



West Park School

Te Kura O Papa Hauāuru

Every student matters, every moment counts.

Broderick Road, Johnsonville, Wellington 6037, Phone (04) 478 7074, Fax (04) 478 7593

28 August 2021

Kia ora koutou Parents and Caregivers,

Thanks for the way that so many of you have engaged with and supported our distance teaching and learning programme during the past week and a half. Staff have really appreciated the enthusiasm and positive feedback received.

Having spent nine full days in Alert Level 4, the Prime Minister announced yesterday afternoon that all of New Zealand will continue to stay in alert level 4 until 11:59 pm on Tuesday 31 August. At that time, and subject to whatever information may emerge over the weekend, all New Zealand regions south of Auckland's regional boundary will shift into alert level 3. Therefore, Wednesday 1 September will be our first day back at alert level 3. That, in turn, means that the school is now working through how to best operationalize a minimal re-opening. At alert level 3 schools are required to be open for the children of parents who need to go to work **and have no alternative care options available**. All other children should continue their distance teaching/ learning programmes as they have since the alert level 4 lockdown began.

Please note that we are still at Alert Level 4.

Considerations in our requests to parents/ caregivers, and in our decision making for alert level 3 are being given to the following points:

1. The health and safety of everyone needs to be paramount and that decisions are being made taking full account of Public Health advise.
2. Schools are required to be open as of the 1 September for the children of parents who need to go to work **and have no alternative care options available**
3. All children who can, should remain home and continue to learn remotely
4. Any children needing to attend school will be kept in their own bubbles where possible to limit exposure between children
5. Children, young people and staff who are at greater risk are encouraged to stay at home
6. Any child, young person or staff member who is sick should remain at home



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7. We have numerous staff members that would also need to work from home due to personal health or home situations that place them or others at a higher risk than others.
8. The logistical challenges presented to teachers in being asked to simultaneously run an onsite, and a distance teaching and learning programme
9. Our available staffing and resources

I also anticipate that in the coming days the school will receive additional Ministry of Education guidance on a number of topics, including safe distancing, staff with health conditions, staff caring for vulnerable people, managing the balance of teachers and children, the role of relievers and support staff, safely managing separate bubbles and whether a return to schools and centres would be voluntary for staff.

To help us, work through a range of practical issues that we will face when the school is moved to alert level 3 next Wednesday, we need to know which of our parents/ caregivers would be sending their child/ren to school at alert level 3, and which parents would have their child/ren remain at home and continue to learn remotely. This information is critical in helping us prepare for life and education under alert level 3.

To that end the school, and parents/ caregivers now need to make contact by next Monday 5 pm. to clarify whether or not each child will be physically attending school on Wednesday and into alert level 3. We appreciate that many of you may not know until Monday whether or not you will be required back at work or not. However, if you are in a position to now provide a definitive answer, contacting your child's teacher with that answer via email would be greatly appreciated. Early clarifications will greatly reduce teacher's efforts on Monday as they try to contact parents/ caregivers after 1 pm for clarification of intent. Your intent can also be given to teachers over any scheduled zoom meeting on Monday morning.

Please note that staff have been asked to give contacting parents priority next Monday from 1 pm onwards, which means any scheduled lessons for after 1 pm may not take place if a teacher has many parents to yet may contact-with.

The School Leadership Team will on Monday evening start to make more concrete decisions for moving forward when they have through their teaching teams gained



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a clear indication of the number of students that would be returning to school at an alert level 3. By then the school will have also received further clarity on expectations being placed on schools by the MoE.

It's been made abundantly clear through the media and official government announcements that Delta is more infectious and moves quickly, therefore, the best way of limiting the spread of cases is by minimizing contact, which would be best achieved by keeping as many students involved in distance teaching/ learning as possible.

Sadly, last year in moving to level 3, we know of a number of parents who chose to send their child to school because they wanted some time away from their kids, or they felt that having their child at home was becoming a distraction to their efforts in working from home. I know that this can, and is a difficult time for many, however, please keep in mind the health and well-being needs, of the staff who have been working so diligently in trying to support all our kids. Adding additional work or undue complexities to their load at the moment is not ideal. We all really hope that last year's choices by a small number of parents are better considered this time around.

The school's leadership teams objective is to structure an alert level 3 educational model that will serve students, staff, and community, whilst giving priority to everyone's health and safety.

Thank you all for your ongoing support and please continue to keep safe.

Kind regards

Luis Echegaray
Principal
West Park School