

10 March 2022

Kia ora tatou,

I hope you're all well. Lots of fun here today in Primary (Year 5 Wheels Day, Junior Choir, and every day is a fun day for the little ones), and College (huge turnout for Debating, Orchestra practice and lots of running around in the wind). And, of course, a great deal of learning!

Today's update is brief, but with some additional notes about a change in the way we're going to use RATs in College.

New Cases

There are three new cases to report, continuing our very steady numbers:

- A Year 2 student, who has been at home since Monday afternoon, tested positive yesterday evening. She has been quite unwell but is recovering quickly - our thoughts are with her, and we're delighted she's bounced back so fast. She contracted the virus from her father, who is also recovering well. It is highly unlikely that she was infectious at school, but we tested Year 2 students anyway this morning: all tested negative.
- A Year 10 student tested positive yesterday afternoon and has mild symptoms. She has been in school this week, and so may have been infectious yesterday and Tuesday. We tested all Year 10 students, her POD and the students who take her bus today. All were negative.
- Another Year 10 student tested positive yesterday afternoon and has mild symptoms. She has been in school this week, and so may have been infectious yesterday and Tuesday. Her case is probably connected to the previous case. We tested all Year 10 students, her POD and the students who take her bus today. All were negative.
- Two teachers have tested positive. One was already isolating at home; the other is a College teacher who was at school earlier this week.

There have now been 26 students who have tested positive and 9 members of staff.

Rapid Antigen Testing

We did a large amount of testing this morning. Can I thank, by the way, the parents who have donated tests to the school: we are very grateful and the tests are being used!

We tested all of Year 11, all of Year 10, students on two buses, students from two PODs and students in Year 2, as well as a number of staff, siblings and students returning to school after isolation.

With regard to testing, we are going to shift to a more targeted approach from now on. The reason for that is that we think we have a clear pattern now, and have enough evidence to be reasonably secure that we are not seeing much in-school transmission at all. The tests are not perfect, of course, and are just one of our strategies to reduce infection, but now, two weeks in, we know we would have seen more cases if we were missing many positive cases when we test.

The lack of in-school transmission is as we hoped and expected, but we couldn't be sure, and the large-scale testing has helped support our community to be as safe as possible. Our community's safe, cautious approach has been hugely helpful too, so please continue this.

We will continue to test widely: it has a very important place as part of our strategy to reduce risk for you and for our students.

But what we will now do is:

In Primary, if there is a positive test and a chance that a student or teacher has been infectious in school, **we will test all the students in that class**. The only in-school transmission we have had has been within a Year 4 class where students were sitting close together. In Primary, no children have yet been fully-immunised, and there is much more movement in the class, so all students need to be tested.

In College, we will test students on buses, and we will test students who are likely to have been close to the student who has tested positive - this generally means students who sit near the student who has tested positive in class, plus good friends who they spend time with outside class. The number of students we test will vary, and we will cast a wide net if we are not sure - in other words, we will be cautious still. But we will not be testing whole year groups unless there is good reason for this. Although we have had a number of cases in College now, the only in-school transmission we have seen has been on a bus where the student was sat next to the student who tested positive for over an hour.

I hope this makes sense: it's an approach that follows the evidence of what we can see happening in school, and is proportionate and sensible. We will continue to review it, of course.

My best wishes to you all for a peaceful evening.

Kind regards,

Alex.

Alex Reed

Executive Principal

Pinehurst School

a: 75 Bush Road, Albany, Auckland 0632, NZ

t: +64 (0)9 414 0960 EXT 603

m: +64 (0)21 194 8584

e: Alex.Reed@pinehurst.school.nz

www.pinehurst.school.nz

