



COVID-19 Level 3 Alert UPDATE

School will be open for children, as a last resort, from Wednesday April 29 2020.

Tuesday 21st April 2020

Kia ora Parents and Whanau

I've been reflecting on the week and before I write about all the fabulous learning taking place, I would like to reflect on the major challenges facing many families. We are aware of several job losses in our community and the financial strain that is resulting in heightened stress in households. If the distance learning programme is adding to stress in your household and things are at a tipping point, then 'flag it'. There will be no judgement from us. We will pick things up when life returns to 'normal'.

I would also like to take a moment to thank and praise the essential workers who rose to support our nation in this dire time. Doing the mahi, so that we could shelter at home with food, with electricity and with peace of mind - we are so appreciative. Thank you.

When we move to alert Level 3 next week, Monday 27th April at midnight, it will be the turn of the teaching profession, amongst others, to heed the call to support Aotearoa. We need to get the economy moving. Our Manurewa Intermediate School staff (Teachers and Support Staff) will rise to this challenge! Nurses did it when they were called upon. Supermarket workers when they were asked. Many workers did it when the nation needed them. Educators will do the same. Level 3 gives the teaching profession the chance to support the other essential workers and reinforce the country's collective effort to get through this pandemic. But we are also understandably very nervous about opening school up, merging bubbles and in so doing, opening both your families and our own up to risk, so sending your child(ren) to school really must be a last resort. We will love them and care for them while you help to get our economy working again. I would like to echo the call of the medical profession - keep us safe, so that we can help you. **Only send your child to school if you really have no other choice.** We have a few staff that have compromised immunity and are therefore unable to return to work at Level 3 and we are working to support our team as well. Regardless of where they are, on the school site or at home, they will be working away to support the team effort.

Manurewa Intermediate School will be open for children from 9am – 3pm, Wednesday April 29. To enable your child to attend we will need all families to register – form teachers will be calling you by phone/mobile between Wednesday and Friday, this week, to ask. So please answer your phone or text!

Once specific names of children attending are known, staff will be in contact with those families to give further details, from Friday this week. This may be by phone or email via your child's school email address. Once a child starts on the Wednesday, they must come to school every day unless they are sick – there is no come one day, then

miss a day and then back again etc. Likewise, the hours are set, 9am – 3pm. If you wish to do differently then you keep your child at home full time. All students must wear full school uniform every day.

All of us will use our energy to ensure the school environment is well managed and safe for those who work there and for the children who need to attend. Level 3 is not a return to “normal”, therefore there cannot be an expectation that schools will return to their “normal” function or operation. We will use our collective professional wisdom, so workloads are distributed, and staff are not having to both teach online and face-to-face. We will use our knowledge and skills to provide teaching and learning opportunities that are appropriate to the situation we are in. Teachers will continue to teach online whether the child is doing so from home or in person at school.

I appreciate that you want more clarity about the proposed move from alert Level 4 to alert Level 3. Official advice has changed several times over the last couple of days, given that the government is responding to feedback. We will work within this environment to bring you the best information available as it comes to hand.

It was always going to be the case that alert Level 3 would be much less clear than alert Level 4 – it is by its nature a partial lifting of limitations and as such creates more grey and more ambiguity. The reason for the approach, as outlined by the Prime Minister, is to find a balance between ***having schools available for those who need it while minimising the numbers of students attending for public health reasons.*** We are still in a state of emergency as the Government takes decisions in the national interest.

Please read through all the information following, and preferably as soon as possible so you know this detail BEFORE your child’s form teacher calls you. As always, we are grateful for your input. We are ever mindful that each family faces a unique set of circumstances.

Yours sincerely

Iain Taylor
Principal

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION!

Who can come to school when we reach level 3?

The overriding principle for [Alert Level 3](#) is to **stay at home**, other than for essential personal movement and going to work. **The children of parents who are returning to work and have no other adult in their bubble to care for their children, can send their children to school.** We will care for them. If it is possible to widen your bubble with another family in order to share child care, you should do that rather than send your child to school where their bubble will mix with many other bubbles.

Parents and caregivers keep their children at home and maintain distance learning where that is possible.

Schools will be open for both onsite and distance learning for years 1 – 10. **Onsite learning will be exactly the same as Distance Learning.**

Year 11 – 13 students to remain at home and undertake distance learning.

People at higher-risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (e.g. those with underlying medical conditions, especially if not well-controlled, and the elderly) are encouraged to take additional precautions when leaving home.

What mitigation protocols will Manurewa Intermediate School have at alert level 3?

As of 21 April, we are planning for the following:

1. Staff with compromised immunity or comorbidities (refers to one or more diseases or conditions that occur along with another condition in the same person at the same time) or such people in their personal bubbles, will stay at home. They will support the school by doing work from the safety of their bubbles.
2. We propose continuing with the current format of work - distance learning at school and distance learning at home. The same learning. This will ensure fairness. It will also make the workload more manageable for staff. So teachers will supervise - not teach. They will give feedback to work being submitted by students at school and at home.
3. We are planning to keep bubbles very small and where possible keep family groups together in the same group for the duration of level 3. To keep the bubbles as small as possible, students will be spread across the room, hall or gymnasium (as much as is practical) - doing the same distance learning activities.
4. Cross grouping will not necessarily occur. Students will stay with their bubble for the duration of level 3. This will help to make contact tracing easier if we do get a case of COVID-19 at Manurewa Intermediate School.

