

# St Joseph's Catholic School



*“Excellent Education befitting our Catholic Character”*

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To our St Joseph's School Whānau,

**St Joseph's School, Pukekohe, is open for learning for all students on Tuesday 1st February 2022.**

In regard to COVID-19 we have moved fully into the new traffic light framework for our school activities and events this year. As at the end of 2021, we have set health measures in place and it is good to know that at Red setting we are able to support everyone learning onsite.

As stated in my last letter, students can enter the school grounds from 8:00 am and wait outside the main building. At 8:30 am all teachers will be in their rooms and students can then go to their classrooms. Aim to drop your children off at school at 8:30 am. **Our school day begins at 8:45 am** and it is important that the children are already there to begin their day with their roopu in prayer; an essential part of our life as a Catholic school. **The school day finishes at 2:45 pm** and it is important that children are collected before 3:00 pm. **There will no longer be early pick-ups.**

While we are at COVID-19 Red Level, our youngest children in Aroha (Years 0-2) can start at 8:50 am and their day can end at 2:40 pm. This is to alleviate congestion at the school gate and we are aware that parents/adults are more likely to be waiting for our youngest children.

We prefer that parents/adults do not enter the school grounds unless your child needs support to come into school. If so, parents/adults need to sign in or use our QR code. Parents/adults are not to enter our school buildings. When adults come onsite, in addition to staff, any **rules for events applicable** at the time will apply.

Our powhiri for new students and their whānau is able to take place at 9:00 am on our first day of school. This will be held outside of our school hall. New whānau would have received an email today inviting them to attend. Because of current Red level, we need to restrict numbers on our site and additional adults cannot attend. This year the powhiri is for new whānau only. Face masks must be worn during the powhiri.

Face masks are to be worn inside by our Year 4-8 children. As Year 3 children will be grouped with Year 4 this year, we encourage them to wear face coverings too, however, this is optional. We will be rotating breaks during the day so that children can get outside more often and the playground be less crowded. Remember it's a summer term so children need to bring their school hats.

Fresh air/ventilation remains the most important thing we can do in our learning spaces to minimise risk. We will also be receiving a CO<sub>2</sub> monitor in the coming weeks to further support our ventilation plan

We all need to continue to play our part to minimise the spread of the virus. Good hygiene, vaccines, mask wearing, ventilation and distancing continues to be our main defense against this Omicron virus.

Staff and children in Years 4 – 13 must wear face coverings when inside at school when we are at Red. 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. We ask that Y4-8 children wear their mask into school in the morning, only to check if they have one.

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.

We will be sending home forms soon so you can update your contact details for 2022, and we can get in touch with you if needed. Often phone numbers are different to what we have on record.

The Ministry of Education has some helpful information on their [Parents and Whānau website](#) to support your tamariki to get back to school. There is also a very important reminder about how you can [take care of yourself](#). 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.

Finally, we do have staff absent in the first two weeks (NOT covid related) and we are grateful to have part-time teachers who can cover these so we can begin our year fully staffed.

Please feel free to contact me you have any concerns or need any support: [principal@stjosephs.co.nz](mailto:principal@stjosephs.co.nz)

I hope your whānau are able to enjoy this long Anniversary Weekend together.  
We look forward to seeing you again next week.

Stay safe and keep well,

Ursula Hall  
Principal