



# St Mark's School

*Transforming lives through the St Mark's Story*

Dear parents and whānau

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.

St Mark's School staff are feeling refreshed and ready to go for the 2022 year following two days of working together to plan for all students/ākonga. We can't wait to welcome everyone back onsite.

This communication, while lengthy, **MUST** be read in conjunction with the communication from the Board of Trustees dated **Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January**.

It is good to know that at Red Setting, we are able to support every student learning onsite.

There are however significant restrictions from the guidance from the Ministry of Education and the Policy set out by the Board of Trustees.

What follows is a detailed list of operational decisions **for Term 1** to ensure the highest quality of our teaching and learning programs, the safety of all staff, students and whānau, and offering **guidance and expectations for staff, students and families**.

- A. School Activities
- B. Students/Ākonga
- C. Staff
- D. School Communications
- E. General information
- F. Future Planning

## **A. SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

### **Gatherings**

Large hui and gatherings especially when indoors continue to be one of the riskier activities we can undertake. We have therefore reviewed all our events and activities for Term 1 to ensure we meet the health guidance for Red. The following decisions have been made for reasons outlined in Board of Trustees policy.

#### **1. Year 6 and 7, and Year 8 camps have been postponed because:**

We could not guarantee equitable EOTC activities for those students (12+3months) vaccinated and those not, shared accommodation with other schools and/or the public created risks of exposure to Covid-19 that could not be mitigated, and the resulting decrease in the range of activities meant the EOTC curriculum goals of our camps could not be met at this time.

**These camps or an alternative EOTC program, will be rescheduled at a later date in 2022.**

#### **2. Term 1 Swimming Years 4 – 8 has been postponed because:** due to current guidelines that require a vaccination pass to enter public pools, inequitable access to the swimming program would result for vaccinated and unvaccinated students. In addition, Waltham Lido Pool is open to the public at the times St Mark's School students would be there, providing a risk of exposure to Covid-19 that could not be mitigated at this time.

**This activity will be rescheduled at a later date in 2022**



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- 3. Church will take place in classes for Term 1** – in consultation with Rev. Ben Truman and observing the gathering guidelines of the Ministry of Education (“We strongly recommend you do not hold events or activities that involve large numbers of students such as school assemblies when at the Red traffic light setting” *Iona Holsted – Bulletin 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022.*). We have made the decision to hold church services in classes/hapori using a pre-recorded service. We hope to provide a link for parents to this service and affirmation of certificate recipients will be posted on class Seesaw pages.
- 4. Parent/Whānau and Teacher Conferences – Monday 31<sup>st</sup> January and Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February** – we want to thank all families who were able to book appointments to meet with teachers for 2022 on one of these days. If you would now prefer to connect with your classroom teacher using a different option including a phone call or an online meeting, please indicate to the teacher that this is your preference. We are committed to using all possible methods to keep school/whānau connections robust.

**Onsite on the days of the conferences** please follow the directions of your child's classroom teacher. Conferences will be held in classrooms and entry and exit points have been established for all classes. “Waiting chairs” will be available between meetings, however we ask that **masks are worn at all times, 2 metre distancing is observed both outside and inside the classrooms and that contact tracing and sanitising practises are observed at all appointments.**

## Parents/Whānau onsite.

According to Board of Trustees Policy:

- Parents/whānau can access the school grounds to deliver and collect their children/tamariki from **outside** the classroom.
- Parents/whānau **will not** have access to classrooms during school hours when students and staff are in classrooms.
- Meetings with staff however, can be prearranged and conducted onsite after hours or using digital platforms as agreed.

To operationalise this policy staff have agreed to:

- Create entrances and exits from the school using 4 gates – 3 on Locarno (including the one near the senior playground) and 1 at Cholmondeley Ave. At Cholmondeley Ave this will include coned pathways for entrance and exit.
- Staff on duty at all gates in the morning will ensure that all parents/whānau will use the contact tracing codes situated along the fence line and leaning boards on Locarno St, and the leaning boards and windows at Cholmondeley Ave. In addition staff will ensure that all parents/whānau are wearing masks and using hand sanitiser provided. We respectfully ask parents/whānau of students in Waka Puhara/Middle School and Waka Hourua/Senior School as a general guide to gather on the grassed areas closest to your classrooms. Teachers will bring classes out at the end of the day to reunite with family.
- We respectfully ask parents/whānau of students in Mōkihi/Junior School as a general guide to gather the sandpit side of the concrete seating in front of the classrooms. Teachers will bring classes out at the end of the day to reunite with family.



