

September 12th 2022 – COVID-19 update



Sacred Heart
Girls' College

HAMILTON

Kia ora e te whānau

COVID-19 Protection Framework – long-term strategy announced

You may be aware that the Government announced, this afternoon, that we will move to a new, long-term approach to COVID-19. These changes have been made based on public health advice and reflect high levels of immunity and declining case numbers across the motu. This will mean some changes to the way we operate at school.

The good news is, **household contacts do NOT** need to isolate. Instead, they should complete a RAT each day, for five days. Therefore, ākongā who are household contacts, but test negative and do not have COVID-19 symptoms, **should continue to attend school**. Being at school is the best place for students to be engaged with their learning and connected with their teachers and peers.

A key policy change for our school is mask use. As of Tuesday, September 13th, our mask policy will be **“Masks are an OPTION”**. We will support any student or staff who chooses to use a mask to protect themselves from illness. This is a common sense policy: masks will no longer be required in public places. However, they may be reintroduced if we experience a ‘spike’ in cases.

All other recommended public health measures will stay in place; we know they reduce the spread of infectious illnesses, including COVID-19, and are good practice in a communal environment:

- indoor spaces are well-ventilated (doors/windows opened for air flow)
- vacating rooms to allow air flow
- air purifiers in spaces where air flow is more difficult to maintain
- hand, cough and sneezing hygiene
- going outside (weather permitting) for fresh air and exercise
- staying home and getting tested, if unwell with COVID symptoms
- going home, if unwell at school: students report to Sick Bay, parents will be contacted by school

These announcements are a sign of a shift from a pandemic to an endemic disease – that means there is still a chance of infection, so the usual strategies of staying safe continue to be relevant. Please continue to report absences in the usual way – for all reasons – **absences@shgcham.school.nz**

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding as we re-adjust to these health announcements.

Kia tūpato tonu tātou – continue to be safe!

Catherine Gunn

Tumuaki/Principal