

Kia ora koutou

Thank you all for the beautiful art works that you sent in for our Autumn Art Exhibition. We are currently compiling these into a sharable format and will get this out to you as soon as possible to view – they are stunning and well worth waiting for!

## **Move to Alert Level 2**

As you will have heard, yesterday the Government announced that as a country, we will move into Alert Level 2 on Thursday 14th May but that **schools will remain under Alert Level 3 until MONDAY 18th MAY.**

**Under Alert Level 2, it is safe for all schools to open and we are thrilled that from Monday all staff and students will be able to return to school fulltime again!**

Safe and sensible practices for hygiene and contact tracing will be the norm, and all students will be able to return, **so long as they remain well.**

The key principles for Alert Level 2 are to:

- reduce the risk of someone getting infected in the first place
- ensure we can identify and contact anyone who becomes infected
- understand that Level 2 is not business as usual.

## **What will it look like at school – ‘Play it safe’!**

The key Public Health approach is to minimise the risk that someone gets infected in the first place, and second to ensure we can identify and contact anyone who has been in close contact with a person if someone in a school is infected. Under Alert Level 2 it is extremely important that we continue to uphold strict hygiene health and safety measures. Thorough and regular handwashing/sanitising, coughing into your elbow, keeping your distance where possible and sanitising hard surfaces are all still expected and will be enforced for all at school. So, what will it look like...

- **Health measures remain unchanged** – wash/sanitise hands, stay home if sick, sanitized surfaces, sanitising hands on entry and exit to classes.
- **Illness** – If any student or staff member displays any symptoms of being ill, they **MUST** stay home. If your child becomes unwell at school, you will be asked to pick them up immediately. If symptoms are also recognised as possible symptoms of COVID-19 e.g. fever, sore throat, coughing then we would expect them to please be tested for COVID-19 before returning to school.
- **Social distancing** - we will endeavour to keep students sensibly distanced where possible.
- **Gatherings** – Educational facilities, and school transport are not considered mass gatherings because they are managed environments for children and

staff. However, for events that we welcome parents and caregivers to, the guidelines read: Mass gatherings indoor = maximum of 100. Outdoor = maximum of 100. This means there will be no full school assemblies during Alert Level 2. It also means we can't run our usual school wide events where we have parents, grandparents attending.

- **Classrooms** – There is no bubble concept at Alert Level 2 so all students will return in their school uniform to their normal classroom with their regular teachers. There are also no restrictions on groups of students mixing with others on site. Our playground will be open.
- **Buses** are running as per normal. Physical distancing isn't practicable on school buses, however, it's a controlled environment where contact tracing can take place if required. Students will be required to hand sanitise on entry and exit to buses.
- If our school has a probable or confirmed case, the school will close for 72 hours to allow for contact tracing and cleaning, followed by remaining closed for up to 14 days if a case is confirmed.

### **Can parents come into the school grounds?**

Technically the answer is yes however physical distancing of 2 metres would be required (to align with public health measures outside the school grounds). Parents and caregivers who come on-site **must** come via the office and sign-in via the vis-tab register with a record of your name and time in and out of the school, including any classrooms you enter. This needs to be kept for contact tracing.

**To simplify and try to reduce the requirements for this, we are asking that parents drop their children off at the Drop Off Zone or at the nearest gate to their classrooms. For safety reasons, please avoid dropping children off via the staff car park.**

I know that this could be quite worrying for some parents and children, particularly those new to the school, especially after such a huge event like lockdown. Please contact me ([principal@leeston.school.nz](mailto:principal@leeston.school.nz)) if you're worried about this so we can support you the best we can.

If you need to go to the office for any reason, you can but you must follow our health measures of sanitising your hands, keeping your distance from others as per floor markings and signing the contact tracing register, all on a table as you come into the office. We would strongly encourage you to try and email any requests through to Megan ([admin@leeston.school.nz](mailto:admin@leeston.school.nz)) instead of coming in for this reason if you can.

### **Welcoming all staff and students back to school**

When we return to school on Monday 18th May, our first priority will be making our students feel safe and checking on their wellbeing. Once this has happened, everyone will be ready to start focusing on learning.

The time it will take for children and some staff to reconnect and relax will be different for everyone. Wellbeing needs to be addressed before learning will happen. There are a lot of resources to support us in reintegrating students and staff and we will make sure that we take our time to ensure our transition back into life at school is a successful and enjoyable time for all.

### **So what next?**

1. During this week Mon 11-Fri 15th May, we will be still working under Alert Level 3 conditions at school for the full week.
2. Keep supporting your child/ren with learning from home during the remainder of this week while at Alert Level 3.

I know there is lots to read and think about as we make our move to Alert Level 2 schooling and day to day life. There will be changes to what we had before we went into lockdown and some of those changes are outside our control. As a school we will ensure that school is the safest possible place for your children to be outside of your family bubbles.

Finally, thank you to everyone for their positive messages and support as we start to think about the new world of Alert Level 2. We are all looking forward to having our children back with us here at Leeston.

Nga mihi nui

Lynda Taylor