

18.11.2021

17 House Ave  
Mangere Bridge

Tēnā koutou,

I hope this letter finds you and your whānau safe and well

We are delighted to have been able to welcome more tamariki back onsite under Alert Level 3 from Wednesday 17 November.

We know learning kanohi ki te kanohi is the best option for children and young people. It's important for them to connect with their friends and teachers and it helps their social, physical and emotional wellbeing.

Since our tamariki have been back at school, there have been some queries from parents about mask wearing and the COVID measures the school is legally required to adopt. The following information re-enforces earlier correspondence from our Principal but provides more detail about mask wearing and exceptions.

The measures the school is legally required to adopt include;

- we need to limit the number of tamariki and staff onsite each day
- we will keep those onsite in separate groups
- we'll ensure our classrooms are well ventilated
- we'll continue to practice physical distancing where possible.

In addition to this, **all staff and children in Years 4 and above** are required to wear face coverings indoors (unless they have an exemption). This is not a School Board Policy decision but a legal requirement for all schools in Alert level 3.

We need to work together as a school community during what has been and still is a difficult time for everyone. We ask that you help in the following ways;

- stay at home if you or your child is sick
- avoid catching up with other parents, children and whānau at the gates
- wear a face covering and maintain a two-metre distance from people not in your household bubble
- get advice from your doctor if you or your child has complex medical needs (and please get in touch so that we can support your child to return onsite, wherever possible)
- avoid having playdates inside with children from other families at Alert Level 3 and above and any staff member working to provide, or support the provision of, that education.
- **Face coverings are not required to be worn in schools by staff or students, for Years 1 to 3.**
- **For tamariki in years 4-6, please have conversations with them at home about the need to wear a mask at school to help keep everyone safe**

There are exemptions to having to wear facemasks for tamariki in years 4-6. Please note however that there needs to be a valid reason for the exemption such as in cases where tamariki may have a disability or health condition.

## **Exemptions**

If you consider that your tamariki in years 4-6 should be exempt from wearing a mask at school, you will need to provide an exemption card from one of the following organisations;

- Disabled Persons Assembly NZ by contacting them on 04 801 9100 or emailing them at [info@dpa.org.nz](mailto:info@dpa.org.nz)
- Blind Citizens NZ on 0800 222 694 or emailing them at [admin@abcnz.org.nz](mailto:admin@abcnz.org.nz) — for blind, deafblind, low vision, and vision-impaired people
- Deaf Aotearoa by emailing [covid@deaf.org.nz](mailto:covid@deaf.org.nz) — for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

You should only request an exemption card if your tamariki has a disability or health condition that makes wearing a face covering unsuitable.

If one of the above situations does not apply, the school will also accept a letter from a registered general practitioner that confirms that your tamariki has a valid medical reason for having an exemption.

For further information, you can refer to the following website which has more detailed information

<https://covid19.govt.nz/activities/education/>

We ask for all parents co-operation in educating our years 4-6 tamariki about the reasons for having to wear a mask and support the school staff in ensuring the school meets our legal obligations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'C' followed by a long horizontal line.

Corinne Cameron

Chair - Waterlea School Board of Trustees