



St Joseph's Catholic School, Fairfield

Tuesday 07 September 2021

Kia Ora Koutou

Following the announcement by the Prime Minister yesterday, the good news is that we will be ready to welcome all students back to our school site on **Thursday 9th September**, as it is now considered safe to do so. On Thursday, it will be 3 weeks since our school was last together onsite as a school community. We look forward to getting children back to school, to learning, to fun times and to their friends and teachers.

At Alert Level 2 there is low risk of community transmission and it provides us with a lot more opportunities to engage and connect with others. However, there are still a number of public health requirements we all need to follow. Please continue to monitor your health and do not send your children to school if they are not well (and please seek advice about getting a COVID test).

For us, all the required safety precautions for Alert Level 2 will be in place which include following all the recommendations from the public health experts. This means we will regularly clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, encourage everyone to frequently wash their hands and cough and sneeze into their elbow.

While physical distancing is not a requirement in schools, we will be doing our best to keep students from congregating in very large numbers and keeping spaces well-ventilated.

Face coverings are not required to be worn in school. The Director General of Health has recommended that children 12 years+ wear a face covering at school – just as older children are required to wear face coverings in some other places. The decision to wear a face covering is up to you and your whānau, whatever your decision it will be respected. If children do wear masks, they need to be able to do so independently and safely: [Mask guidance from covid-19.govt.nz](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/keeping-you-and-your-whanau-safe/covid-19/mask-guidance) . School staff are not expected to help children with their face coverings as this is not hygienic.

If you are not sure what all the rules are for alert level 2 when you are out and about, then the following information may be useful to you:

[COVID-19 Alert Levels summary table](#)

[COVID-19 Alert Levels detailed table](#)

There is a lot of important information in this letter - so get comfortable! We have attempted to address any "frequently asked questions" in relation to our children returning to St Joseph's. All our decisions have been based on the guidelines from the Ministries of Health and Education.

Please don't hesitate to contact your child's kaiako or me if there is something you need assistance with. See you Thursday!

"Frequently Asked Questions"

Who can come back to school?

Everyone (from **Thursday 9th September**). Schools are open and considered safe to do so. The only exception will be anyone that is feeling unwell or sick, and we will send anyone home immediately if they show any symptoms of illness. As the Prime Minister has said, set the bar very low on this! If your child is unwell you must keep them home.

When will school start for all students?

On Thursday 9 September. The Prime Minister has said that schools **will not open Wednesday** and in the current transition period from Level 3 to Level 2, no new students can be added to the small number of students that have required schooling during Level 3. They will remain in their bubbles until Thursday. On Wednesday staff will return to prepare and plan for the full school reopening on **Thursday 9th September**.

Can I still keep my child home even when the school moves to Level 2?

Under Level 2, it is now deemed safe for everyone to return to school. We anticipate that some families may still be reluctant to send their child(ren) back to school, and we understand this. We want to work with you to support your child's transition back to school.

If you **DO NOT** intend on sending your child back to school from Thursday 9th September, please email your child's teacher and/or me directly.

Please note that with all of our staff back at school, teacher focus will be on the students at school. Distance Learning will not be continuing in the same way it has done over the lockdown period.

Returning School devices?

At Alert Level 2 all devices loaned out by the school must be returned. Please ask your child to return the device to the school office on Thursday 9 September to be signed off.

What Health and Safety procedures will be in place?

The key principles for Alert Level 2 are to:

- reduce the risk of someone getting infected in the first place
- ensure we can identify and contact anyone who becomes infected
- understand that Level 2 is not business as usual.

Our school will follow detailed Ministry of Health guidelines to maintain the health and safety of everyone on the school site. This includes regular cleaning, use of sanitiser, handwashing and reminding and helping children with those important habits such as coughing and sneezing into their elbows, handwashing and drying. No one at school needs to wear any PPE.

Face coverings

Face coverings are not mandated for use when in schools.

However, the Director General of Health strongly encourages staff and students aged 12 and above to wear face coverings in secondary school settings to align with the requirements when out and about and indoor public places.

This is not a requirement for anyone in a school setting.

It remains an option for individuals and a decision for the individuals and whānau. Whatever decisions students and teachers make, it is their own to make and needs to be respected. Where an individual chooses to use a face covering they should supply and wear their own, and to do so safely. This option applies to younger children too.

Can parents and caregivers come on-site at school at Level 2?

Only if absolutely necessary. Schools are required to keep contact tracing registers, which means every visitor onsite must be signed in, including parents. As you can appreciate, *this is a huge logistic for us to manage, so **we ask parents to stay outside the school grounds please.*** If you **need** to come onsite, you must sign in and out at the school office, or with a staff member at a school entrance. Parents who need to come onsite will not be allowed into classrooms without prior arrangement.

How will school drop-offs and pick-ups work as parents cannot come onsite?

Please drop your children off rather than coming into school, or even better, have your child bike, scooter or walk to school to avoid congestion. We ask parents to stay in their cars where possible, or walk your children to the entrance to say goodbye if needed. Staff will be at the entrances to school (Strowan Ave and by the PE shed) to welcome your child onsite. Parents who **need** to come onsite will not be allowed into classrooms.

As traffic and parking are an issue for St Joseph's at the best of times, **we will run an optional staggered end of day pick up during Alert Level 2**. The aim of this is to ease the pressure on parking in Strowan, and to ensure that we can manage the congested waiting zone at the school office after school.

