

Mōrena koutou

I am aware that we are communicating a great deal lately, but as you are aware, things are very changeable at the moment as we all comes to terms with the sharp rise in community case of COVID-19.

By now I assume that almost everyone in our community knows of a family member or friend that has had to isolate and is coming to grips with what is required of them. If you are dealing with COVID-19 in your family, we wish you a speedy recovery and are here to help if you need anything. Please make contact with us if you need anything.

We have seen an increase in the number of positive cases reported to us by families, so we have made the decision to reduce the number of school wide, general emails about individual cases and move to families only being notified if your child is a close contact following a positive case being infectious whilst at school. Close contact situations are not happening very often at the moment, as students (and staff) are doing an amazing job following all the public health advice, wearing masks, eating outside and generally being awesome!

Based on the messaging from central government and the Ministries of Health and Education, we can expect a fair amount of change to our current rules and approaches over the next few weeks. Thank you to those of you who have sent in questions following previous newsletters and we hope we have cleared things up for you. One of the common questions is around set work for those students being rostered home.

To provide a bit of clarity, we are rostering students home to create flexibility in our staffing to cover the classes of the increasing number of staff having to isolate at home. It is about physical safety and supervision onsite. In many cases, the isolating staff member is not unwell, so may be able to continue with zoom lessons, teams chats, etc and learning may continue, just remotely, for the day whilst fellow staff members supervise the students onsite. Whilst there is no expectation for staff to provide work, many still are. As you can imagine, this is significantly increasing staff workload as they plan for their own lessons and cover the classes of others. This is why we are attempting to relieve the pressure a bit and roster students home. This is likely to be in operation whilst we are at phase 2 of our Omicron response.

Finally, we need to inform you that this Friday, 25 February, we will be sending all students home at 12.30pm (the end of period 3) as the majority of our teaching staff will be attending a *paid union meeting* in the afternoon.

As always, feel free to make contact with us should you have any questions. Click [here](#) for a link to our contacts pages.

Yours sincerely,

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Principal of Papatoetoe High School



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