



Fairfield College

25 February 2022

Kia ora e te whaanau,

New Zealand's COVID-19 response is now at phase three which means that case numbers will continue to escalate with the predicted peak taking place towards the middle to end of next month. You may have seen the headlines in the media about the number of cases being seen in schools. Please do not be alarmed by this. Dr Jin Russell's [research from New South Wales about their recent Omicron outbreak](#) shows that spread within the school setting is very low (less than 4% of cases at school infected someone else when at school). New Zealand schools appear to be following a similar pattern.

Fairfield College has evidence-based systems in place to respond to the predicted increase of cases so that the threat of spread is minimised. Higher vaccination rates and the implementation of public health measures enables schools to remain open at the Red Setting.

I believe that participating in on-site learning is vital as it strengthens student wellbeing and learning because it enables a physical connection with friends and school staff. I appreciate the challenge that you face as parents regarding school attendance in the face of rising case numbers. The wellbeing of your children is our top priority, and we will continue to emphasise the importance of the public health measures that have been put in place.

With phase 3 of the Omicron response, the key change is that it is only confirmed cases and their household contacts who need to self-isolate. Those who may have had close contact with a case but are not in the household, must continue to monitor closely for any symptoms of COVID-19. All close contacts can return to school on Monday February 28. Household contacts can return to school after completing their ten days of isolation as well as the day three and day ten testing requirements. They must be symptom free before returning to school (see visual at the end of this communication).

Rapid antigen tests (RATs) are now being used to diagnose COVID-19 as well as PCR tests. This means that people who test will get an almost immediate test result back if a RAT is used. If anyone in your family is confirmed as having COVID-19, you will be asked to notify your close contacts yourself. Please get in touch with us as soon as you can if your child has tested positive for COVID-19. We will support you in any way that we can, including the provision of distance learning resources.

It has been reported that transmission of COVID-19 is still most likely to happen in the 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. There is information online to help your family [prepare to isolate](#) if you need to.



Be respectful
Be responsible
Be the best you can be

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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.

To keep you informed of the number of cases that Fairfield College is dealing with, which will include the number of cases that have returned to school, we will post a data table on the school face book page and website. This will be posted from Monday February 28.

Finally, 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](#).

Please continue to keep a close watch of your whānau for anyone with symptoms. If unwell, please stay at home and get advice about getting a COVID-19 test. If you have any concerns about sending your child to school, please do get in touch. We are here to help.

Kia haumarū - Be safe.
Naaku noa, naa



Richard Crawford
Principal

