

25 August 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers

Re: Return to school Monday 31 August at Level 2

As you will already know the Prime Minister has advised that Auckland will return to alert Level 2 from Monday 31 August. This means that our school will re-open for all staff and students on this day.

I again acknowledge that for many in our community, there has been a heightened sense of anxiety and uncertainty exacerbated for senior students as they prepare for NCEA examinations. We are sensitive to this and will remain focused on flexible solutions that ease some of this stress. The senior leadership team over the next week or so will carefully review some of our organisational systems in order to gain maximum benefit for students from the remainder of the year.

School start

School starts at 8.50am on Monday 31 August for all students. There are no changes to the routine timetable.

On-site health and safety

The school has been deep cleaned and well prepared for a return of staff and students. When on site, we will continue to adhere to Ministry of Health guidelines and protocols to manage any potential risks:

- If anyone is sick then they should remain at home. Parents should phone the Healthline or their GP.
- If anyone is sick while at school, our identification and isolation procedures will be enabled.
- We will not be holding any student group meetings of 100+ until we return to alert level 1.
- Hand sanitiser will be available in every classroom. Appropriate coughing and sneezing etiquette will apply.
- We will be cleaning and disinfecting our high touch surfaces daily.
- Where appropriate physical distancing will apply (in class this means no touching each other and keeping out of breathing distance)
- Students are encouraged to bring their own water supply and only use the school fountains to refill their drink bottles. They should not drink directly from the water fountain.
- All visitors to the school must register using the school reception device and scan the contact tracing QR code posters at our entrances.

NCEA/Assessments/Examinations: Senior Students Year 11 – Year 13

As mentioned earlier, we are very conscious of the impact that Covid-19 has on teaching and learning. Our primary focus over the next few weeks is to ensure senior students particularly are well prepared for NZQA assessments. We have decided that the senior practice exams scheduled for week 8 and 9 (8 September – 18 September) will **proceed** as planned with more information to follow. The reason for this decision is to assess how well students have progressed to date and to immediately identify any gaps in students' learning so we can manage this as a priority over the next few weeks.

We acknowledge that many students have lost the best part of a term's worth of face to face learning and therefore, we are exploring a range of options to try and maximise teaching time so that students can have as much confidence going into external examinations as possible.

Face masks

- If you travel on a bus to/from school you must wear a face mask. This is for both public and school buses.
- A face mask is not required while at school but students may choose to wear one if they wish.

Physical activities

All sports and other physical activities in our school can continue with good hygiene practices. Shared sports equipment and other resource materials will be regularly cleaned with the addition of hand washing before and after activities. Physical distancing is not possible in some situations.

EOTC trips and Year 9 Camps

All school trips have been suspended and will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Our Year 9 camps which are scheduled to start from 24 November will proceed at this stage.

NZ Secondary School Sanctioned Sport and Auckland College Sport

All inter-school competitions will not resume until the next alert level review on 6 September. All sports governed by NZSSSC (winter sports tournaments) are also under review until further notice. Our Director of Sport will advise once there is confirmation from the Government.

Unofficial school ball

I am aware that there is some student/parent led planning for a private Year 13 Ball this year that is intended to replace the official Howick College ball cancelled earlier this year due to Covid-19.

It is important for me, and on behalf of the Board of Trustees, to convey our strong view that owing to safety concerns we recommend that parents do not allow their child to attend this event. It is not sanctioned by the school and therefore does not have the same level of health and safety scrutiny which the board applies to any school run event.

If you do allow your child to attend, then you need to be aware of the expectations required and the responsibility placed on those adults organising this event, to ensure that your child is safe.

It is unfortunate that, due to the impact of Covid-19 and other calendar events scheduled for the end of the year, that we could not reschedule the Ball. We have offered our Graduation Dinner to be reformatted to include some elements of a 'Ball' and hope that students can view this as a safer option to celebrate being a Senior student at our school.

I thank you all again for your support during these challenging times. We want to make sure that students remember the last four months of 2020 for all the right reasons.

Yours faithfully

Mr I L Ropati
Principal