

Friday 1st April

Dear parents and caregivers

I am writing to keep you updated about how our school is continuing to respond to COVID-19 in New Zealand. As you may have seen, in the last few days the media has reported a reduction in the number of daily cases.

While we know that cases in school will rise and fall with that of the level in our community, our health experts tell us that children are much more likely to be exposed to COVID-19 in the community than at school. We also know that nationally in mid-March no more than 4% of teachers in any seven-day period reported as testing positive. It is currently around 3.5%.

Covid numbers have once again been low in our school over the last week. At present we have the following information about the school community:

- Of the full school roll of 695 students, this week (last 7 days) we have been advised of only 6 children testing positive for COVID-19.
- We have only 2 staff members isolating due to household contacts / COVID-19 cases.
- 85% of our roll is currently onsite.
- We require all parents to have their children return to school now the Auckland Omicron peak appears to have passed.

As you know, it's great for any child's wellbeing and learning to be at school with their friends, teachers and other school staff. You also know that we have very good systems in place to keep everyone as safe as possible. This is why we remain open at Red.

I wanted to remind you that in our school we are keeping the additional layers of protection in place to help prevent or reduce the risk of onward spread.

Current Ministry of Health data for our Albany district this week:

- **71% of 5 - 12 year olds have had their first COVID vaccination.**
- **only 14% have had their second vaccination.**

We know that being fully vaccinated and boosted reduces the risk of severe illness due to COVID-19. I know that some of you still have questions about this, however, so I've included links to a video that answers many of the common questions about the vaccine:

- [Common questions about the vaccine \(English\) – KidsHealth](#)

Mask wearing for our students Years 3 - 6 and for adults remains in place in indoor spaces and we are getting lots of fresh air during the day. We also continue to focus on basic hygiene such as washing hands regularly, covering any coughs and sneezes, and cleaning surfaces regularly.

Like the links above, KidsHealth has some other great resources you may be interested in:

- [Why wearing masks and creating airflow helps – KidsHealth](#)
- [Back to school with Omicron in 2022 – KidsHealth](#)

From time to time some students will need to isolate at home. This is in line with Government advice and if this happens, we will support them to continue their learning at home while in isolation to minimise any interruption.

According to the Paediatric Society of NZ, in most children COVID-19 is a mild illness. It can be managed by whānau with some simple measures such as keeping fluids up and keeping an eye on your tamaiti (child).

If you have any concerns about sending your child to school, please get in touch – our team is here to help. **We want ALL children to be at school and engaging in learning with their friends.**

With Term 1 holidays only nine school days away, teachers continue to update assessments, collecting vital data to record your child's progress and achievement in preparation for Term 2 reports. The Deputy Principals will be in contact if you continue to keep children at home and have not contacted us with a justified reason for their absence, as the Ministry of Education has advised us that we will need to remove them from the school roll. We need all our tamariki back at school, as they have had enough disruption in the last two years.

Your job remains the same, too: please continue to keep a really close watch of your whānau for anyone with symptoms. If unwell, please stay at home and get advice about getting a COVID-19 test.

We will send out our next update on Wednesday once the Government have made their latest COVID announcement.

Noho ora mai,

Maree Bathurst
Principal