

# St. Bernard's College

*Te Kura Tuarua ō Hato Perenara*



## **Kia ora koutou**

I hope that you and your bubbles are as enthusiastic about getting back to school as we are. As a school we have tried hard to stay connected with our boys but, given the suddenness of what happened, this has not been easy. It will therefore be awesome to be back together.

I apologise if there appears to be a delay in sending this type of information out to you. This is simply because we hear about government decisions and are provided with Public Health information at the same time as you receive it. We then need to plan how these new 'rules' can be best implemented at our school. It is not ideal but that is the situation we are all in.

## **Back to School**

It is wonderful to be able to have the boys back onsite. We intend 'staggering the start days' as we do at the beginning of the year. We are doing this because we need to ensure that the systems and protocols we are putting in place to manage Level 2 are effective in the real world of hundreds of students. We are also aware that, particularly for our younger boys, some may find coming back to school a cause of anxiety and we want to help manage that for them.

**Therefore Years 7 – 10 will come back to College on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May and the whole school (Years 7 – 13) will attend from Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May.**

The timetables for both days will be 'different' in that we need to spend some time re-establishing with the boys how we will run safely and unpacking and reflecting on the last 6 weeks – a time that has been unique in all of our lives. Full details will be provided to you in a further communication this Friday. Remote learning continues for all students through this week and also on Monday next week for our senior students.

## **Who should be back at school?**

It is entirely understandable that many of us remain anxious at this time given what we have seen in the media from overseas. However we are reassured by the Ministry of Health and Government that the situation in our country now means that it is safe for everyone who is not immune-compromised to be back at school. If you are at all concerned over whether or not your son should be attending school because of pre-existing health reasons – or if someone in your household is particularly at risk - you must get advice from your Doctor in the first instance. It is important that you communicate this with either myself [sstack@sbc.school.nz](mailto:sstack@sbc.school.nz) or Liz Thomson [ethomson@sbc.school.nz](mailto:ethomson@sbc.school.nz) and we will ensure that a plan is developed so that remote learning continues for him.

## **Uniform.**

The Year 9 – 13 students are normally expected to be in winter uniform over this term. Obviously the uniform shop has been unavailable for some weeks and so we do not expect all of our College students to have this uniform for the remainder of this term. Further communication over the uniform shop hours and how we will manage that safely will be sent to you shortly.

## **Devices/remote learning.**

We would like all students to bring their own device to school wherever possible. This will minimise the risks of cross-infection associated with any sharing of the school's devices. It will also ensure that any move back into distance learning would happen easily should that need arise – either through the country moving back into Level 3 or if a student is required to self-isolate. As our Prime Minister informs us - Level 2 is not "back to normal". We need to be prepared for learning to be disrupted again and our teaching programs must reflect that.

## **Sport.**

Under Level 2, we are advised that College sport is likely to recommence. However there will need to be rules/restrictions put in place particularly around spectators at venues and how contact tracing could be assured. Andrew Cavill – our Director of Sport - will communicate that with you when these matters

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have been clarified by the various Ministries and organisations involved. You will also be receiving information from him around how our sports trainings etc. will happen safely.

### **Health and Safety.**

We are reassured by the Government and the Ministry of Health that in Alert Level 2 the possibility of infection is minimal and that schools are safe environments for your sons and for our staff. I wish to assure you how we will be adhering to the Public Health advice that all schools have received from the Ministries of Education and Health.

The Physical distancing of our boys will be “challenging” to say the least. The “Bubbles” of students we had at level 3 are gone as is the strict 1 metre distancing rule for students. Instead the Public health advice is that students should not be “physically touching” or able to ‘smell each other’s breath’ and our focus should be on hygiene practises.

