

# Thames High School

Te Kura Tuarua o Te Kauaeranga



*Kia kōtahi ai te piki ake, kia ikeike rawa ki te taumata / We grow together to achieve one's true potential.*

## Whānau Pānui

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13 October 2021

Kiā ora e te whanau

### Covid-19 Update

This bulletin is an update following the recent announcements (11 October) by the government that affect all schools - all staff and students. A general pānui will be sent to cover some other aspects of Term 4. We are looking forward to seeing all students back again.

We are very fortunate to remain in an area at Alert Level 2, but the situation could change. Our thoughts go out to those regions that are at level 3 (Auckland, Northland, and parts of the Waikato region). It is incredibly hard for them, and we hope that they can soon return to level 2 or below.

As we plan to come back to school next week, I would like to reassure you that we continue to follow all the advice we receive. As a school we have been planning to remain at level 2 for some time and we are prepared for a higher alert level should that be needed. As always well-being is our focus, and that means we need to follow all the recommendations and rules at level 2.

Much of the information I am providing is from the Ministry of Education as they work out the details of the government announcements.

As the government has stated, the response by New Zealanders to this latest outbreak has been strong, with high rates of testing and more and more people getting vaccinated. Every day we are seeing news that the rates are increasing.

### The key points of the announcements from the government are:

- From 1 January 2022, all schools (and early learning centres) will need to ensure only vaccinated staff and support personnel have contact with children and students. They need to have their first dose by 15 November to meet this deadline. This requirement includes all support people in schools such as teacher-aides, administration, and maintenance staff.

This also applies to unpaid workers, such as volunteers (including parent volunteers), trainee teachers and any members of the community who are on site at the school kura, as they are likely to meet students.

- All secondary schools are required to maintain a **COVID-19 vaccination register of staff and students**.
- **BUSES – no mask, no trip:** Face coverings are required to be worn by Year 9 to 13 students when on **school transport at all Alert Levels**. This is a key change to the previous rules.
- Face coverings continue to be required by students and staff in secondary settings (Year 9 to 13) at Alert Level 3.
- At level 2, face coverings are still **recommended** for both staff and students, especially indoors where physical spacing isn't easy to manage.
- Children under 12 years of age remain exempted from wearing face coverings.



## Vaccination Register

The Ministry of Education has advised that if we were to have a case of COVID-19 in our school, public health authorities will want to know if we are a school with a high vaccination rate. This information will then be used as part of the local health authority's risk assessment. The more highly vaccinated we are (staff and eligible students), the less likely it will be that we will have to close for a long period of time, or we might not need to close at all. This could limit the numbers of staff and students that may be required to self-isolate.

We have therefore been instructed by the Ministry of Education to find out if **staff and students have had their first or second vaccine dose or are exempted from being vaccinated**. This information will be held by us in accordance with the Privacy Act and will only be shared outside the school with public health authorities. Inside the school the information will be securely put alongside other health information accessible only as required.

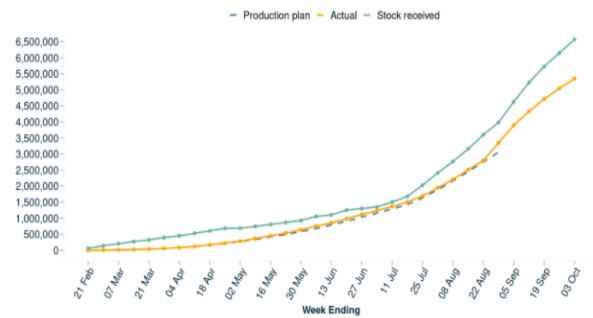
We are getting our data collection system in place, following advice from the Ministry of Education, and will get in touch with you again very soon, by separate email requesting this information. This will be in the form of a short online survey. Those that do not complete the survey will need to be followed up manually, by a paper form or phone call.

More than 5.7 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine have now been given in New Zealand (as of 13 October 2021):

- 59 percent are fully vaccinated (2 doses) = 2.49 million New Zealanders
- 83 percent have had their first dose = 3.48 million New Zealanders

For a full update go to the [Ministry of Health website](#)

Cumulative vaccinations



The two best things we can do to keep our community as safe as possible is **to get tested if we are feeling unwell and get everyone who is eligible vaccinated**.

The trend is clear that accessing services and activities, like travel or concerts, will become increasingly limited to those who are vaccinated.

## Other safety guidelines at our school

### Safe practice - hygiene

- We regularly clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces
- We encourage everyone to frequently wash their hands and
- cough and sneeze into their elbow.



Wash & dry your hands



Clean and disinfect all surfaces and objects



Cough or sneeze into your elbow



Sanitise on your way in



## Visitors

Visitors to the school must continue to contact trace (QR code or register at Reception) and **must** wear a face mask. Visitors who enter beyond reception will continue to sign in and have a visitors pass as always.

## Physical distancing

While physical distancing is not a requirement in schools, we will be doing our best to keep students from congregating in very large numbers and keeping spaces well-ventilated.

What that means is we encourage there to be more spacing in the seating arrangements, and students should be far enough away from others, so they are not breathing on or touching one another. Doors or windows will be left open (if warm enough) or regularly opened to refresh the air inside.

We will limit numbers in small rooms and offices, including at Reception, Student Services, and administration offices.

When we have meetings with external visitors, we will all wear masks.

## Pick ups and drop offs

For parents conducting student pick-ups and drop-offs, these should occur in an outdoor environment where face coverings must be worn, and physical distancing measures retained. Parents, whānau and caregivers are not required to be vaccinated or tested to pick up or drop off children.

## Sick or unwell? Stay at home

Please do continue to monitor your health and do not send your children to school if they are not well (and please seek advice from your GP or Healthline about getting a COVID test).



**Stay home  
if you are sick**

## Face coverings recommended, especially inside

At level 2, face coverings are 'recommended' at school **just as they must in some other places.**



The number of students who have worn masks inside has been low, but it continues to be encouraged especially in spaces where physical distancing is limited.

The decision to wear a face covering is up to you and your whānau, whatever your decision it will be respected.

Wearing a face covering is one simple action we can take to be responsible for your safety and the safety of others. Remember that students should have their own masks and they are not to share them. Masks need to be worn correctly to be effective.

[For details about the correct use of masks please follow this link to the covid-19 site.](#)

See you all back at school next week!

I welcome any queries or questions and I will do my best to answer these either personally or in upcoming pānui or bulletins.

Ngā manaakitanga

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