



Te Kura Tuarua o Opunake

OPUNAKE HIGH SCHOOL

OHS Learning @ Home LETTER UPDATE MONDAY 23 MARCH

I want to provide you with an update on our plans as we head into the next week at Opunake High School within the context of this rapidly changing national and international situation. Our primary concern is the health and well-being of Opunake High School's students and staff as well as those in the wider Opunake High School community. As you know, this situation is requiring us all to think and act in new ways, every day.

We are actively following the information and advice being provided by the [Ministry of Health](#) and [Ministry of Education](#) with regard to the Coronavirus - COVID 19. We continue to regularly update this page as information comes to hand. Our priority is the health and safety of all students and staff. As you know, the steps being taken to contain and limit the spread of the virus are unprecedented and they require all of us to think and behave differently.

High Risk Individuals

You will be aware of the Prime Minister's statement on Saturday, that at Level 2 on the NZ Government's COVID 19 Alert System, there are groups of New Zealanders who are now required to self-isolate. This clearly applies to Opunake High School students and staff. If your student has a pre-existing health problem or compromised immune system for any reason, or if he has experienced liver disease, cancer, kidney disease, heart disease or diabetes mellitus, he needs to stay away from the Opunake High School campus and self-isolate until further notice

If you consider your student to be a 'high risk individual', please keep them at home. All whanau who are choosing to keep their children at home; please use the absentee function on the School APP or phone, email admin@opunake.school.nz. Do this early –please notify us of the duration of the absence in the reason section. (This can always be amended if need be). The admin team are very busy while we are in this situation. Please be proactive with absence notifications so we do not have to spend our valuable time contacting whanau.

Stay at Home if Sick

One action we can all take is to be vigilant about our own health and the health of each other. We are encouraging staff to stay away from school if they are showing signs of illness such as coughs and colds. We ask that you please do the same with students. Colds and flus are common in schools and by staying away, seeking medical attention and practicing good hygiene, we can all keep any spread of illness to a minimum.

Self Isolation Requirements

There is now a 14 day self-isolation requirement for anyone arriving in New Zealand from other countries. In line with Ministry of Health advice, any member of our school community who returns to New Zealand from overseas, or has been in close contact with someone confirmed with COVID-19, is required to self-isolate, stay away from the Opunake High School campus for 14 days, and register using Healthline's dedicated COVID-19 number 0800 358 5453. If you have any plans for your student to be overseas in the April holidays or prior to this, please email admin@opunake.school.nz immediately. Where practicable we will provide work for students who are not able to be present in timetabled classes, although sustaining this for 14 days will be challenging. We respectfully ask you to consider postponing these trips if at all possible.

Learning @ Home Trial Day - Friday 27 March

The Ministry of Education has signalled that in some circumstances it may be necessary for schools to close. For example, if a student or staff member is confirmed with COVID-19, the Ministry of Health may close a school for a day or two, to undertake tracking and tracing of close contacts. We need to be prepared for this. On Friday 27 March we intend to run a 'Learning @ Home' Trial Day. On this day we will be requesting that all students work from home. Students will be provided with information about how this will work, including what platforms teachers will be using to connect with students. *Information on how you can support your student adapting to this online learning environment, is provided on the parent help sheet which is available [here](#).* If you are unable to provide appropriate supervision for your student on Friday (especially for those under 14), we will have supervision available at school provided by the Senior Leadership Team. Please email admin@opunake.school.nz if you require our team to provide supervision for your student on Friday.

Internet & Computer Access

We are committed to supporting everyone with their learning. Whanau mentors have been asking students about their ability to access online resources off campus, but please contact your students whanau mentor if your child does not have access to the internet at home so that we can make arrangements with them so that they can continue with their learning.

Hygiene & Cleaning

To minimise the potential spread of the disease at school we are continuing to reinforce essential messages with students and staff about basic hygiene - including hand washing, and physical contact. The school has also taken deliberate steps this week to maintain high standards of cleaning. Our cleaning and property teams are

focusing on the regular cleaning of all shared surfaces, such as tables, desks, door handles and benches across our campus. We have large supplies of soap in all of our bathrooms. These are refilled whenever necessary.

School Trips, Sport & Arts

We have cancelled all school trips of any kind. Many national sports codes have announced the cancellation or postponement of their trials, games, tournaments and practices. [TSSSA](#) has suspended or postponed all of its summer leagues and all games until the end of Term 1 and is reviewing its programme. In order to support the community effort to contain the spread of COVID-19, and to ensure a consistent Opunake High School approach, all sports trials, training sessions and games are suspended until April 26. Regional and national arts events are also being postponed or cancelled by regional and national bodies.

Assemblies

In light of the Government's recommendations about large gatherings of people, we will not be holding our normal Iwi assembly for the remainder of the term.

First Aid Room

To minimise the spread of illness within the school we have modified our First Aid Room and released some adjacent spaces for patient use. The aim is to provide our first aid staff, with the ability to allocate patients to different spaces and treat them individually.

Mental Health - Support Available

These are difficult and stressful times. Events are moving quickly and there is a huge range of information available online, some of which is alarming. If your student is finding this upsetting, please encourage them to make contact with our guidance counsellor Mrs Sarah Reddish- guidance@opunake.school.nz, their dean or their whanau mentor.

Thanks again for your support and care at this turbulent time. We look forward to your feedback about Friday's Learning @ Home Trial Day. If you have any suggestions about further ways in which we could manage this situation at Opunake High School, I would be pleased to hear from you.

NCEA Assessment

If your student has an NCEA deadline or assessment event they are unable to meet due to illness or self isolation, please let their subject teacher know as soon as possible, and continue to keep your student away from school. The school has assessment procedures, approved by NZQA, which ensure that they will not be

disadvantaged if they are unable to attend school as a result of illness. If you are unable to provide a medical note due to demands on our health system, please email Deputy Principal, Mrs Andrea Hooper - anh@opunake.school.nz, who will support you through an alternative process.

Hygiene

Everybody should continue to follow the basic principles of hygiene and cough etiquette to reduce the risk of getting an acute respiratory infection or passing it onto others. This includes:

- regularly washing hands (for at least 20 seconds) with warm water and soap and drying thoroughly. You should do this before and after eating as well as after using the toilet
- covering your coughs and sneezes with clean tissues or your elbow
- Putting used tissues in the bin
- avoiding close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms
- if you feel unwell you should stay away from school and avoid public gatherings and events

Teaching and Learning

This week we will be supporting and equipping staff to continue their use of online approaches with the idea of making these available both to the students at school and to those working from home due to their medical situation. Our hope is that this will keep all students engaged in learning regardless of their location. Please be patient with us as we develop these approaches. We are not set up to be a correspondence or distance-learning school and getting used to the online environments being our primary mode of student engagement will take time. The online environment poses different challenges to individual subjects, teachers, assignments and projects.

These are challenging and difficult times for us all. Thank you again for your feedback, care and support.

Horoi o ringa ringa and Arohanui

Peter O'Leary

Principal