### **The key controls that will operate at our College for Alert Level 2 are:**

- *Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or who feels generally unwell must stay away from College. Any student who becomes unwell during the day will be isolated and must be taken home as soon as possible.*
- *In areas under our direct control physical distancing measures will be maintained so there is no breathing on or touching each other. We will ensure that our classrooms are set up so that the boys are not sitting ‘crammed’ together or forced to be in physical contact with each other. We will not have full school assemblies but may have year level assemblies or ‘split school’ assemblies so that we can better control the boys’ movement in and out of the gym as well as ensuring that the ‘no shoulder-to-shoulder’ guidelines from Public Health are adhered to.*
- *Good hygiene and cleaning practices will be reinforced (hand washing and drying; coughing and sneezing into your elbow; keeping surfaces clean). All class rooms will have a sanitizer station inside the door and every student will be required to sanitize their hands when coming into the room. The message to our boys about the need to follow these hygiene practices will be constant and ‘loud’.*
- *Contact tracing registers will be in place through a combination of our timetable, attendance register and visitor register. There will be no fieldtrips where our boys could be mingling with large groups of members of the public. For example the Year 10 Retreat day working in the Wellington soup kitchen will not proceed. We will also require all of our students – including Year 13’s - to remain on school grounds during lunchtimes to avoid contact with the wider, ‘un-contact-traceable’ public. Any visitor to the school site will be clearly identified as having checked in at the office and had their details recorded.*
- *Break-times will run as normal however, we will ensure that a number of classrooms are open and supervised for boys who want to be out of the cold and wet. We are also working on a plan to ensure that the gym is open and supervised at break-times. The sanitizing rules and ‘no climbing all over each other’ rules will apply to these rooms.*
- *We are awaiting clarification from the Ministry of Education over how our canteen will be open in terms of MBIE rules. We have a plan in place for ensuring we can manage our Canteen in such a way as to ensure hygiene (hand washing) and reasonable distancing is maintained. Further information on whether the canteen will be available will be provided to you this Friday.*

**Buses:**

School buses will run as normal. We are informed that because every student on these buses is 'contact-traceable' there will be no restrictions on numbers on these buses. The same is not true for public transport where we understand there will be limitations placed on the numbers of people allowed on board. If your son does have to catch a public bus or train you should ensure that he has a 'plan B' if the bus is full. The College office is open until at least 4.30 every day and we will ensure that the library remains open until 4pm every day if your son needs to stay on-site.

**Enrolments:**

We have had to cancel our Open Day and it is unlikely that we would be able to have one safely under Level 2. So while we get a plan around how we advertise ourselves to the wider community, please inform anyone you think is interested in enrolling their son that our enrolments will be open as of Friday 15 May. Enrolment information will be available on our website [www.sbc.school.nz](http://www.sbc.school.nz) and packs can be picked up from the College office.

**Staffing:**

We have had one change over the last 2 months. We farewell Ms Hilary Asquith on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May. Ms Asquith has been with us for the last 5 years as teacher in charge of Junior Curriculum. She has been a wonderful classroom teacher and a leader of innovation across the whole school. We congratulate her on her appointment to a leadership role at Wa Ora School. We welcome Mr Alan Grant to the staff to take over Ms Asquith's role within the College. Mr Grant may be known to many of you from his teaching time at SS Peter and Paul School.

**Hardship.**

This is an awful time for many of us in terms of financial stress and all the anxiety and pain that comes with that. While some of us have been truly fortunate in that we have had jobs that have enabled us to work from home, many of us have not been in this position. I personally know of some of you who have lost jobs and businesses. I have absolutely no doubt that our community is hurting a lot at the moment.

No boy should be unable to do sport or suffer in their learning or not be able to wear our uniform and be proud of it because of a lack of money. Certainly, no boy should have to leave St. Bernard's because of a lack of money. None of this is the fault of anyone. Please let me know directly if you are in that situation and I will do everything possible to manage that for your son here. Mr Boon is currently working on a more long-term response to the harm that has happened to many of our families because of this crisis. We will communicate our thinking around that to you shortly.

Thank you to the staff who have worked hard to upskill and make this 'remote-time' work as best we could. There is much that happened behind the scenes – from the 'shipping out' of around 70% of our schools stock of chrome-books to support families whose sons didn't have a device...to google-meets of classes and phone calls to families when we were worried that their son was not engaging in learning.

Finally, thank you for looking after your kids for us during the day. I don't mean that to sound "trite". Having tried to 'teach' two of my own boys at home and get them to 'do' their homework' I absolutely understand the pain some of you may have experienced in this regard. We are very pleased to be able to take on more of that role again now.

I am personally looking forward to seeing people and not just pixels again.

Kind regards

Simon Stack  
Principal