



## Whānau Pānui – Covid Update – 22 July 2022



### Welcome back!

School starts back on **Monday 25 July**; we will start with a Whānau/Rōpū class at 8.45 am.

I trust you have enjoyed a positive and refreshing school holiday. I know that many of us may have experienced poor weather and had to manage indoor activities.

Our thoughts and best wishes go out to those communities affected by the winter weather, experiencing floods and other challenges.

This update is about the advice from the Ministries of Health and Education about **masks being required in term three**. Please read this carefully and please get in contact if you have any concerns or queries about the mask wearing settings.

The update is consistent with the messages that we had last term that there may be times where **mask wearing is required**.

Thank you for your support in protecting our school community. By reducing the rate of infections and re-infections then there is a much better chance that we can keep the school operating without rostering level(s) home or moving to full distance learning. It is best for all of us to keep learning as uninterrupted as possible.

We have done well so far, and we are grateful for the cooperation that we have received from our students and community. And we need to continue to work together.

### Masking up for the start of Term 3

*We are following advice to require masks inside for the first four weeks (at least).*

#### **Read more...**

In previous years we have found there is an increase in winter illnesses in schools at the start of Term 3 as students bring back infections after travelling and socialising during the holidays.

In recent weeks cases of COVID-19 are increasing in most parts of the country, and we are also seeing high numbers of other winter illnesses like flu. Our experience at the end of Term 2 and information from our community suggests Thames has experienced this increase too.

For the start of Term 3, 2022, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health strongly recommend that all schools and kura change their mask policy for the first four weeks of term **to require mask wearing in all indoor settings for students** in Years 4 and above.

This does not include any situation where mask wearing might not be practicable, such as while eating and drinking, playing certain musical instruments, indoor sport, certain activities such as singing or drama performance on stage, and PE. In situations where mask wearing is impractical particular attention will be paid to ensuring there is good ventilation during the activity, and physical distancing where practicable.

**Wearing masks can reduce new cases of the virus by as much as 53%.**

Mask wearing works alongside other measures including vaccination, good ventilation, staying home when sick, and hand washing and other hygiene measures, to protect our students and staff.

[Keep up healthy habits – Unite Against COVID-19](#)

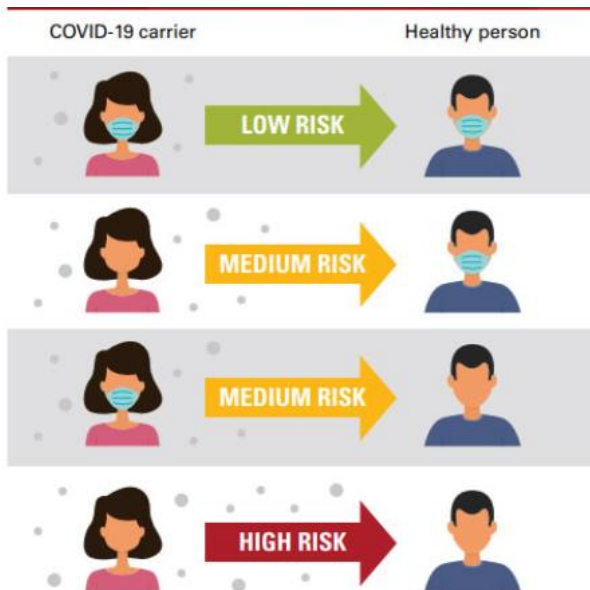


## Wearing a mask

**Please make sure that taiohi / students come to school ready to wear masks indoors.**

Students should bring masks from home.

If students cannot bring masks from home, masks will be available from teachers and the student support office.



Adult-sized masks can generally be adjusted to fit older children by tying knots in the ear loops. Unite Against COVID-19 shows how to do this:

[How to wear a face mask safely – Unite Against COVID-19](#)

## Buses and school transport

As always, wearing masks is required on all school transport. It is a condition of service to follow all guidelines on the buses.

We also require masks on all school trips and transport for sports teams and so on. That is because there is limited physical distancing a van or car.

## Exempt students

We know that that some of our taiohi / young people are exempt from wearing a mask.

**In term one we provided passes for those who are exempt, and these will still apply.**

If there are any **new exemptions**, please advise one of the deputy principals to discuss this.

If a student has an exemption card or a letter from their health provider, or we have agreed that mask wearing is not practicable for them, **we will support them to not wear a mask.**

[Apply for a face mask exemption pass – Unite Against COVID-19](#)

Once again, thank you for your support in protecting our school community.

Noho ora mai

Michael Hart  
**Tumuaki / Principal**

