



# St Joseph's Catholic School, Fairfield

Tuesday 16 November 2021

Kia Ora Koutou

Following the unexpected announcement by the Prime Minister yesterday, the good news is that we are returning to Alert Level 2 and **will be ready to welcome all students back to our school site on Wednesday 17 November**, as it is now considered safe to do so.

Even though we will be Alert Level 2 tomorrow, we have a number of Covid-19 cases still in Hamilton, and several locations of interest in our community. **Therefore we have made the decision to create a “school bubble” which means that we will not be having any parents or visitors onsite, as we do not yet have the means to check their vaccination status.** We are doing this to ensure that we can keep our tamariki as safe as possible on our school site.

Alert Level 2 at St Joseph's means:

- Hygiene measures will be in place - regular hand washing/sanitising.
- Keeping spaces well-ventilated.
- There is no requirement to keep groups of children separated.
- Breaktimes will be normal - all children are allowed to mix as usual.
- There is no requirement for mask wearing by children or staff unless interacting with the public.
- We will be avoiding large school gatherings such as assemblies for now.
- We will return to our optional staggered end of day to allow social distancing by our parents at our school exits. If you want your child released to go home independently at 2.25pm, email your class teacher. All other children will be released at 2.45pm. If you turn up at the school gates from 2.25pm, we will send a runner to collect your child.

Please appreciate that we don't yet have the answers to how end of year school events/occasions will look; after planning extensively for part-time schooling, we now need to plan what the next four weeks under Alert Level 2 looks like with all our students back! We will keep you well updated.

Please don't hesitate to contact your child's kaiako if there is something you clarified.  
See you tomorrow - Wednesday!

## “Frequently Asked Questions”

### **Who can come back to school?**

Everyone can return full time from **Wednesday 17 November**. Schools are open and considered safe to do so. The only exception will be anyone that is feeling unwell or sick, and we will send anyone home immediately if they show any symptoms of illness.

### **Can I still keep my child home even when the school moves to Level 2?**

Under Level 2, it is now deemed safe for everyone to return to school. We anticipate that some families may still be reluctant to send their child(ren) back to school, and we understand this. We want to work with you to support your child's transition back to school.

If you **DO NOT** intend on sending your child back to school from **Wednesday 17 November**, please email your child's teacher and/or me directly.

***Please note that with all of our staff back at school, teacher focus will be on the students at school. Distance Learning will not be continuing in the same way it has done over the lockdown period.***

### **Returning School devices?**

At Alert Level 2 all devices loaned out by the school must be returned. Please ask your child to return the device to the school office on **Wednesday 17 November** to be signed off.

### **Face coverings**

**Face coverings are not mandated for use in primary schools.** However, the Director General of Health strongly encourages staff and students aged 12 and above to wear face coverings in secondary school settings to align with the requirements when out and about and indoor public places. **This is not a requirement for anyone in a primary school setting at Alert Level 2.** It remains an option for individuals and a decision for the individuals and whānau. Whatever decisions students and teachers make, it is their own to make and needs to be respected. Where an individual chooses to use a face covering they should supply and wear their own, and to do so safely. This option applies to younger children too.

### **Can parents and caregivers come on-site at school at Level 2?**

**No. Parents need to stay outside the school grounds.** If you need to talk to your child's teacher, they are able to phone you or Zoom call.

### **St Joseph's Fairfield "optional" staggered end of day arrangements:**

As traffic and parking are an issue for St Joseph's at the best of times, **we will run an optional staggered end of day pick up during Alert Level 2.** The aim of this is to ease the pressure on parking in Strowan, and to ensure that we can manage the congested waiting zone at the school office after school.

- "1st wave" of students released at 2.25pm: Parents can let teachers know if their child can be released from class at 2.25pm, ready for pick up from 2.30pm. Please email your child's teacher directly to be added to this list. This can be a standard instruction for the duration of Level 2, or can change daily, but the email must be received by the teacher before 1.30pm.

- "2nd wave" of students released at 2.45pm on bell.

Staff will be at the following points from 2.30pm to ensure students are safe. If your children are old enough to walk to Dalethorpe Ave or Haultain St to be picked up, please put this arrangement in place as staff will be there to watch your child until you get there. We hope this

will make a significant difference to the congestion and will allow social distancing expectations to be adhered to. Parents, we know you will model these expectations to your children at your pick up points if you are chatting to other parents.

Staff will be at these points between 2.30-3.00pm:

- Traffic Lights Crossing on Clarkin Road
- In front of the Church
- Haultain St corner -
- Strowan Ave entrance by the School Office
- Dalethorpe Avenue (end of Strowan Avenue)

We need parents to stay beside their cars or walk towards our entrance, but remain outside of the school grounds please - we will send your child to you.

For some families, you will be able to arrange for older siblings at school to collect their younger siblings and accompany them off the school grounds.

Children are NOT to cross Strowan Ave - this is a real safety hazard and we need your support with this! **As always, no cars are permitted down the driveway as this remains a safety hazard.**

We fully appreciate that there will be heightened emotions for students and parents as we return to school, ranging from excitedness to anxiety. We will be doing everything we can to make pick ups and drop offs as smooth as possible within the restrictions we have. Thanks for your support.

**Will students be in “bubbles”?**

**No.** At Alert Level 2 the bubble system is not required. Students will be free to move around the school.

**Will students be using drinking fountains at Level 2?**

**No.** Please ensure your child has a personal water bottle.

**Is the Playground open?**

**Yes.** Our focus will be on washing hands before and after every break time. The playground can be used before school, once students have washed their hands on arrival, at morning tea and at lunch time. The playground will not be open after school as parents will not be onsite to supervise their children.

**Will students be able to play sports and do PE?**

**Yes.** We are looking forward to sports and physical activity resuming within the school grounds.

**Will there be School Assembly / Liturgies, or large school events?**

**No.** Although technically these are deemed okay, in the short term we will not be holding these, as they would be bringing together large groups of people.

**Will Distance Learning continue ?**

**No.** Teachers are full time at school now.

**Is there a plan to support the transition of students back into school?**

**Yes,** We're really mindful of the well-being and readjustment of children back to school. We know that students will have experienced this lockdown in many different ways. Wellbeing and relationships have always been our priority and our staff will take the time to focus on this, and to rebuild culture and relationships, in a manner similar to what we would do at the beginning of each school year. Wellbeing needs to be addressed before significant learning can happen.

**Will there be after school care?**

Under Alert Level 2 after school care will operate. Please contact SKIDS directly for more information.

**School Lunches at Level 2?**

Not yet. We will work this out in the next few days and let you know.

**School uniform:**

Children can wear school uniform or PE uniform for the rest of this year. Make your best attempt at school uniform - eg if you don't have the right shoes, wear other plain sensible shoes.

**Is the School Office open?**

**No.** There will be a new doorbell you can ring on the gate at the Strowan Ave entrance - ring the bell and someone will come out to see you!

If you need something, e.g. to pick up a child for an appointment, please phone the office and we will bring your child out to you.

We appreciate your understanding around the processes we will be putting in place. We will be constantly reviewing how we are operating under Alert Level 2, to ensure that we can keep our students safe, happy and learning while following the guidelines. We will keep you well informed and updated about our protocols.

For more detailed information at Alert Level 2, you can visit <https://covid19.govt.nz>

If you have any further questions or comments please feel free to email me - [principal@stjosephs.school.nz](mailto:principal@stjosephs.school.nz)

Ngā Mihi  
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Principal