



Whānau Pānui – 28 January 2022

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Kei aku nui, kei aku rahi, tēnā koutou katoa i roto i ngā āhuatanga o te wā.

Welcome back after what we hope has been a wonderful summer for your whānau.

We can't wait to welcome everyone back onsite, after the long weekend. [Refer to the information shared last year about dates.](#)

This pānui is focused on Covid-19 and how we are planning to keep everyone safe as possible as we start the new school year.

Covid-19 Update

As you may know, since Monday 24 January, we are at **Red in the Covid-19 Protection Framework (CPF)**.

As at all colours of the CPF, **the school is open**. At this stage, all the dates in our start-up calendar are unchanged.

We are used to operating the school under good public health guidelines (see more below). The main change that is a requirement at Red is the wearing of **face masks**.

Face masks at school

All taiohi / students, staff and any visitors **must** wear face masks indoors and when in close contact with others. For instance, this, may be outside, while lining up at the canteen.



Masks need to be specific for this purpose. Not scarves, handkerchiefs, bandanas, etc. The mask must cover the nose and mouth properly. Recommended masks are the **disposable masks (medical masks)** and **re-usable fabric masks with three layers**.

We do not have a choice in this matter, and we look forward to your support in making sure this key measure happens without any pressure or issues caused by not having a mask.

Masks are required:

- On school transport or public transport
- in classrooms and other gatherings
- when accessing public venues
- at student health services



The only people who do not have to wear masks are those who have an **official exemption card** from authorised agents.

- Disabled Persons Assembly NZ
- Blind Citizens NZ
- Deaf Aotearoa

If anyone has been officially exempted from wearing a face covering, this **must** be communicated to the school with relevant approval documented and always carried – an exemption card, for instance.

How to wear a mask

Refer to this guide: [Wearing a face covering](#)



Students who do not wear a mask

We hope we do not need to deal with non-compliance, but if we do it will be handled as we do all non-compliance, regarding health and safety. Such as:

- We will ask and remind. Expecting a correction.
- If needed, we will provide a mask in the short term (blue 'surgical mask')
- We will ask for support from caregivers/parents.
- We will advise caregivers/parents of the non-compliance.

If the situation is not changed then there may be grounds to consider stand down or suspension for continuous disobedience or for being a health and safety risks.

Equity

As in all matters that are compulsory - such as uniform - we have equity measures for those who cannot supply their own mask. Please enquire at the Student Support Office.

This is a good time to remind that the same goes for uniform and basic stationery that is required for school. Please ask, call 868 8688 or email studentsupport@thameshigh.school.nz

Other ways we stay safe

Public health habits

To slow the spread of the virus, and continue to help protect everyone and our whānau, and our community, it is important to [keep up the healthy habits](#) we know.

The most important is taiohi / students who are sick or feeling unwell, must stay home – advise the school in the normal way. If you are unwell with cold, flu or covid-19 symptoms then get tested and remain away until a negative test is returned.

Note: If staff observe taiohi / students who may be unwell, we will contact parents/caregivers to come and pick them up. The principal can insist someone who is potentially unwell with a communicable disease to stay away. But that is a last resort when we expect common sense and support.

Other reminders include:

- Regularly washing and thoroughly drying hands or use hand sanitiser. Sanitiser is provided at school, especially at entrances. We recommend taiohi / students have a personal supply of sanitiser.
- Sneeze and cough into elbow.
- Avoid touching face, including eyes, nose, or mouth if hands are not clean.
- Keep your distance from people you do not know.
- Clean or disinfect shared surfaces often.
- We will ensure that classrooms and other spaces are as well ventilated as possible.
- Always maintain physical distancing with those you do not know when out and about.
- Use the COVID-19 tracer app and record where you have been.

Events and activities

Large hui and gatherings especially when indoors continue to be one of the riskier activities we can undertake.

We are in the process reviewing all our events and activities for the upcoming term to ensure we meet the health guidance for Red.



