



Lake Rotoma School 2022 Term 1 Notice

Kei aku nui, kei aku rahi, tēnā koutou katoa i roto i ngā āhuetanga o te wā.

Welcome back after what we hope has been a wonderful summer for your whānau.

I am feeling refreshed and ready to go for the 2022 year and can't wait to welcome everyone back onsite!

In regards to COVID-19 we have moved fully into the new traffic light framework for all our school and kura activities and events this year. You will be familiar with all the health measures we will have in place [link to a copy of your safety plan if appropriate] and it is good to know that at Red setting, we are able to support everyone learning onsite.

Events and activities

Because we are a small school this will not affect us as yet!

However, large hui and gatherings especially when indoors continue to be one of the riskier activities we can undertake. We have therefore reviewed all our events and activities for the upcoming term to ensure we meet the health guidance for Red.

On Tuesday 1 Feb we will gather outside the school classroom to meet and greet following the social distancing guidelines.

Ventilation

We will continue to use good old fashioned fresh air that is the most important thing we can do in our learning spaces, minimising the risk for akonga and kaiako.

We will also be receiving a CO₂ monitor in the coming weeks to further support our ventilation plan.

Omicron and testing

We have all seen very large numbers of cases overseas and we will very likely see much larger numbers of cases in Aotearoa than we have previously experienced in the last two years. While Omicron is more transmissible than previous strains, most people who get COVID-19 will have a mild to moderate illness and will fully recover in their own home.

However, some of our community who are immune compromised, are ill or have other vulnerabilities, even when they are fully vaccinated, could be more affected by Omicron. So, we all need to continue to play our part to minimise the spread of the virus.

In regard to testing, the health system currently has capacity to process 40,000 PCR tests a day. PCR testing is the most accurate test for COVID-19 and will continue to be used while New Zealand is in the stamp-it-out phase.

Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) will begin to be used more widely over time. They are not as accurate as PCR tests and this means that some people who do have COVID-19 will get a negative test result back. There are currently 4.6 million RATs in the country and 10s of millions ordered.

If you are symptomatic or need to be tested to access a workplace or service, you will be guided at the time on which test is best for you.

Face coverings

Staff and children in Years 4 – 13 must wear face coverings when inside at school when we are at Red.

Public health advice is that an appropriate face covering will fit snugly and seal well around facial contours. This can include single use, disposable masks (medical masks) and re-usable fabric masks with three layers.

Don't worry if you don't have these specific types of face coverings, as public health experts also say that any face covering is better than no face covering.

The Unite Against COVID-19 website also has information on [how to make a face covering](#).

For those of you with children who might be reluctant to wear a face covering, there is some [helpful advice from Michigan Health](#), including using simple, specific explanations about why they need to wear a face covering, adults being the role models, providing small rewards for wearing them, bringing face coverings into play such as drawing face coverings on characters in colouring books, or letting them choose/make the mask.

Vaccination for five- to 11-year-olds

Vaccination including a booster shot, remains an important tool to help prevent the most serious harm from the COVID-19 virus. If children and young adults who have been vaccinated do develop COVID-19, they are far less likely to get seriously ill and less likely to transmit the virus to others.

The free five- to 11-year-old vaccination programme is now underway and more than 100,000 children in New Zealand have had their first dose.

There is some helpful information available to support you on the [Unite Against COVID-19 website](#) including [How to book a vaccine for your five – 11 year old](#) and [some great videos](#) on the Kids Health page that can support you to talk to your tamariki about the COVID-19 vaccine.

Managing cases in our school

We have a good contact tracing system in place so that if there is a confirmed case who has been at school while infectious, we can quickly identify who was a close contact of that person. We will then quickly advise those contacts of what they need to do.

Only if the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education advises to do so, would we consider closing a physical onsite school and moving to distance learning for everyone. At Red we will keep everyone learning onsite for as long as we can.

Please make sure your contact details we have on file are up to date, so we can get in touch with you if needed.

Preparing for COVID-19

You can also prepare for COVID-19, making sure you and your household have a plan and know what to do. This will mean your whānau and community can help each other if needed. Find out more here:

- [Be prepared for COVID-19](#)
- [Download the COVID-19 Readiness Checklist \[PDF, 121 KB\]](#)
- [What to expect when self-isolating at home](#)

Self-isolating at home because of COVID-19

Many people will be able to manage self-isolation with help from friends and whānau, but there is help available if you need it – both with health support and access to food and other essentials.

- [What to expect when self-isolating at home | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)
- [Getting extra support if you have COVID-19 or are self-isolating | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)
- [COVID-19 positive – managing your symptoms | Health Navigator NZ](#)

If you know anyone in your community affected by COVID-19 and who may need help, such as food and other financial assistance, Work and Income has a range of [supports available for individuals, families, employers and self-employed people affected by COVID-19](#).

Work and Income support

The beginning of the year can be a tough time for parents who are faced with many costs and it is important you are aware of what assistance you may be able to get from Work and Income. These are available to people on a low income as well as those on a benefit.

Check what you might get here

- [School costs](#)
- [Out of School Care and Recreation \(OSCAR\) Subsidy](#)
- [Other Childcare Assistance](#)
- [School and Year Start-up Payment \(for people getting Orphan's Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit\)](#)
- [Help with living costs \(including food and rent/mortgage\)](#)

Use the links above or call 0800 559 009 to find out more, or to apply.

MoneyTalks can assist with [free budgeting and debt help](#)

You can also contact your local community provider. [Please find more information here.](#)

Getting ready to return to school

The Ministry of Education has some helpful information on their [Parents and Whānau website](#) to support your tamariki to get back to school. There is also a very important reminder about how you can [take care of yourself](#).

While this might all feel a little overwhelming at times, we know that all these measures will help our children return to school, reconnect with whānau and friends and do what they enjoy.

We are also here to help. Please get in touch if you have any concerns or need help in any way.

See you soon!

Te Aroha Wihapi
Acting Principal