



Birdwood School

PB4L



Thursday 27th January 2022

Nga mihi nui ki a koutou katoa, talofa lava, fakalofa lahi atu. malo e lelei, bula vinaka, naumaste, Ni hao, Ahn nong ha se yo, Sawasdee, Xin Chao, Malo ni, Fakatalofa atu, Ayubowan & Sawubana, Greetings to you all.

Starting School Thursday 3rd February 2022 9.00am

School will be kanohi ki te konohi , face-to-face, five days a week for all students

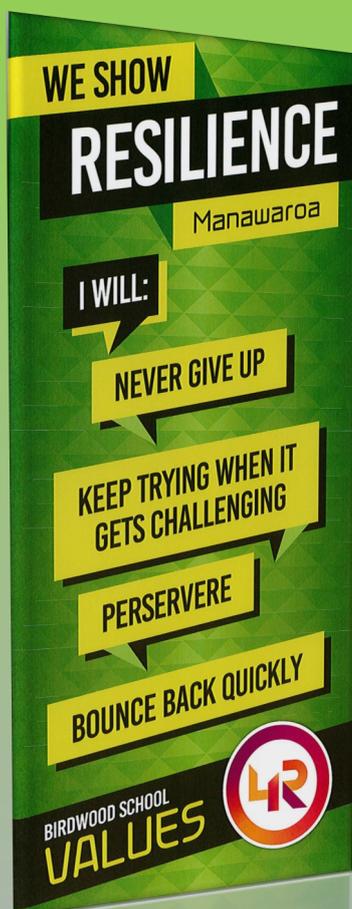
PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

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

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



Our team is feeling refreshed and ready to go for the 2022 year and can't wait to welcome everyone back onsite. In regard 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 and it is good to know that at Red setting, we are able to support **everyone** learning onsite.



Just a week out from the beginning of Term 1, you'll know the Omicron variant is now in some of our communities. The Ministry of Education released information to the sector on Tuesday 25 January and the Senior Leadership Team worked through the following guidelines yesterday to determine the following protocols/health and safety processes. We will continue to update you as quickly as possible as information comes to hand. Please consider logging into our Whats App for the latest information.

Ventilation

We have used the Ministry of Education self-assessment tool to review all our ventilation in readiness for the start of the year. Providing good old fashioned fresh air remains the most important thing we can do in our learning spaces to minimise risk for ākonga and kaiako (and the same goes for you at home). We will also be receiving a CO₂ monitor in the coming weeks to further support our ventilation plan

Events and activities - Education Outside the Classroom

Large hui and gatherings especially when indoors continue to be one of the riskier activities we are no longer able to undertake. We have therefore reviewed all our events and activities for the upcoming term to ensure we meet the health guidance for Red. As a consequence we have made the decision for our welcoming Powhiri to not proceed on the first day as per our normal operating procedures. We will meet all new students and whanau at the gate on **Thursday 3rd February 9.00am** to welcome them to our kura with a whakatau. All other students will be able to enter the 2 gates at the front of the school by **8.30am** and go directly to their classes where the teachers will be there to meet you.



Omicron and testing

We have all seen the 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 – 8 must wear face coverings when inside at school when we are at Red.

Expectation

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) or for children a 3 ply cotton mask.

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.

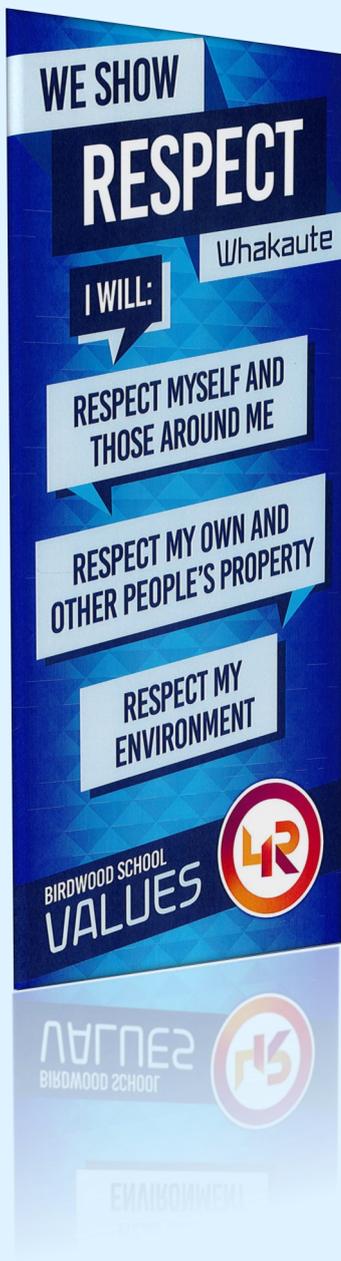
Vaccination for five- to 11-year-olds

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.

If your child is absent, please remember to call 833 8479/ text 0275694305 or website:www.birdwood.school.nz or Skoolloop



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. Please contact Vicky or Debbie in the office with this information 09 8338479

If your child is unwell or sick, please keep them at home. We will be sending home students who show symptoms of any illness at school.

School start and finish times

- The new school year will start on **Thursday 3 February at 9.00am.**
- School will start every day at 8.55 a.m (no arriving before 8.30 a.m)
- Parents are not allowed on the school site. You will need to contact the office beforehand.
- All students are to arrive at the front gate where you will be hand sanitised.
- Students to bring a water bottle (no drinking fountains will be operational)
- Lunches will be available from the first day

Please bring a named wide brimmed hat and your own sunscreen is recommended as students will be spending time outside. Please support your child to apply sunscreen before coming to school.

- Students are able to play on the school playgrounds
- Students are able to bring sports equipment and balls to school
- Homework club will begin later in term 1.
- The school office will be closed for all visitors. Any new enrolments please phone Vicky (Office Secretary) 09 8338479 to coordinate a time to complete this process/paperwork.

Stationery

Stationery will be supplied free to all children who arrive at school on **Thursday 3rd February** or **Friday 4th February only**. This is a small incentive to encourage as many of our learners back at school and only available for these 2 days. After this you will need to purchase your stationery for your tamariki. Please contact the office beforehand to make an appointment to sort this.

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.

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. Please refer to the Covid website.

Continued

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 be entitled to

- 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)

Getting ready to return to school

The Ministry of Education has some helpful information to support your tamariki to get back to school. 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 Viv Carr - Deputy Principal vcarr@birdwood.school.nz

Kevin Meikle- Team leader Te Whare Kotahitanga

kevinm@birdwood.school.nz

Sarah Finau - Team leader Timatanga Taonga

sarahf@birdwood.school.nz

Nga mihi nui

Jenny Bernard

Tumuaki/Principal