Pōwhiri

The first event that we are changing to meet the gathering limits at Red is our pōwhiri on Wednesday 2 February 2022. As the gathering limit, without vaccine passes is 25, and with passes, 100, we must make some changes.

Students can participate at school regardless vaccination status, and that includes the pōwhiri. For a group event at Red any other participants will need to have a vaccine pass, including whānau.

Therefore, we have decided to split our pōwhiri into two ore (groups), and limit participation to keep numbers below 100. This will mean that we can have parents who have vaccine passes join us at the wharenuī for the pōwhiri.

A separate email will be sent to advise if you are in group 1 (starting at 9 am) or 2 (starting at 9.30 am).

Any change to this plan will be advised. If there is a case in the local community all our plans will be revised.

Similarly, we have made changes to events such as Swimming Sports (as it is held at the Centennial Pool that required vaccine passes). We will give more details next week.

Vaccination status

As a reassurance, we remind you that All staff, support people and volunteers at school **must** be vaccinated. This includes:

- All teachers and principals
- All support staff in schools: teacher-aides, administration staff, maintenance staff
- contractors,
- parent or other volunteers.
- All homestay caregivers, e.g. for international students

Taiohi / students are not prevented from going to school based on their vaccination status, or participating in curriculum-related activities (school work).

Parents who have a meeting at school may also come to school regardless of vaccination status, but all other precautions need to be followed (contact tracing, mask, distancing, etc.)

Managing cases in our school

We have a good contact tracing system in place (timetable schedules, attendance rolls) so that if there is a confirmed case who has been at school while infectious, we can quickly identify who was a close contact of that person. We will then quickly advise those contacts of what they need to do.

Only if the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education advises to do so, will we consider closing physical onsite school and moving to distance learning for everyone. At Red we will keep everyone learning onsite for as long as we can.

We may also get to a point with staff and student absences that the only safe way to continue to operate is by distance learning only. This will also be done with advice from the Ministry of Education. As much as possible we will provide some onsite supervision.

Please make sure your contact details we have on file are up to date, so we can get in touch with you if needed. Please log in to the [WebPortal](#) and check details. You can put changes of details into the Portal that need to be accepted by our admin staff.

Distance learning

We are planning to support off site learning for those **required** to self-isolate or waiting for a test result or those students with complex medical needs, following advice from a health professional

This typically means providing learning materials using our online platform (Google Classroom). Not all activities may be possible, such as practical activities, but alternatives may be expected.

In all other circumstances taiohi / students are required to come to school.

Those at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19

Those with complex medical needs, can seek advice from their health professional about whether it is appropriate to come to work / school.

Support off site learning will be provided for those who are advised to remain at home by a medical professional (e.g. medical certificate).



Contact tracing

Contact tracing is a key part of how we respond to cases. We will display QR codes and have a contact tracing system (timetable, attendance register and visitor register) to assist health authorities when there are cases connected with our school.

All visitors should scan in using the NZ COVID Tracer app or use another method such as a physical visitor register. The register will be provided to health authorities if needed.

We will maintain up-to-date registers of those involved in school activities, like sports teams.

Our timetable and attendance registers will be kept up to date as always.

At Red students may not be offsite during lunchtimes or other breaks.

Only those who have legitimate appointments may get exit passes in the normal way. Signing in and out, as always, is essential.

Parents and caregivers dropping off and picking up students

Parents and caregivers dropping off or picking up students before and after school are encouraged to wear a face covering and keep 2 metres distance from others.

Preparing for COVID-19

We can all prepare for COVID-19, making sure you and your household have a plan and know what to do. This will mean your whānau and community can help each other if needed. Find out more here:

- [Be prepared for COVID-19](#)
- [Download the COVID-19 Readiness Checklist \[PDF, 121 KB\]](#)
- [What to expect when self-isolating at home](#)

Work and Income support

The beginning of the year can be a tough time for parents who are faced with many costs and it is important you are aware of what assistance you may be able to get from **Work and Income**. These are available to people on a low income as well as those on a benefit.

