

24 February 2022

Kia ora tatou

I hope you're well. Apologies for the length of this email. There's a lot of information for you right now, and we will also post this email on the website in our usual place. Please pass it on to your children if you feel they are old enough to process the information as well.

Firstly, thank you to everyone for your prompt and supportive actions over the last 24 hours. The two families with infections have done absolutely everything right to support the community, and everyone has understood that we are both trying to keep everyone safe, and trying to ensure that high quality education continues, Pinehurst style!

In summary, this is the current situation:

1. Two siblings, one in Year 7 and one in Year 8 have tested positive, and were potentially infectious in school on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday morning. They have no symptoms.
2. One child, in Year 4, has tested positive. He has mild symptoms that are already fading.
3. The Year 4 child has a sibling in Year 2. She has tested **negative** this morning and will take another test later today.
4. The Year 8 child is fully-vaccinated; the Year 4 and Year 7 children have had their first dose and waiting for their second (as is the case with most children their age).
5. A Year 9-13 teacher has tested a "weak" positive and is isolating for the next ten days. She has been exceptionally careful and our assessment is that she poses no risk to any students. She also has no symptoms and is fully-vaccinated and has had her booster jab.

This means that:

1. Year 7 and 8 students are studying online Thursday 24th and Friday 25th February. They will be tested with RATs on Monday morning.
2. Year 4 students are studying online Thursday 24th and Friday 25th February. They will be tested with RATs on Monday morning.
3. Year 2 students are studying online Thursday 24th, but will be back in school tomorrow, Friday 25th February.

Some good news for you:

1. We have tested all of the siblings of Year 7 and 8 students who came into school today. All tested negative.
2. Nearly all Year 7 and 8 students have now been tested at home. So far, all are negative.

3. This means that we are confident that our health measures in school are working well. There is still time for there a child to test positive, though. This is why we are teaching Year 4 and Year 7 and 8 online today and tomorrow.

I want to explain our reasoning for this approach:

1. We are now **managing risk**. We accept that there are many infections around our community, and that there will be students and staff who come into school with an infection. This is true of all schools now.
2. Our priority is the safety of our students, staff and wider community, so we will keep our health measures in place and continue to be very careful around school.
3. Our second priority is our students' education - both their academic progress and their broader school experience. This means that we will do all we can to keep students in school.
4. We will have a different approach in Primary than we have in College. This is because students in Primary have currently not had the chance to be fully-vaccinated, and the risk profile is slightly different with younger children.
5. Our community is largely vaccinated and is generally a cautious one who also wishes to have our children in school. So we will always act with caution.
6. Siblings of students who are in year groups where there has been an infection are not a high risk to other students because the chance that they are infected is not much higher than the chance of someone from any year group. In other words, infections are more likely to come into school from outside than they are to come from inside the school. The negative tests we have had in the last 24 hours are one piece of evidence for this.

This means that, in the future:

1. We are unlikely to send whole year groups home when there is a case. The Prime Minister is about to announce a move to "Phase 3". This does not change our approach - we are already doing things our own way. We will continue to use short online learning periods of 2-3 days for classrooms in Primary and in Year 7 and 8, but in Years 9-13, we are likely to move to focusing only on the actual positive cases
2. We will use RATs for classes and year groups where there are infections. These are an effective tool even though they are not perfect. If a student tests negative in the morning, and has no symptoms, the strong likelihood is that they will not be infectious at school. As I said earlier, we are managing risk now, and we do not expect to keep out all infections. Our health rules in school, plus the RATs, mean that the risk is appropriately low.
3. If we have a number of further cases in Primary, we will move to hybrid learning. That is: we will offer parents a choice each week whether they wish their children to learn at home or at school and we will organise teaching resources accordingly. You will be asked this on Thursdays for the following week in order to enable teachers to plan effectively. Our wonderful teachers need to be cherished! We are not doing this yet because the risks remain low at the moment and because it will mean that students' learning is disrupted. But we will if there are a number of additional infections.

4. We will continue to organise College as it is currently organised. That is, in-school learning with students joining Teams to see lessons in action if they are at home, and work on Schoolbox. If you keep your child at home in College, you must contact Mr Verryt to let him know.

I hope this makes sense!

For now, can I ask the following:

1. If you are a Year 7 or 8 parent and you have not collected RATs or done the test yourself, please do so straight away. Let me know about any positive test.

2. If you are a Year 4 parent, please test your child with an RAT. You can collect a pack of a single RAT from school any time today. Year 2 parents do not need to do this as there is no positive case in Year 2.

Many thanks to everyone for your continued support!

Alex.

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