



Banks Avenue School

Living And Learning With HEART

Te oranga me te ako ki te Ngākau

Te pānui o te kura o Banks Avenue: Wednesday 26 January 2022

Bienvenidos, karibu, maligayang pagdating, welkom, haere mai

From the Principal - Te pū kāea a te Tumuaki

Kei aku nui, keiaku rahi, tēnā koutou katoa i roto i ngā āhuatanga o te wā.

Welcome back after what we hope has been a wonderful summer for your whānau.

Our team is feeling refreshed and ready to go for the 2022 year and we cannot wait to welcome everyone back onsite.

In regard to COVID-19 we have moved fully into the new traffic light. As being at RED alert is new to us we wanted to give some clarification before school starts so parents know what to expect.

Parents Onsite

Parents are strongly encouraged to pick up and drop off children from our school gates. Only in emergency situations or for specific needs should parents be entering our grounds. If you do need to come onsite for a valid reason then you must:

1. Wear a mask.
2. Scan as you enter the grounds.

Learning Conversations

These will still go ahead next Monday and Tuesday. Thanks to all of those parents who have already booked. If you are yet to book please go to www.schoolinterviews.co.nz and enter our school code: **d9kw5**. If you have a New Entrant child starting at Banks Avenue School please use code: **cud6y**.

During Learning Conversations you are asked to:

1. Sanitise your hands at the door.
2. Wear a mask.
3. Socially distance from the teachers - more than 2m.
4. Please do not mix and mingle with other parents onsite - adhere to social distancing practices.

Events and Activities

Large hui and gatherings, especially when indoors, continue to be one of the riskier activities we can undertake. We have therefore reviewed all of our events and activities for the upcoming term to ensure we meet the health guidelines for Red.

1. Mihi Whakatau planned for next Wednesday - Cancelled
2. Junior swimming - Postponed
3. Walkathon - Postponed
4. Kapa Haka and Pasifika - adapted so they occur outside and limited children from one bubble attend.

5. Playtimes - adapted. We have zoned the school into three play areas and will not have children playing in alternate spaces..

We will continue to review our activities and our practices.

Ventilation

We have used the Ministry of Education self-assessment tool to review all our ventilation in readiness for the start of the year. Providing good old fashioned fresh air remains the most important thing we can do in our learning spaces to minimise risk for ākonga and kaiako (and the same goes for you at home). We will also be receiving a CO₂ monitor in the coming weeks to further support our ventilation plan.

Omicron and Testing

We have all seen very large numbers of cases overseas and we will very likely see much larger numbers of cases in Aotearoa than we have previously experienced in the last two years. While Omicron is more transmissible than previous strains, most people who get COVID-19 will have a mild to moderate illness and will fully recover in their own home.

However, some of our community who are immune compromised, are ill or have other vulnerabilities, even when they are fully vaccinated, could be more affected by Omicron. So, we all need to continue to play our part to minimize the spread of the virus.

I have attached a home checklist below to help you prepare at home.

Face Masks

Staff and children in Years 4 – 6 must wear face masks inside at school when we are at Red.

Public Health advice is that an appropriate face covering will fit snugly and seal well around facial contours. This can include single use, disposable masks (medical masks) and reusable fabric masks with three layers.

Please name face masks to avoid cross contamination.

The Unite Against COVID-19 website also has information on [how to make a face covering](#).

For those of you with children who might be reluctant to wear a face covering, there is some [helpful advice from Michigan Health](#), including using simple, specific explanations about why they need to wear a face covering, adults being the role models, providing small rewards for wearing them, bringing face coverings into play such as drawing face coverings on characters in colouring books, or letting them choose/make the mask.

Vaccination for 5 to 11 year-olds

I have had several concerned parents email me asking if we are going to give children vaccinations at school. We had a long discussion at our December Board meeting about our role in the vaccination process.

At this stage we will not allow vaccinations to occur at school in school time, however, we would allow the school premises to be used after school or at weekends for vaccines but no teachers would be present; parents would need to choose to take their children.

We would never vaccinate children without parents' written consent and ideally parents' being present as well.