St Joseph's Fairfield "optional" staggered end of day arrangements:

- "1st wave" of students released at 2.25pm: Parents can let teachers know if their child can be released from class at 2.25pm, ready for pick up from 2.30pm. Please email your child's teacher directly to be added to this list. This can be a standard instruction for the duration of Level 2, or can change daily, but the email must be received by the teacher before 1.30pm.
- "2nd wave" of students released at 2.45pm on bell.

Staff will be at the following points from 2.30pm to ensure students are safe. If your children are old enough to walk to Dalethorpe Ave or Haultain St to be picked up, please put this arrangement in place as staff will be there to watch your child until you get there. We hope this will make a significant difference to the congestion and will allow social distancing expectations to be adhered to. Parents, we know you will model these expectations to your children at your pick up points if you are chatting to other parents.

Staff will be at these points between 2.30-3.00pm:

- Traffic Lights Crossing on Clarkin Road
- In front of the Church
- Haultain St corner -
- Strowan Ave entrance by the School Office
- Dalethorpe Avenue (end of Strowan Avenue)

We need parents to stay beside their cars or walk towards our entrance, but remain outside of the school grounds please - we will send your child to you. On wet days we will shelter students in the Library and Rm 6 and bring them out when we see their parent(s).

For some families, you will be able to arrange for older siblings at school to collect their younger siblings and accompany them off the school grounds.

Children are NOT to cross Strowan Ave - this is a real safety hazard and we need your support with this! As always, no cars are permitted down the driveway as this remains a safety hazard.

We know that the parents of our 5 year olds may be the exception to coming onsite, particularly those who have just started school. Matatipu parents will need to sign in if they come onsite to help their 5yr olds put their bag away and hand them over to their teacher at the classroom door. To enable this to happen with social distancing applied, Matatipu students can arrive any time until 9.15am, and can be picked up from 2.15pm for the next 2 weeks until the national Alert Level 2 situation is reviewed. Matatipu parents will receive further information about this.

We fully appreciate that there will be heightened emotions for students and parents as we return to school, ranging from excitedness to anxiety. We will be doing everything we can to make pick ups and drop offs as smooth as possible within the restrictions we have. Thanks for your support.

Will students be in “bubbles”?

No. At Alert Level 2 the bubble system is not required. Students and staff will still avoid physical contact as much as possible and keep personal space. The students will be free to move around the school.

Will students be using drinking fountains at Level 2?

No. Please ensure your child has a personal water bottle.

Is the Playground open?

Yes. Our focus will be on washing hands before and after every break time. The playground can be used before school, once students have washed their hands on arrival, at morning tea and at lunch time. The playground will not be open after school as parents will not be onsite to supervise their children.

Will students be able to play sports and do PE?

Yes. We are looking forward to sports and physical activity resuming within the school. We will await each sporting code releasing their recommendations and timeframes around winter sports.

Will there be School Assembly / Liturgies, or large school events?

No. Although technically these are deemed okay, in the short term we will not be holding these, as they would be bringing together large groups of people. The Church remains closed at this stage.

Will online learning continue this week?

Yes. Our teachers have provided the Distance Learning programme for this week which provides learning until Friday 10 September. **On Wednesday, teachers will not be answering emails or doing Zoom meetings as they will be in meetings at school planning for the return of our students.**

Is there a plan to support the transition of students back into school?

Yes, We're really mindful of the well-being and readjustment of children back to school. We know that students will have experienced this lockdown in many different ways. Wellbeing and relationships have always been our priority and our staff will take the time to focus on this, and to rebuild culture and relationships, in a manner similar to what we would do at the beginning of each school year. Wellbeing needs to be addressed before significant learning can happen.

We will share more specifics around what your children can expect in regards to learning this term back once the teachers have met in their teams. They will relay any messages to you via the usual platforms (Hero, Seesaw etc).

How can I notify the school if my child is going to be absent?

Please use one of the following processes to advise of your child's absence:

- our school app is easiest method
- phone 07 8555434
- email admin@stjosephs.school.nz

Will there be after school care?

Under Alert Level 2 after school care will operate. Please contact SKIDS directly for more information.

Is there a plan to support the transition of NEW students to our school?

Yes. We will be in touch with parents to arrange school visits for New Entrants under Alert Level 2 guidelines.

School Lunches at Level 2?

School Lunches will start again next Monday 13 September. Ordering will be via the Kindo link. [Kindo](#)

School uniform:

Children are to wear the school uniform as normal. We ask that you make your best effort to send your child to school in the correct uniform.

Is the School Office open?

Only for essential business that cannot be done via phone or email. All visitors will need to sign in. The office will operate a 1 in 1 out policy to maintain social distancing.

Signing in

If you need to come onto the school site, please use the school app to sign in. Press on the button first in the top row and follow the prompts (see picture on the right). This is so the school has a record of who is on site. You must also use the Covid QR code as well.

What can we do to support the school and our children?

Keep any students who are sick at home until they are well - remember as parents, the Prime Minister has said that the bar should be low here around sickness. Keep reminding them about the importance of hygiene and washing their hands. Ask about their school day and stay connected to us via Facebook and email, Seesaw and Hero as appropriate.

We appreciate your understanding around the processes we will be putting in place. We will be constantly reviewing how we are operating under Alert Level 2, to ensure that we can keep our students safe, happy and learning while following the guidelines. We will keep you well informed and updated about our protocols.



For more detailed information at Alert Level 2, you can visit <https://covid19.govt.nz>

If you have any further questions or comments please feel free to email me - principal@stjosephs.school.nz

Ngā Mihi
Grant Stuart
Principal