unacceptable and not in keeping with our values, including the value of being respectful to oneself, and as representatives of Thames High School.

Primarily it is a health concern, as it is for smoking and the use of other drugs/alcohol, and we discourage students from all of these.

With the increased incidence of vaping, it is important to reinforce that the school will treat

such behaviour as serious in order to discourage it. What we have been doing is informing parents and discussing the harms and risks of vaping with the young people, give warnings against future behaviour and have consequences for students.

Further incidents may need to be dealt with more serious consequences, such as stand downs or suspension, should the behaviours continue or repeated. We must send a clear message that this is unacceptable behaviour. It has been heartening that many young people have said they have been shocked to hear of the harmful effects and that has discouraged them. Overwhelmingly, parents contacted in relation to these behaviours have been supportive, and we appreciate the ongoing support.



Vaping is marketed as a ('more healthy') substitute for smoking, but young people have been attracted to the activity by both its 'over 18' status and the look and taste of it, the flavours are seemingly made so that young people will try them out. There has been recently a surge of marketing that may be in response to the regulations that are underway.

There are multiple health concerns. Vapes contain nicotine, an addictive substance, often in larger amounts than in cigarettes. The craving for vaping is stronger if one is addicted to the nicotine. As vaping has become more widespread and around for several years now, more studies are showing them being harmful to the lungs, making them more prone to develop lung diseases, including forms of pneumonia. Sadly, there have also been reported cases of deaths linked to the use of vapes or the vaping oils they contain.

More recently, [there has been news that vaping increases the risk of COVID-19 illness.](#)



To reinforce how serious the risks are, recently [the law changed to make vaping illegal to sell to under 18s, and make it illegal to vape in a workplace, as part of the SmokeFree Act.](#)

Some other articles for reference

The Guardian (UK): [Vaping is risky. Do not do it if you care about your lungs](#) (5 September 2019)

"a steady stream of scientific studies has uncovered potential health risks associated with vaping. These risks include nicotine dependence, airway injury, and cardiovascular disease. Now we must add debilitating lung disease to that list. Lipoid pneumonia is one such disease, probably caused by inhalation of oil-containing vapor: the body's immune response to oil in the lungs involves inflammation that can be fatal."

NZ Herald: [First death reported from vaping-related lung illness, officials say](#) (24 August 2019)

More about vaping:

<https://childmind.org/article/teen-vaping-what-you-need-to-know/>

<https://vapingfacts.health.nz/the-facts-of-vaping/>

As always, I welcome comments.

Please email principal@thameshigh.school.nz or call 07 868 8688

Ngā mihi

Matua Michael Hart
Tumuaki/Principal

Key dates

Dates are subject to change and will be advised.

Mon 31 Aug - Fri 4 Sept	Spirit Week (3.30 to 5.00 pm)
Tues 1 Sept	Photolife Sports/Team Photos
Fri 4 Sept	Mufti day (SPCA) – gold coin
Tue 8 Sept & Tue 15 Sept	Year 9 2021 Enrolments (3.30 to 5.00 pm)
Thu 10 Sept	L2 & 3 English Derived Grade Exams
Fri 10 Sept	L1 English Derived Grade Exams
Thu 10 Sept to Sat 12 Sept	Year 13 Drama Production (7.00 to 8.30 pm)
Fri 18 Sept & Sat 19 Sept	Year 13 Drama Production (7.00 to 8.30 pm)
Fri 25 Sept	Last Day of Term 3
Mon 12 Oct	Term 4 begins
Fri 16 Oct	Pink Shirt Day
Sat 17 Oct	General Elections - voting centre in THS Hall
Sat 17 Oct	THS Senior School Ball(<i>subject to change</i>)
Wed 11 Nov	Senior Prizegiving
Mon 16 Nov	NCEA external exams start
Wed 25 Nov	Teacher Only Day - no classes for junior students
Mon 7 Dec – Wed 9 Dec	Year 10 Camps
Fri 11 Dec	Junior Prizegiving / Last Day of Term 4

2021 Start dates (tentative)

Mon 1 Feb	Anniversary Day
Tue 2 Feb	Teacher-only day
Wed 3 Feb	Term 1 begins: Year 11-13 course confirmation
Thu 4 Feb	Powhiri for Year 9 Orientation for Year 9 / Year 10 start
Fri 5 Feb	School starts
Mon 8 Feb	Waitangi Day (obs)
Tue 9 Feb	Whole school / timetable

