

Kia ora Whānau

As whānau to Houghton Valley School we are letting you know we have a number of whānau (4 students) that have been contacted by the Ministry of Health today and have been identified as casual contacts of the NSW covid cases. The student has gone home from school this morning.

The school has been taking advice from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health and they have assured us it is safe to remain open. As a precaution we are all staying in our spaces.

The safety and wellbeing of our students, staff and community are our top priority and we will keep you updated on the school's operating status via the School website and email going forward.

The Ministry reminds everyone to remain vigilant and stick to the basics: stay home if you are unwell and get advice about having a test, wash hands regularly, cough and sneeze into the elbow, wear masks or face coverings on all public transport, and keep track of where you've been – scan QR codes wherever you go and turn on Bluetooth tracing in the app dashboard.

Our suggestion is for you to follow the Ministry of Health's recommendation on this and your COVID related policies.

Visit <https://covid19.govt.nz/> for more information. Please check out the [locations of interest](#).

At 1.00pm this afternoon we also heard from Chris Hipkins - COVID-19 Minister advised the country that Wellington Region is going back into Alert Level 2 until Sunday night.

We know that this means schools are safe environments for children, young people and staff and that additional public health control measures are in place to prevent the spread of disease and to support contact tracing.

**We ask that to limit any risk that you wait at the gate and don't enter school grounds. We will have staff on the gates and teachers will bring students down to the gate.**

The good news is that we will be able to have all students and staff at the school site when we are at level 2.

Here are the things to note:

**For the kids:**

1. Students can arrive from 8:30am as normal
2. They need to make sure they bring their lunch and drink bottle (water fountains will remain closed for the next few weeks)
3. Students must wash their hands or sanitise when they arrive at school each morning and go directly to their classroom. No one is playing outside before the bell.
4. During the day they will also need to sanitise, hand wash, avoid touching their face and cough or sneeze into their elbow, and follow the rules around no touching of other people, especially their mates
5. No toys or equipment from home (pencil cases are fine)

**Drop off:**

1. We ask that unless your child needs extra support that you don't enter the school site or any of the school buildings. Staff will be located at entrances to support students as they enter the school grounds.
2. All students need to come through the entrances on Houghton Bay Road or through the gate at the carpark
3. All students must arrive between 8.30am and 9.00am. No students will be allowed onsite before 8.30am (teachers need to be able to set up for the day)
4. All parents/whanau who come onsite to drop off children must sign in for contact tracing. We have created QR codes to make this as quick and easy as possible.
5. There will be hand sanitiser for you to use as you enter a room (Our toilets are solely for students and staff)

**During the school day:**

1. If anyone enters the school they must still scan the QR code and then come directly to the school office. We ask you don't go to any classrooms.

**Pick up:**

1. Students will be released at 2:55pm as usual and teachers will assist children to get to the gates and to find the friends and siblings that they are heading home with, to avoid needing parents to enter school grounds.

**Whole School events:**

We will need to postpone any planned school events. This includes the Year 5/6 trip to the Museum of Sea and City/Te Papa on Thursday and our school hui on Friday morning

We will keep you informed as we know more. Please stay safe and stay home if you are unwell. We appreciate your support in keeping our tamariki and staff safe.

Nga mihi nui

Luana Carroll, Principal at Houghton Valley School