5. The cleaning regime will be stepped up significantly. Learning Assistants and Leadership staff will be deployed to help with classroom cleaning and playground supervision. Rooms will be cleaned throughout the day on a rotation.
6. Each bubble will have individual break times. Breaks supervised by Learning Assistants and Teaching Staff.
7. The reception counter will not be open for face to face transactions of any nature. All office staff will be on site in reception and will only interact via phone or from a distance, with the main foyer door locked. This will help to reduce their bubbles and to support us with the contact tracing of our office staff.
8. When students arrive at school, they are to move directly to the classroom bubble spaces for hand sanitisation (stations will be set up at the door). **Do not congregate with other children and parents who are not in your bubble.** Contact teachers via phone or email. Please do not arrive at school before 8.45am.
9. All Health and Safety measures we are following at school need to be followed by all students and their whanau on their way to and from school as well ie. 2 m apart etc.
10. There will be no before OR after school sports or cultural practices, or any other after school activities or supervision.
11. Hand sanitiser will be available in each classroom space.
12. Playground equipment will be off limits to all. No personal sports equipment to be brought to school either.
13. Breaks will occur in designated areas e.g. courts/fields. Break times will be staggered - to maintain their individual bubbles.
14. Devices will be sanitised between any changes of user (although we will be trying to ensure the same device is used by the same child each time) and at the end of each day.
15. All large gatherings are cancelled. This refers to our weekly assembly and whanau singing, as well as our daily Fitness.
16. There is NO Breakfast Club or Tuck Shop so please ensure your child comes to school with their morning tea and lunch. NO lunches to be dropped off at reception at all. Do not be angry if you try this and we say no! You have been advised!
17. Playground water fountains turned off. All students to have their own drink bottles.
18. PE shed will not open. No shared equipment.
19. Depending on the numbers of children who physically attend school, staff may be rostered to be at school. Thus, the full staffing compliment may not be at school on any given day.

20. Staff who have to remain at home for health reasons will be completing distance learning programmes.
21. Any child that appears sick at school will be sent home immediately. Parents/Caregivers will be rung, and you will collect immediately, with your child being isolated until you arrive. The definition for 'appearing sick' includes: coughing, runny nose, chesty coughs, exposed skin lesions, headaches. If your child displays these before coming to school please don't send them! This will create more issues for you as we will call you to collect immediately.
22. Physical distancing - 2 metres outside and 1 metre inside.
23. The Director-General of Health has recommended that we start with bubbles of 10 and over time move to 20. We are still working through this, but are hopeful that we can have smaller bubbles.
24. We also have to determine what the level of attendance will be at level three. We will not know this until form teachers have called you by the end of Thursday.
25. The school Library will remain closed until further notice.
26. Personal electronic devices are not to be brought to school. This includes cell phones. NO cell phones at school.

What will be the difference between learning at home vs learning at school during level 3?

There will be no difference because these students can work through the online material at home and at school with very little adult support.

Will all teachers be back at school?

Whilst the majority will be, there may be some who are not. Those at high risk will not be. If the numbers of attending students is low - we will roster teachers on supervision of the bubbles. This will allow us to reduce the amount of people on site.

Will all Learning Assistants be working?

Yes. Those who do not have high risk factors will be assisting the teachers, supervising breaks and helping to support the cleaning roster.

Will break times remain the same?

No. We will stagger the breaks. Each 'class' will have different break times. Lunch times will be reduced in length.

Will children be allowed to use the playgrounds?

No. We know that the virus can live on surfaces for a few hours. The length of time that it can survive depends on the surface.

Will the school office be open?

The office staff will only be available via email or phone; or when vital at the sliding reception door which will be closed, and therefore speaking through it. We want to

protect our office team by also keeping their bubble small and the office is the area that could have the most traffic through it. Please help us to do this by either phone calling or using email.

Will Before and After school programmes/clubs etc operate?

No. They will not operate during alert level 3.

What Health and Safety evidence underpins the partial opening of schools at level 3?

Health and safety is at the forefront of our planning and the health of all in New Zealand is at the forefront of decisions that are being taken to respond to COVID-19.

Health authorities have carefully looked at the evidence around COVID-19 and educational settings, and at the experience of other countries in responding to COVID-19 to inform the public health advice to the education sector in planning for a move to Alert Level 3. Experience in New Zealand and overseas with COVID-19 over the last three 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 don't become that unwell if they do get infected, and they don't tend to pass the virus on to adults. The two key public health principles that support Alert Level 3 are first to minimise the risk that someone gets infected in the first place, and second to limit the number of possible contacts people have if they do get infected to make it easier to rapidly stop further spread.

The Alert level 3 approach in an ECE or school environment is designed to limit the number of people that children have contact with based on these principles. And because all the evidence points to children having a lower risk of getting infected and being affected by COVID-19, and it is possible to ensure that children are within the same group each day with no mixing between rooms, it is safe from a public health perspective to have a group of children learning together in a room or physical space (but to keep that group small).

Parents can have confidence that the proposed approach is designed to keep children and their families safe, to keep staff safe and to support the country's overall response to COVID-19 to 'keep it out and stamp it out'.

Parents also have a role here, to fully support this approach by doing their bit – making sure that they inform their school as to whether they need to have their children at school, keeping children home if they are unwell and seeking medical advice about whether a child may need to be tested; strictly maintaining their family 'bubble' outside the ECE or school environment; and ensuring great hygiene practices at all times.

- Iona Holstead, Secretary of Education, MOE