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- Because staff will be using the field for PE and curriculum related activities, staff ask that no parent/family member enter the school grounds before **2.50pm**. If your child needs to leave school **before 3.00pm** a separate arrangement with the class teacher **MUST** be made prior to the day.
- If your child usually connects with you outside the gate, catches a bus or scooters home for example this can occur as usual – these examples all reduce congestion on the school grounds.
- We respectfully ask that **ALL** families exit the school grounds as soon as possible after delivering or collecting their children.
- We respectfully ask you to observe the current Public Health guidance and ensure that those of your family on the school grounds practise physical distancing – 2 metres - from non-family members.
- Staff also respectfully request that where possible ākongā/students are dropped off and picked up at the school gate.

## B. STUDENTS/ĀKONGA

### Face Masks

- Tamariki/children in Years 4 – 8 **MUST** wear face coverings when **INSIDE AT SCHOOL** when we are at Red. During breaks including morning tea and lunchtime, and when they are outside masks can be removed.
- 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) and reusable fabric masks with three layers.
- Where possible we ask that families of students year 4 and up provide masks that are suitable for their child. We are advocating that the use of masks is like our sun hats – part of our protection to keep us all safe and healthy.
- Masks will be stored in individual desks in classrooms.
- The school has a limited supply of blue and white masks should they be needed for students. Please contact your teacher directly regarding if you have difficulty supplying masks for your child.

### At school

- ALL students need a full drink bottle every day along with their lunch and morning tea. Communal drinking fountains will not be available.
- It is anticipated that Subway lunches will continue – at the time of writing this is to be confirmed.
- All students will be encouraged and continue to use regular hand washing and sanitising, cough and sneeze etiquette and non-sharing of food items.

## C. STAFF

Just a reminder of the following:

- **All staff that have contact with tamariki** including teaching staff, teacher aides, caretakers, board members, administration staff, and PA members in the uniform shop are vaccinated.
- Staff will assess students who become unwell or injured during the course of the day and at times recommend that they go home. If you are called to pick up your child please do so from the office area using the Cholmondeley Ave entrance.
- **This is a perfect opportunity to ensure that ALL your whanau emergency details are up to date. Please contact Christine Fairchild [c.fairchild@saintmarks.school.nz](mailto:c.fairchild@saintmarks.school.nz) to make changes.**



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- Staff will ensure all frequently used surfaces are cleaned with bleach including desk tops and door handles.
- All staff will wear face masks – this is a decision by staff to ensure the health and safety of everyone onsite.

## D. SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

For clarity Staff want ALL whānau to be aware that there are two main pathways of communication at St Mark's School

1. **Seesaw** – this is an online platform that we primarily reserve for sharing learning from year 0-8. Family/whānau members can be logged into Seesaw which provides opportunities for your tamariki to share their learning in real time. Once you have downloaded the app and signed in, you will receive alerts on a device of your choice of a post from your child or child's teacher. As whānau you are able to respond to this post with comments and other supportive tools. Seesaw is also used for sharing class and waka information when this information is isolated to small groups of students.

**Please download this app – details from your class teacher**

2. **St Mark's School App** – this is an app where **whole school** information is found. This app (from School Apps<sub>nz</sub>) is free to download onto the device of your choice (most commonly used is a smartphone) and provides the following services:
  - St Mark's School **Calendar**
  - A facility to text an **Absence** which links directly to the office
  - **Links** to key documents
  - **Alerts** including key communications from the Board of Trustees, Board of Proprietors and Parents Association
  - The **Newsletter**
  - **Contacts** – easy connection to any staff member
  - **Term dates**

**Over 600** members of our community have this app and report how vital it is to receiving information and using the tools with ease. This indicates the wide stretch of this tool to our extended whānau.

3. **Staff use email and calls** to communicate where appropriate and aim to respond to emails within 24 hours. An email received during the day is not always picked up by staff until after 3.00pm due to a wide range of teaching commitments. If your question or communication is urgent, calling the office on 03 332 7339 or email [office@saintmarks.school.nz](mailto:office@saintmarks.school.nz) is advised.

## E. GENERAL INFORMATION

### Ventilation

We have reviewed 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/students and kaiako/teachers. We are fortunate that our classrooms have been fitted with CO2 monitors and we will be



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following Public Health Guidelines for optimal levels. In addition the Ministry of Education have indicated that CO<sub>2</sub> monitors will be available in the coming weeks to further support our ventilation plan.

## **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 get here](#)

- [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 \(including food and rent/mortgage\)](#)

## **F. FUTURE PLANNING**

Current and urgent areas for discussion for staff include:

- Online platforms to include whānau in onsite events.
- Staff and students absences should Covid-19 enter our school community.
- A multifaceted approach to learning online and onsite.
- Redirecting resources for postponed EOTC events including risk assessments for alternative opportunities.
- Ways to use the outside environment of our school for learning.

While this might all feel a little overwhelming at times, we know that by working with whānau, these measures will help our children return to school, reconnect with whānau and friends and do what they enjoy.

Please get in touch with your teacher in the first instance if you have any concerns or need help in any way.

Welcome, welcome, welcome back to school.

See you soon!

Averil Worner and all staff  
Tumuaki and Kaiako  
St Mark's School