

School Notice

Thursday 3rd March 2022

Kia ora koutou,

This is a special update so you know what is happening in our kura.

Responding to Omicron: Our On-site Learning Strategy

At the start of this year our Leadership teams reviewed what we had learnt from last year, and identified what we would keep doing, and also what we would do differently. Especially if (or when) Omicron broke out.

We agreed that the things we had done to keep our people (students and staff) safe would continue. Including vigilance in wearing masks properly, regular and frequent sanitising, ventilation, and using outdoors as much as we could.

We also agreed that we would do our very best to maintain schooling and not disrupt student learning.

There were two main strategies to ensure this happened. One focussed on **“On-site Learning”** and the other on **“Off-site Learning”**. This newsletter is about part of our ‘on-site’ strategy.

The On-site Learning strategy was based on knowing that:

- There might be times when more than half of our students and/or half of our staff are absent, maybe for several weeks,
- The best learning and teaching happens kanohi ki te kanohi, (face to face).
- Our school has a very talented and capable staff,
- In almost all subjects and all year levels there are more than one class of students learning that subject,
- We can arrange our courses so that all of the students in that course (e.g., *Year 10 English*) ...are learning the same things at the same time – even if they are in different classes with different Teachers,
- Having to close the school or send students home would be our very last resort because it is so disruptive – to learning, for our people, and for whānau and our community.

So, part of our planning, especially when student and staff absences were high, was to be able to combine classes together. Combining the same year levels and the same courses, and in this way ensuring as much as possible, that we still had a Teacher who was an expert in that subject working with the students learning that subject.

Last week we had about 50% to 60% of our students in school, and about 24 of our 170 staff away. We started this week with just over 30% of our students in school, and almost 30 staff away. We were also running out of Teachers for classes, with many of our teaching staff (including our Senior Leadership Team) covering extra classes.

So, we made the decision that it was now the time to combine classes. We put this in place today for our Year 9 and 10 students. This means that we now have half the number of Year 9 and 10 ‘classes’ but each ‘class’ now has more students in it. The students are still getting taught every period of every day the same timetabled subjects that they are supposed to have. Almost no ‘class’ is over 24 students, and many are less.

These students have been given a new temporary timetable, that will stay in place until the Omicron outbreak is over, probably towards the middle of April. Then we will switch back to their normal classes and timetable again. We are also able to do the same for our Year 11 – 13 students, and we will review whether or not we need to do this each week. I will let you know if and when we decide to combine senior classes.

I am confident in the quality of the learning we are providing, and the safety of our environment, where we are doing our very best to ensure our school is amongst the safest places in our community. As always, please call or contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

He waka eke noa • We are all in this together. Ngā mihi,



Grant McMillan

Tumuaki • Principal, 021 336 328