



Friday 10 September 2021

Dear Parents and Caregivers

It is wonderful having your children back at school (89% attendance today!) and school being mostly back to normal. I say “mostly” because there are a few restrictions that we have to work within, and I am writing to explain some of these.

I receive a daily email from the Ministry of Education national office, and some of the new Level 2 restrictions are still being developed and shared with schools through these emails. Some items shared here only came to us after the newsletter we sent on Wednesday.

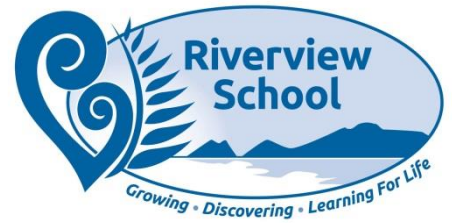
Unfortunately, with this new "Delta Level 2" lockdown, while schools are able to be open, we have some new restrictions from both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. The restrictions added to what we had in place last year are all related to health concerns over the Delta virus being airborne and keeping the possibility of the virus being in our communities at bay. Schools are a potential place of spread, so we take the view of following these instructions carefully.

They include, and are quoted from the Ministry emails:

- "Activities such as singing, dancing, and shouting are considered higher-risk and should be done in well-ventilated areas or outdoors 2 metres apart."
- In relation to large events (like assemblies, productions, sports events), "We'd recommend that these types of events are **deferred** until your school returns to Alert Level 1."
- In relation to mask wearing: "It remains an option for individuals and a decision for the individuals and whānau. Whatever decisions students and teachers make, it is their own to make and needs to be respected. Where an individual chooses to use a face covering, they should supply and wear their own, and do so safely. This option applies to younger children, too."
- "Indoor spaces should be well-ventilated, for example, by opening windows, doors, and any vents. Good practice would include fully opening all windows during breaks and after school for as long as possible."

In response to these instructions, we have had to make some tough calls:

- While at Level 2, we won't be doing in-class singing
- Kapa haka and assemblies are on hold.
- Bible in Schools sessions are on hold.



- Classrooms will often have doors and windows open. Children would do well to have a warm top or other clothing as rooms may be a bit cooler than usual.
- The planned Years 5 and 6 production is cancelled. This is a tough decision, and I know many children will be disappointed. However, making this call now seems wiser than doing all the work and preparation (remembering the restrictions above) and then cancelling. Four weeks of rehearsal time has also been lost. We are not permitted to have gatherings of parents in the school under Level 2, and indications from the Ministry are that we may be at this level for quite some time. The Board decision early in the year to not have a Bazaar is an example of this type of decision.

I reiterate that we will take all the precautions needed to follow government directives related to the Delta Covid virus. I would rather err on the side of caution, which may seem stringent, but provide better safety for our 480 children and staff, than be more casual and end up being responsible for a health problem later that could have been avoided. Thank you for your understanding.

For the Children

Ken McLeay  
Principal