

# Rangiora New Life School

RNLS COVID newsletter #5 Feb 25 2022



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Kia ora koutou,

New Zealand's COVID-19 response continues amid much larger numbers of daily cases. We now move to Phase 3 of Red, so the information that I sent earlier this week about close contacts, isolating, and casual contacts monitoring has changed and is now superseded with new advice.

You may well have seen the headlines in the media about the number of cases being seen in schools. Please don't be alarmed by this. It is only natural as cases in our community increase, they will appear in our school. We have really good systems in place to respond to this and to keep any spread of the virus – should it appear – to a minimum.

You may have seen Dr Jin Russell in the media noting [research from New South Wales about their recent Omicron outbreak](#) showing that spread within the school setting is very low (less than 4% of cases at school infected someone else when at school). We have seen that in New Zealand too.

This is why we remain open at Red. It's great for a child's wellbeing and learning to be at school with their friends and school staff, and we have very good systems in place to keep everyone as safe as possible. We plan to keep RNLS open for as many and as long as our staff availability enables us - as I mentioned in the newsletter yesterday.

Your job as parents remains the same, too: please continue to keep a really close watch of your whānau for anyone with symptoms. If unwell, please stay at home and get advice about getting a COVID-19 test.

With Phase 3 of the Omicron response, the key change is that it is only **confirmed cases and their household contacts need to self-isolate**. Everyone else, including those who may have had close contact with the case but aren't in the household, continue to attend

school/work, but must continue to monitor really closely for any symptoms of COVID-19 as we all continue to do at Phase 3.

Rapid antigen tests (RATs) are now being used to diagnose COVID-19 as well as PCR tests. This means that you will get an almost immediate test result back if a RAT is used.

If anyone in your family is confirmed as having COVID-19, you will be asked to notify your close contacts yourself. Please get in touch with us as soon as you can if your child has tested positive for COVID-19. Only your household with a confirmed case isolates, everyone else monitors – and gets tested if they are symptomatic,

**Please email me on [stephenwalters@rnls.school.nz](mailto:stephenwalters@rnls.school.nz) or text/phone me on 027 778 3839 (including after hours) if you have any questions/queries.**

Transmission of COVID-19 is still most likely to happen in your home – so please keep doing all those good things to keep your whānau safe. Wash your hands, get lots of fresh air, cover any coughs and sneezes, clean surfaces regularly, and seek advice if anyone is not feeling well. And please wear a mask when you are out and about. There is information online to help your family [prepare to isolate](#) if you need to.

The most important advice we can give to keep your whānau safe is to act as if you have COVID-19. More than a third of people who have COVID-19 will not have any symptoms if they have had three doses of the vaccine. Please think about who you visit and what health measures you can put in place to keep everyone as safe as possible.

Getting three doses of the vaccine will really help you to do that. Research has shown that compared with being unvaccinated, three doses of the vaccine will mean you are 67% less likely to be infected with Omicron and 97% less likely to get Delta. If you can't get COVID you can't pass it on.

At school here we will continue to use the health measures that prevent the spread of COVID-19 – the use of sanitizer, encouraging regular handwashing, keeping classrooms well-ventilated, disinfectant fogging of high use areas, and encouraging physical distancing. The best way to stop the spread of Omicron is the use of face masks.

Finally, we know how hard the impacts on COVID-19 have been for many families in New Zealand. If you know of a family in your community who is struggling, please encourage

them to reach out for support for example to access food, medicine, or access financial support: [Help is available – COVID-19 Health Hub](#).

If you have any concerns about sending your child to school, please do get in touch. We are here to help.

Hopefully with us at Phase 3 now I will revert back to fortnightly newsletters!

Have a great weekend.

Aku mihi,

Stephen Walters

Principal

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