Check what you might get here

- [School costs](#)
- [Out of School Care and Recreation \(OSCAR\) Subsidy](#)
- [Other Childcare Assistance](#)
- [School and Year Start-up Payment \(for people getting Orphan's Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit\)](#)
- [Help with living costs \(including food and rent/mortgage\)](#)

Use the links above or call 0800 559 009 to find out more, or to apply.

MoneyTalks can assist with [free budgeting and debt help](#)

You can also contact your local community provider. [Please find more information here.](#)

If you know anyone in your community affected by COVID-19 and who may need help, such as food and other financial assistance, Work and Income has a range of [supports available for individuals, families, employers and self-employed people affected by COVID-19.](#)

Activities

Whether activities not in our typical teaching programme go ahead depends on whether they are essential to the curriculum or not.

Curriculum-related activities

At red these can continue with appropriate measures:

- the primary school technology programme – with distancing especially from THS students (1 m) where possible.
- Examinations – with 1.5 m spacing
- Assemblies – either outdoors or with limits to ensure physical spacing



Non-curriculum related events

Non-curriculum related events must be limited and may only go ahead if a vaccination certificate is required.

- If bringing others onsite, including parents and caregivers, any general rules for events applicable at the time, will apply.

Sport

- All advice from [Sports NZ](#) will be followed. Here is the [advice for sports and recreation](#)
- The guidelines for sport were shared last year and can be found on our website.

EOTC (Education outside the classroom)

- EOTC (Education outside the classroom) will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- If the activity can be run with the same or better measures than at school, then it may be allowed. In many cases EOTC activities will be affected by the needs of external venues. For example, they may require only fully vaccinated people on site or participating. That may then put the activity at risk for those students who are not fully vaccinated, or the numbers may mean that the activity is no longer sustainable and must be called off for all.
- If there may be contact with people we do not know or have contact tracing information, then the event will not be allowed.

Visitors

- Only essential visitors, those that support learning and wellbeing are allowed on site. This includes learning support, like RTLB and health services. All visitors will be required to register and wear face coverings.
- At Red, no non-essential visitors are allowed on site. Parents and caregivers that are required to meet with staff may visit, following public health measures.
- All visitors, including parents and caregivers, if they do come onsite should wear face coverings when on school grounds.
- All visitors, as always, need to enter at reception.

Large gatherings

- At **Red**, we must avoid large gatherings that are not essential to schooling and that do not follow the public health restrictions in place at the time.
- Non-curriculum related events are limited.
- At the time of writing the limits for gatherings are:
 - 100 with vaccine passes required and with 1 m spacing
 - 25 without vaccine passes required and with 1 m spacing

Library

- As we have in the past, we will limit numbers in the library at break times and ensure we have contact tracing in place.

Drinking fountains

- We have been advised that it is okay to use drinking fountains to use and fill water bottles.
- We strongly recommend students have their own water bottle and do not share it.
- We will follow usual safety precautions (regular cleaning, don't touch mouth to metal, wash hands regularly).

Food preparation and eating

All food safety requirements will be followed, and we will ensure any suppliers meet all health and safety requirements.

Advice at Red is that food should be eaten outside wherever practicable.

This will be managed in wet break times by managing numbers indoors if needed.

Emergencies and drills

As emergencies like fire and tsunami alerts require evacuation and gathering, we are allowed to continue]. Likewise, lockdowns requiring staying indoors are also allowed. We will practice fire and emergency and lockdowns as normal.

While this might all feel a little overwhelming at times, we know that all these measures will help taiohi / students return to school, reconnect with whānau and friends and do what they enjoy.

We are also here to help. Please get in touch if you have any concerns or need help in any way.

Ngā manaakitanga

Michael Hart
Tumuaki / Principal

