



Houghton Valley School

Newsletter

Caring, Exploring and Inspiring Together

Ka Manaaki, Ka Rapu, Ka Whakamanawa tahi ai tātou

Thursday, 27th January 2022

Week 0 of Term 1 2022

Kia ora Whānau,

RED LEVEL

Ngā mihi o te tau hou.

Happy New Year to you all! This fabulous weather has meant we have been able to get out and about and enjoy our summer break.

With the school year about to begin, we have been busily preparing for our return to school and we are looking forward to seeing you all on Thursday 3rd Feb 2022.

While New Zealand is now in the “red” traffic light setting as a result of omicron community transmission, schools are open and we’re committed to making the transition back to school after the holidays as smooth as possible, particularly for our new learners and teachers.

I’d like to reassure you that the health and safety of our children and staff is our top priority and Houghton Valley School is well placed with the correct processes in place to keep everyone safe.

We know that many of our usual events and celebrations for the beginning of the year will not be able to go ahead, so we are planning an opportunity for whānau to come in and have a one on one hui with your child’s teacher for 15 minutes. This will happen in the first few weeks of this term, and we will be able to tell you more next week.

As we’ve learnt, flexibility, adaptability and patience are key!

The overriding principles for **COVID RED LEVEL** are very clear. Please observe the following guidelines:

- Stay home if you are unwell and get advice about having a test
- Wash hands regularly, cough and sneeze into the elbow
- **All adults, educators, and students Year 4 and above must wear masks**
- Scan QR codes wherever you go and turn on Bluetooth tracing in the app dashboard
- There should be no non-essential visitors onsite at Red
- Maintaining good ventilation is important

Key requirements for our first day of school - Thursday 3 February:

- **Stay home** if you are unwell
- **Masks** must be worn by **all ākonga/students from Year 4 and above** when indoors or in close contact with others. We ask that parents please provide these masks, and a zip lock bag to store them in when they are playing outside.

We also invite Year 3 students to wear a mask if they want too. This is completely optional. We also have a very small number of students who have mask exemptions due to health reasons.

- **Medical grade masks** must be worn when indoors by all staff members and we will provide masks for students who forget or don't have a mask
- **Masks** must be worn by all whānau when waiting at drop-off gates and when onsite.
- **No non-essential visitors on site. Drop-offs and pick-ups will continue at our two gates. Entry is from 8.30 am** and children must go directly to their classroom. **Pick up is 2.55 pm.**

Maintain a physical distance - if you are waiting outside the gate, **please observe the 2m social distancing rules** recommended by the Ministry of Health.

- If your child is a new entrant starting school for the first time, **one whānau member** is able to bring them to the classroom door but we ask that drop off is between 9.15am-9.30am.
- If your child is feeling anxious about returning to school, we are happy for **one whānau member** to bring them to the classroom door between 9.15-9.30am for the **first week** to help them transition back into school. It would be helpful to let their classroom teacher know so they don't mark them as absent on the roll.
- **If you are required to come onsite please scan-in** using the Covid Tracer App at the gate (COVID QR code) or the physical register to ensure we can contact trace effectively,
- **Follow good hygiene practices** - all students will sanitise as they come onsite and regularly follow good hygiene practices throughout the day.

Transition back to school

I'm sure some of you may have questions about students settling back into school after many weeks at home. We are aware this may be difficult for some children, but we are confident we can manage this transition smoothly. We are committed to doing all we can to support all individuals so please let us know if there is anything we can do to better support your whānau. We highly suggest that you bring your child to school for a look around before Thursday and go to their classroom door so that they know where they are going.

Absences

We ask if you can use the school app to notify us of your child's absence, that would be useful.

Distance Learning

Support for off-site learning will be provided for those who are advised to remain at home for medical reasons and COVID related testing and isolation. This will be provided via hard packs and there will be further information to come about this.

We will be in touch again next week with more information. Please check our website also for further information.

Kia Kaha, Kia Maia, Kia Manawanui

Luana Carroll
Tumuaki, Houghton Valley School