

18 August 2020



Dear Parents, Caregivers and Whānau

You may be aware of media coverage over the past 24 hours about Year 12 and 13 students returning to school during Level 3 Lockdown. This advice goes against public health recommendations and the PPTA and Secondary Principals Association are currently engaging in further dialogue with the Ministry of Education about this, particularly as a number of cases from the current Auckland cluster are linked to schools.

The Hon. Chris Hipkins reinforced today, during the 1pm briefing, that a return to school for Year 12 and 13 students is not automatic and schools need to apply for a dispensation for such a return. At this time, we believe our energies are best served engaging with students through our distance learning programme. Today, we have engaged in consultation with the Board Chairperson, staff, and have taken into consideration a sample of student voice feedback to make the decision not to bring back Year 12 and 13 students, at this stage. Should the Lockdown be extended or if there are any changes to current advice, we will notify you.

The Government decision to allow Year 12 and 13 students onsite was made after increasing pressure from some schools who use external assessment systems which are dictated by overseas jurisdictions. Sancta Maria College offers the NCEA qualification and this qualification is both robust and flexible. NCEA allows for multiple means of assessment (both internal and external). As a College, we carefully monitor and track each student's progress towards their qualification and are very confident that we will maintain the high levels of achievement that saw the College ranked first for NCEA student attainment of qualifications, in East Auckland, for 2019.

Our teachers and learners are agile and have shown an incredible amount of resilience this year. In one of my first communications earlier this year I spoke of the need for 'Future-ready' students and the need to exercise agency through complex times and in an uncertain world. Our students showed us they were capable of this during the first lockdown experience and we are asking them to once again adjust to the new normal and do it again. There may be multiple occasions going forward that students will be asked to exercise learner agency and self-management skills again.

Daily conferencing on Schoology, our school Learning Management System is mandatory and where attendance is recorded. Students are expected to continue to work through the learning their teachers are placing on Schoology and submit work according to deadlines as they would if they were physically at school. Some of the submitted work may account towards other forms of assessment that are not from externals. The College is seeking the support of our parents, caregivers and whānau to ensure that your child(ren) are taking full advantage of the distance learning programme by engaging with the teacher during the student timetable conferencing time.

We do understand that this is a stressful time for many students, I would urge parents and students alike to refer to the wellbeing information in last week's communication if further support is needed.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Ngā mihi nui

Louise Moore
Principal



