

18 March 2020



Dear Parents, Caregivers and Whanau

This communication provides new information and guidance especially since our government has taken further action in the last days. The policy decisions being made by our Government are giving our school time to plan for any national changes ahead. The Ministry of Education has been talking with all schools as part of future planning and checking any support that we may require.

Health and safety is paramount for our staff and students. We are taking a risk assessment approach based on advice from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education advice, to make informed decisions as to whether activities or events will go ahead, be postponed or cancelled. These include but are not limited to sport, cultural, special character, enrolments, camps, academic, community, field and classroom-related trips etc. A growing number of organisations and networks that work with the College to deliver some of our activities, are in direct contact with us about decisions they are making e.g. National Sporting Organisations and College Sport.

This week, there was no school assembly as we maintain a safe physical distance from each other. A presentation with a video prepared by myself was delivered to students by their Homeroom Teacher. It reminded students about the importance of keeping a high standard of personal hygiene and reassured students on other relevant information relating to the virus. Some students had questions and these were able to be responded to.

We have the following safety advice for you:

- Maintain high personal hygiene practices. When coughing or sneezing, do so into a tissue or into the arm/elbow area. Remind your children about this routine.
- Wash hands well for at least 20 seconds with warm, soapy water. Be sure to soap the web finger areas and the thumb with soapy water too.
- If your child(ren) aren't feeling well, do not send them to school and seek medical support from your family doctor.
- If your child(ren) becomes unwell at school, they must go to the medical centre where the School Nurse will attend to them and if necessary the Nurse will be in contact with you. We need to log their issue and assess them first.
- We still request that you report all absences from school in the usual way. See the Parent Handbook.
- We ask that families avoid travel overseas during the Term 1 holiday period unless absolutely necessary. There are now border control restrictions in place for many countries and this is changing week by week. If you do, then please be aware of the self-isolation requirements at both ends of your trip.
- Please be in contact with us if you have a question or a concern to report on [covid@sanctamaria.school.nz](mailto:covid@sanctamaria.school.nz)

**Additional Measures:**

- The Pandemic Management Plan has been reviewed and is already being actioned where necessary.

- Soap dispensers are in all toilet areas. Hand sanitisers and tissues are in every classroom and students are encouraged to use these. These are checked each day and topped-up.
- All staff have access to hygiene cleaning products for cleaning table-top surfaces, desks and lap-top surfaces.
- Cleaning services are carried out at the end of every day.
- All staff have access to clothing protection and equipment to protect themselves and others where there is a suspected case.
- All student day and overnight trips have been cancelled or postponed.
- Other non-essential school events, including curriculum events have also been postponed or cancelled.
- All sporting training, games, events have been cancelled or postponed as directed by National Sporting Organisations and College Sport.
- Our teaching staff are currently preparing online learning materials to offer distance learning should this be required. We are confident these can be delivered if the call is made to close our school in the future.

#### Looking Ahead:

- We continue to take advice and guidance from official agencies, particularly the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education in the first instance.
- We have set up a dedicated email for parents to contact us for more information or to advise us of any concerns. [covid@sanctamaria.school.nz](mailto:covid@sanctamaria.school.nz)
- Currently, the overall anxiety and stress levels for students is low. However, if you have any concerns in this regard please contact your child's Dean, or school counsellors who will be able to support your child.
- Payments made to any trips or activities scheduled that may not go ahead will be refunded in full direct to your child's financial account.
- Staff at the College will be able to receive the flu vaccine next week. While this does not protect them against COVID-19, it will help to manage the demand on our hospitals this winter.

The Ministry of Health's current advice is that with continued vigilance, the chance of widespread community outbreak is expected to remain low. We all have a role to help minimise the spread of the disease.

For more about COVID-19 The Ministry of Health is the best source for information.  
<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

We will continue to undertake appropriate planning and have a staged response that can be escalated should the situation require this.

Thank you all for your continued support. We will keep you updated.

With Warm Regards and Blessings



**Louise Moore**  
Principal



**Warren Brabant**  
BOT Chairperson