



TUAKAU COLLEGE

Pai rawa atu i nga mea katoa • The very best in all things

24 February 2022

Dear Parents and Caregivers

I want to take this time to thank the school community for their positive support in the way that we have been managing the Covid -19 phases. We all know that it is stressful times for whānau/families especially when there is so much change. Please be assured that you and your family are doing an awesome job in assisting the school in dealing with the positive cases we have identified.

You may well have seen the headlines in the media about the numbers of cases being seen in schools. Please don't be alarmed by this. It is only natural as cases in our community increase, they will appear in our school. We have really good systems in place to respond to this and to keep any spread of the virus – should it appear – to a minimum.

You may have seen Dr Jin Russell in the media noting [research from New South Wales about their recent Omicron outbreak](#) showing that spread within the school setting is very low (less than 4% of cases at school infected someone else when at school). We have seen that in New Zealand too.

This is why we remain open at Red. It's great for a child's wellbeing and learning to be at school with their friends and school staff, and we have very good systems in place to keep everyone as safe as possible.

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.

Today the Ministry of Health advised we are moving within the Covid Protection Framework to **Phase 3** at midnight tonight, **Thursday 24 February**. Please refer to the [Government Covid Website](#) from which we provide the following information:

What does Phase 3 look like?

You should only get a COVID-19 test if you have symptoms, or if you are a Household Contact.

At Phase 3, PCR tests will be used for people who need it the most, and rapid antigen tests (RATs) will be more widely used to confirm positive cases. **When you go for a test, the testing centre will let you know which test — RATs or PCR is best for you.**

If you test positive for COVID-19, you will need to isolate for 10 days. You will be sent a link to complete an online form, which will help contact tracers identify locations you have visited and people you have come into close contact with. **You can leave isolation after 10 days - you do not need a negative test.**

Close Contacts no longer need to isolate — unless they have symptoms. If you get a notification through the NZ COVID Tracer app that you are a Close Contact, you should monitor your symptoms for 10 days.

If you live with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, you are considered a Household Contact and will need to isolate for 10 days. You must get a test on Day 3 and Day 10 of your isolation. If you develop symptoms you should get a test sooner. If you are a Household Contact and you test positive, you will need to isolate for 10 days.

College Close Contacts

From tomorrow (**25 February**), if your child(ren) is **currently a Close Contact** and are part way through their isolation, they do not need to complete the 10 days isolation and they are **permitted** to return to school.

They do not need to get a negative COVID-19 test. However, if they are unwell, they must not come to school. If they have any symptoms, please remain in isolation and ensure testing takes place. If symptoms should occur once they have returned to school, please follow the testing and isolation regime for Phase 3.

What does this mean for our College students in the coming weeks?

Please advise the College if your child(ren) is tested positive for Covid via a.jacobs@tuakaucollege.com.

Please do not send your child(ren) to school if they are unwell. You will be asked to collect them from school if they are unwell.

The College will no longer be investigating and advising close or casual contacts in the school environment, other than managing any occurrences where a school activity might meet the criteria provided by the Ministry of Health in Phase 3.

Transmission of COVID-19 is still most likely to happen in your home – so please keep doing all those good things to keep your whānau safe. Wash your hands, get lots of fresh air, cover any coughs and sneezes, clean surfaces regularly, and seek advice if anyone is not feeling well. And please wear a mask when you are out and about. There is information online to help your family [prepare to isolate](#) if you need to.

The most important advice we can give to keep your whānau safe is to act as if you have COVID-19. More than a third of people who have COVID-19 will not have any symptoms if they have had three doses of the vaccine. Please think about who you visit and what health measures you can put in place to keep everyone as safe as possible.

Getting three doses of the vaccine will really help you to do that. Research has shown that compared with being unvaccinated, three doses of the vaccine will mean you are 67% less likely to be infected with Omicron and 97% less likely to get Delta. If you can't get COVID you can't pass it on.

Finally, I want to reiterate, we know how hard the impacts on COVID-19 have been for many families in New Zealand. If you know of a family in your community who is struggling, please encourage them to reach out for support for example to access food, medicine, or access financial support: [Help is available – COVID-19 Health Hub](#). We look forward to welcoming back students and return to classes and learning.

Ngā mihi

Chris Betty
Principal