These are strange times and things do change, however, I am 100% certain we would never vaccinate without a clear mandate from parents.

Information for Parents on Vaccinations

Vaccination, including a booster shot, remains an important tool to help prevent the most serious harm from the COVID-19 virus. If children and young adults who have been vaccinated do develop COVID-19, they are far less likely to get seriously ill and less likely to transmit the virus to others.

The free 5 to 11 year-old vaccination programme is now underway and more than 100,000 children in New Zealand have had their first dose.

There is some helpful information available to support you on the [Unite Against COVID-19 website](#) including [How to book a vaccine for your five – 11 year old](#) and [some great videos](#) on the Kids Health page that can support you to talk to your tamariki about the COVID-19 vaccine.

[Kids Health](#)

[Health Navigator](#)

[The Immunisation Advisory Centre](#)

Managing Cases in our School

We have a good contact tracing system in place so that if there is a confirmed case who has been at school while infectious, we can quickly identify who was a close contact of that person. We will then quickly advise those contacts of what they need to do. This heavily relies on you as parents, scanning in each time you enter our grounds.

Only if the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education advises to do so, would we consider closing a physical onsite school and moving to distance learning for everyone. At some stage we may end up with some children onsite and some at home due to staff availability. At Red we will keep everyone learning onsite for as long as we can.

Please make sure your contact details we have on file are up to date, so we can get in touch with you if needed.

Preparing for COVID-19

You can also prepare for COVID-19, making sure you and your household have a plan and know what to do. This will mean your whānau and community can help each other if needed. Find out more here:

[Be prepared for COVID-19](#)

[Download the COVID-19 Readiness Checklist \[PDF, 121 KB\]](#)

[What to expect when self-isolating at home](#)

[What to expect when self-isolating at home | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)

[Getting extra support if you have COVID-19 or are self-isolating | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)

[COVID-19 positive – managing your symptoms | Health Navigator NZ](#)

If you know anyone in your community affected by COVID-19 and who may need help, such as food and other financial assistance, Work and Income has a range of [supports available for individuals, families, employers and self-employed people affected by COVID-19](#).

Finally

Stay home if Sick and get Tested

Ensure tamariki, students or staff members with COVID-19 symptoms get a COVID-19 test and remain at home until a negative result is received and they are symptom free for 24 hours.

[Download the COVID-19 Readiness Checklist \[PDF, 121 KB\]](#)

PLANS AND TOOLS

Use a separate piece of paper to make household plans so everyone knows in advance what to do and how to help.

- Our emergency contacts
- People who can help make isolating easier (e.g. by dropping off food)
- Our care and support plans (e.g. for children, dependents)
- How we'll let people know we're isolating
- Household instructions (e.g. how to take care of pets and plants, household maintenance such as paying bills)

Wellness kit What everyone needs to look after their health and wellbeing will be different, but below are some general ideas.

General hygiene checklist

- Masks
- Gloves
- Tissues
- Hand sanitiser
- Rubbish bags
- Cleaning products

Note down what else you might need:

Dealing with COVID-19 symptoms

- Cough / Throat / Sinus
Treatments for your nose and throat like nasal sprays, lozenges and cough mixture. Soothers such as honey, kawakawa or other balms, or ice blocks.
- Fever and pain relief
Things to help soothe temperature and pain relief like paracetamol and ibuprofen.
- Aches
Things to help keep you comfortable – like pillows and blankets.

Note down what other medicines for family members you might need if isolating:

Staying mentally well It's normal to feel anxious or stressed in times of difficulty. Don't be afraid to reach out for help. For support with anxiety, distress or mental wellbeing, you can call or text **1737** to talk with a trained counsellor for free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Some ideas to look after wellbeing include:

- Stay connected with friends and whānau
- Acknowledge your feelings – it's normal to feel anxious or stressed
- Stick to routines where possible
- Limit your time online

Note down what other things you think might help (e.g. things you enjoy and can do at home):

Things to find out What don't you know about COVID-19? What do you need to find out to help you feel more prepared? [Covid19.govt.nz](#) is a good place to start.

COVID-19 Support Services