



# Newsletter

## COVID-19

12 May 2020

[www.stheliers.school.nz](http://www.stheliers.school.nz)

Dear Parents

### **School Opening Alert Level 2**

We received great news from the Prime Minister that under Alert Level 2 schools will reopen for all children on Monday 18 May. Our staff, teachers and support staff have done a brilliant job of adapting to distance learning and support, but it does not replace being together face-to-face.

For the remainder of this week, distance learning remains the same for children and staff who have been onsite during Alert Level 3 and for those children and staff who have been offsite.

### **Thursday 14 & Friday 15 May**

A reminder that on Thursday and Friday of this week, classroom teachers will not be available to conference, meet or provide feedback to children as all staff will be back onsite to prepare for the school to reopen to all children on Monday 18 May. Teachers will provide learning activities for Thursday and Friday during the week. Non-classroom staff will carry out supervision on Thursday and Friday for children who have been onsite for the duration of Alert Level 3.

### **Week Beginning Monday 18 May and Pick-up & Drop-off Entrances**

School commences and finishes for all children at the normal times of 8.50am and 3pm, with children in their regular classrooms. Children are unable to be on the school site before 8.30am and must leave promptly at 3pm. Children will have designated entrances.

**NB.** There will be a further email on Thursday advising drop off and pick entrances for specific year groups and family groups.

### **Well-Being**

Well-being of children and staff will be a particular focus when we return to school.

Research and evidence tells us that racing back to 'catch up' is not the priority. Yes, learning will recommence, but time needs to be spent on children's well-being, being aware of the emotional impact of Covid-19 and reintegrating children back to the class and school setting.

When we return to school, it will be eight weeks since we have been onsite together. Children will have been away for longer than we have actually been at school this year. It will be like starting the school year again, re-grouping and re-establishing connections and routines.

As we near a return to school please let us know if you are concerned that your child might need some extra support to get them through this next period.

## **Health & Safety**

The 'Public Health Statement for the Education Sector' from the Ministry of Health give us confidence that schools are safe places to be. Their key messages include:

- *Our experience in New Zealand and overseas with Covid-19 over the last four months shows that it does not infect or affect children and teens in the same way it does adults.*
- *Children and teens have low infection rates, they do not become that unwell if they do get infected and they do not tend to pass the virus on to adults.*

In addition, when we think about Covid-19, it is reassuring to hear how well the country has done at minimising the impacts of the virus and the very low number of new cases that are occurring in NZ now.

The likelihood of Covid-19 coming into any schools' gate is considered very slim.

## **Distance Learning and Face-to Face Teaching & Learning**

- Distance learning ceases at the end of the day on Friday 15 May.
- Face-to face teaching and learning commences on Monday 18 May.

## **Children with Compromised Immunity**

Children at higher-risk of severe illness from Covid-19 (e.g. those with underlying medical conditions, especially if not well controlled) are encouraged to take additional precautions when leaving home. If, on the advice of a medical practitioner it were recommended that a child not return to school under Alert Level 2, distance learning would be provided to that child. A medical certificate would be required.

## **Staff with Compromised Immunity**

Staff at higher-risk of severe illness from Covid-19 (e.g. those with underlying medical conditions, especially if not well controlled) are able to work on-site in a safe and conscientious way. Staff in this group have sought reassurance from their doctor.

## **Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing is one of the precautions to prevent the spread of disease. We do however know it is challenging in schools. The guidelines that the Ministry of Health has issued to schools are for children and staff to maintain a physical distance so that they are not breathing on or touching each other, coupled with the good hygiene and cleaning practices that we are all well and truly used to by now.

## **Hygiene Routines & Guidelines**

This will be a priority, applying the same practices throughout the school with regular hand washing, sanitising and cleaning. Although we have class supplies of hand sanitisers, we are asking families to supply their child/children with a small bottle (50-60ml) of hand sanitiser, named, for ease of use to complement class sanitisers and class supplies of soap and paper towels for regular hand washing. Year 1&2 children are to give their sanitisers to class teachers for dispensing.

## **Parents Onsite under Alert Level 2**

Contact tracing is a key strategy in preventing the spread of Covid-19.

Ministry of Education requirements are that all parents, visitors or contractors who need to come onsite must sign in at the school office each time they are on site.

Unfortunately, this means **parents will not be able to come onsite at drop off and pick up times.** Logistically, at drop off and pick up times, all parents signing in would simply not work. Signing in is all to do with contact tracing.

When dropping off and picking up children, physical distancing of 2 metres is recommended for parents and caregivers from people they do not know to align with public health measures outside the school grounds.

### **School Grounds & Playgrounds**

Under Alert Level 2 our school grounds and playgrounds remain closed to the public. Allowing members of the public to use our playgrounds after hours brings a level of complexity to contact tracing and cleaning. There will be no before school and after school sports practices while in Alert Level 2.

### **Parent & Emergency Contact Details**

If you are unsure that we do not have the most up to date parent and emergency contact details, please check with the School Office.

### **Assemblies**

Assemblies can proceed with physical distancing. During the early stages of our return to school, we will only be having syndicate assemblies as we bed in our distancing rules. There will be no morning or whole school assemblies at this stage.

### **Sports Equipment & Playgrounds**

These can all be used in Alert Level 2 using appropriate hygiene practices.

### **Bay Suburbs (Y5&6) & Eastern Zone (Y7&8) Sports**

All Bay Suburbs and Eastern Zone sports have been cancelled for the remainder of this term.

### **Tuckshop**

The tuckshop will not be reopening during the first week back at school. It will reopen on Wednesday 27 May for lunch orders only.

### **How can you help?**

- Please get children back into the routine of a school morning – bedtime, morning routines, uniforms ready and so on.
- Bottle of hand sanitiser for each child.
- Update any changes of your contact details to the School Office.
- Talk to your child about what they are looking forward to about returning to school.
- Reassure your child that school is a safe place.

Thank you for the support you have been giving to the staff and to the school in general during these past few weeks.

The staff are really looking forward to welcoming the children back to school on Monday.

Kind regards



**Principal**