

25th February 2022

Kia ora koutou

Firstly: there have been no new reported cases in our community since yesterday afternoon.

I thought I would start with this as I know an email from the school with "Covid" in the heading can cause some alarm. I am going to write home daily at the moment as the situation is changing so quickly. I also want to give you an update on attendance today and to explain what we will be doing on Monday to keep all of our children safe. This email will be placed on our website alongside all of our current Covid-19 emails. Apologies again for the long email.

RATs and Cases

We have run around 500 RATs at school and at home in the last 48 hours. Apart from the Year 4, 7, 8 and 11 students (4 students in total) that you already know about, **all tests have been negative**. This includes many siblings of Year 7 and 8 students especially. Of course, this may change, but what this tells us already is that we have not got widespread infections taking place in school, and that our approach offers a good level of protection. If we had lots of infections in schools, a number of these tests would have been positive.

1. All of Year 7 and 8 have had one test. All of Year 7 and 8 will have another test tomorrow (they have these at home) and another on Monday before going back to lessons.
2. All of Year 4 have had one test. All of Year 4 will have another test on Monday before going back to lessons.
3. All of Year 11 have had one test and are back in school.
4. Around 70% of staff have had at least one test.

Moving forward, if we have a case in a year group, we will continue to use RATs, but we will not use as many:

1. We will continue to target either single classes or particular year groups.
2. In Years 9-13, we will either send home an RAT (generally this is a good approach for Years 11-13), or will run the tests in school. Unless we have multiple cases, Year 9 to 13 students will not be sent home.
3. In Years 7-8, we will test students in school, either before returning to school (if we have sent them home), or in school. Year 7 and 8 students may or may not be sent home (we will run full online lessons in this case), depending on the circumstances.
4. In Years 1-6, we will initially keep students at home for 1 to 3 days, and test them on return to school.
5. We may, depending on the circumstances, test siblings of students in affected year groups. This also will be in school.

As you can see, we are not proposing to hand out many RATs to parents, although we will continue to do this in particular circumstances. This is to make sure that we retain enough stock to look after our staff and students properly. To give you an idea of numbers, we purchased around 1300 in

January, another 200 earlier this week, and should have a further 500 by the end of today. We have around 2500 more on order, and we expect these in the next week or so. By the end of Monday, we expect to have used around 1200 tests. We expect that our current orders, with the approach we have outlined above, will last us up to 6 weeks. Our approach is basically the same as it has been - testing staff and students as an extra level of precaution - but it conserves our stock. The cost so far is manageable and within budget, but we hope to be able to scale this back over time. We obviously will not charge for any tests we administer, but we will restrict our tests to when there has been a case in school.

RATs are now available at testing stations if you are symptomatic or a close contact, and I would encourage those of you with access to the tests to purchase your own if you are able. Businesses already can do this, and individuals should be able to do this in the near future.

Attendance today

I want to thank parents for their continued support of and trust in the school. I know this has been an unsettling week but, just to give you an idea, nearly 90% of Year 1 students are in school today, and around 70% of Year 2 students, where I know there have been some concerns. Attendance in Year 5 and 6 is nearly normal, as it is in Years 9 to 13. Even in Year 11, where there was a positive case recorded yesterday, 80% of students are in school (and all Year 11 students recorded negative tests last night). Thank you for your continued support and trust in our systems.

We expect all students in school on Monday (unless, of course, they are self-isolating because of a positive case in their household).

Monday Morning

All **Year 4** students should come to outside the dance studio (underneath the Library, between the Gym and the Arena) at 8.00 am. Students will have an RAT test and go to their class 15 minutes later. All **Year 7** students should come to outside the dance studio (underneath the Library, between the Gym and the Arena) at 9.00 am. Students will have an RAT test and go to their class 15 minutes later. All **Year 8** students should come to outside the dance studio (underneath the Library, between the Gym and the Arena) at 10.00 am. Students will have an RAT test and go to their class 15 minutes later.

This means that Year 7 students will miss some of period 1, and Year 8 students will miss all of period 1 and some of period 2. Please be patient with us: this enables us to be safe and to manage testing effectively without bringing the school to a complete halt! Parents are not permitted to stay with students, I'm afraid, while we do this. All of the students will already have had at least one test, so this is not a new procedure for them.

All other students should come to school as usual.

Online learning

A reminder that we will treat Primary and College differently:

Primary:

We currently run a limited online service for students who **have to self-isolate or are overseas**. This is not suitable for large numbers of students.

If the number of cases increases, we will offer parents a choice of in-school and online learning. This will look like the arrangements we had in place at the end of 2021 (with a few changes).

College:

If students have to self-isolate or are at home for other reasons (not sickness, in which case they need to rest!), they can join lessons via Teams and access work via Schoolbox or One Note. This is not the same as it was last year because College students are expected to be at school unless they have to self-isolate. This online learning is appropriate for short-term absence.

Finally, I will of course let you know if anything changes over the weekend. Please have a good couple of days, and please also remember my advice to be cautious about socialising, remembering the impact this can have on school life.

My very best wishes
Alex

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