

31 January 2022



Kia ora koutou Rotorua SDA School community,

Welcome back after what we hope has been a wonderful summer for your whānau (families). Our RSDA staff team is feeling refreshed and ready to go for the 2022 year and can't wait to welcome everyone back onsite. Teachers have returned to school last week to plan and prepare for the beginning of Term 1 on Wednesday 2nd February.

In regard to COVID-19 we have moved fully into the new traffic light framework for all our school activities and events this year. We have health measures in place and it is good to know that at Red setting, we are able to support everyone learning onsite.

Events and activities

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 the upcoming term to ensure we meet the health guidance for Red.

Coming onsite to school grounds

Being in RED means that any visitor or parent needing to come onto the school site must do the following:

- wear a mask
- scan the QR code
- use the hand sanitizer
- keep to the distancing requirements

We would greatly appreciate payments for stationery and/or Attendance dues, to be made by online banking.

Opening school powhiri

This will be held outside on the first day of school and following social distancing measures. Students will refrain from hongis and harirū, instead adopting 'hā ki roto hā ki waho'. That is, sharing a combined inward and outward breath at the conclusion of the formalities. All visitors must wear a face mask.

Ventilation

We have used the Ministry of Education self-assessment tool to review all 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 will also be receiving a CO2 monitor in the coming weeks to further support our ventilation plan.

Omicron

We have all seen the very large numbers of cases overseas and we will very likely see much larger numbers of cases in Aotearoa (New Zealand) than we have previously experienced in the last two years. While Omicron is more transmissible than previous strains, most people who get COVID-19 will have a mild to moderate illness and will fully recover in their own home.

However, some of our community who are immune compromised, are ill or have other vulnerabilities, even when they are fully vaccinated, could be more affected by Omicron. So, we all need to continue to play our part to minimise the spread of the virus.

Face coverings

RSDA Staff and children in Years 4 – 8 must wear face coverings when inside at school when we are at Red. A **face covering must be an actual mask**. That means no more scarves, bandannas, or t-shirts pulled up over the face, for example. This is to ensure that it is a mask designed to cover your nose and mouth properly. Younger children will need help to learn how to wear a mask and the reason for wearing them: they are a protection, similar to protection measures through our sun safety in the compulsory use of sun hats and sunscreens.

All students from Year 4 up must wear a mask on the school van run or when being transported on the school van.

Evidence of vaccinations

RSDA cannot require evidence of a child's vaccination status. Nor can a child be excluded from education outside the classroom (EOTC) based on vaccination status.

If RSDA does ask about vaccination status, we must take reasonable steps to ensure the information is collected lawfully, including students being aware of how this information will be used and why it is being collected.

Personal information about an individual's vaccine status must be protected and cannot be shared without the student's consent.

COVID-19 immunisation programme for ages 5 to 11 is now available

Parents and caregivers now have the opportunity to protect their tamariki aged 5 to 11 against COVID-19, by being immunised with a child (by a paediatric) formulation of the Pfizer vaccine.

The vaccine used is a children's version of the Pfizer vaccine with a lower dose than used for adults. Children will need two doses of the vaccine and it is recommended to have the first and second dose at least eight weeks apart.

There are a number of websites available with resources that will help explain what the vaccine is, how it works and whether the vaccine is safe for young people.

- [Kids Health](#)
- [Health Navigator](#)
- [The Immunisation Advisory Centre](#)

Managing cases in our school

We have a good contact tracing system in place so that if there is a confirmed case who has been at school while infectious, we can quickly identify who was a close contact of that person. We will then quickly advise those contacts of what they need to do.

Only if the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education advises to do so, would we consider closing a physical onsite school and moving to distance learning for everyone. At Red we will keep everyone learning onsite for as long as we can.

Please make sure your contact details we have on file are up to date, so we can get in touch with you if needed.

Preparing for COVID-19

You can also prepare for COVID-19, making sure you and your household have a plan and know what to do. This will mean your whānau (family) and community can help each other if needed.

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. Call 0800 559 009 for further information.

We are also here to help. Please get in touch if you have any concerns or need help in any way via email - principal@sda.rotorua.school.nz or calling (07) 3484 689 during school hours.

Nga mihi
Lanea Strickland
Tumuaki (Principal)