

ASHBURTON COLLEGE — APR 21, 2020

Tēnā koutou katoa He waka eke noa - We are all in this together ... we've got this!

To students, staff, and whānau

The Prime Minister's announcement at 4.00 pm yesterday is that we will move from Alert Level 4 to Alert Level 3 at midnight on Monday 27 April. We will remain at Alert Level 3 for at least two weeks and, on 11 May, Cabinet will review the situation and make a further decision about the alert levels.

This is very good news as it shows that we have done well in lockdown over the last four weeks. Well done to us all!

The overriding principle for Alert Level 3 is stay at home, other than for essential personal movement and going to work.

What does **Alert Level 3** mean for education at Ashburton College?

1. The main advice from Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is for parents and caregivers to 'keep children at home and maintain distance learning where that is possible; parents and caregivers can send children to school if they need to'. This means that, if there is a parent/caregiver able to look after children at home, and their children have access to distance learning, children should stay at home. School will be open to those students who need to attend, due to their parents' work, or due to access to online learning.
2. Ashburton College will be open to cater for Year 9 and 10 students onsite, supporting their online learning. Distance learning is still available to all Year 9 and 10 students.
3. Year 11, 12 and 13 students are to remain at home to continue with distance learning online.

At the press conference yesterday, Ms Ardern reiterated a number of times that **parents who could keep their children at home should**. The reason for the approach she outlined 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. The intention is to help support "safe workers" return to their work!

The New Zealand Education Sector, and we at Ashburton College, realise that we have a significant role to play in supporting our country to get back on its

feet, and to get the economy moving. Yes, this does bring challenges, but we are ready to do this.

Health and Safety at the forefront of decision making

Health and safety is at the forefront of our planning; and the health of all is at the forefront of decisions taken to respond to COVID-19.

On education, Dr Ashley Bloomfield, Director General of Health, said: *“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 stamp it out and keep 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 school environment; and ensuring great hygiene practices at all times”.

Planning for how Ashburton College will operate under Alert Level 3 is well underway. This includes:

- How we manage the **Public Health requirements (see below)** in a covid setting. We have strict guidelines to follow, and adhere to, before we can re-open and operate.
- What time is needed for us to undertake **cleaning and general maintenance of our campus** so as to provide a suitable, safe environment for staff and students. We are allowed onsite to do this work before our actual start date. Due to our size, it is envisaged that this will take at least 2 to 3 days.
- Our **staff** availability. We have a number of staff who cannot be involved at this stage, as they are in the high risk group, or have partners that are. We also have teachers with young children.
- The **number of students** who actually arrive at school. We need a system to establish who will be attending school onsite. We will also be required to record attendance and complete a contact tracing register too.
- Students who are attending will **need to bring their own lunch and a drink**, as the canteen will be closed and the drinking fountains will be unavailable.
- It would be desirable that students attending **bring their own device** to school for the duration of Alert Level 3.

- **A text will be sent to the families of all Year 9 and 10 students on Wednesday to ascertain accurate numbers to assist us with our planning. Any student who is going to attend must register with us in advance.**

Once we are aware of the numbers of students who will be attending, we will notify students and whānau of the day's timetable and other arrangements.

Public Health Service: Specific public health measures to be taken in schools:

Parents are asked to keep any sick children at home. If a sick child comes to school, send them home.

Hand sanitiser at entry to classrooms and in bathrooms.

Breaks will be staggered and bubbles cannot mix during breaks.

Initially the number of children must be limited to 10 in a school bubble, but this can be increased to 20 once all processes are running smoothly. There can be multiple school bubbles in a physical space but there must be distance between bubbles and strictly no mixing between school bubbles.

To support contact tracing, students should sit in the same place each day, with 1 metre physical distance between all children, young people and staff. Must maintain 2 metre physical distance outside and 1 metre inside during breaks and 1 metre on school transport.

Disinfect and clean all surfaces daily.

Contact tracing registers must be set up and identify which children are in each teaching space, record when and who they have contact with during the day if that changes. This includes recording who the adults are in contact with as well as recording any visitors to the site, including parents.

Notes:

We continue to receive information from the Ministry of Education as to our response to health and safety measures.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is not required or recommended as necessary in any educational facility by the Public Health Service.

We now have this week to fully access our school and undertake a property inspection, complete necessary maintenance, and clean. **Monday 27 April is a**

public holiday (ANZAC Day observed) and Tuesday 28 April will be a Teacher Only Day. We, therefore, anticipate **Wednesday 29 April** being the first day when some students are able to attend Ashburton College in person.

More information will follow this week once our plans are finalised. This information will incorporate additional advice and procedural directives from both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. Thank you for your understanding and support.

'Be strong, stay home, and be kind'. Jacinda Ardern 20 April 2020

It is imperative that we all continue to follow the government's clear instructions and we can and we will get through this together.

Kind regards

Ross Preece
Principal
Ashburton College