



Whānau Pānui – 23 February 2022

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Covid-19 Update

I am grateful that staff and students are doing their best to reduce the chance of infection by mask wearing and other public health guidelines. It is appreciated that students bring their own masks to school, either three-layer cloth-type or the surgical-type masks. However, we are supplying over 50 a day, which is taking a lot of the supply we had planned for some forgetfulness. We can help but should not be the first option for some.

We are continually staying up to date with what is happening in the Omicron outbreak and assessing what it means for our school.

While we hope we do not see a positive case in the school, we have plans in place should that happen.

If there is a positive case

Hopefully anyone who gets COVID-19 has a mild sickness, especially if we have followed public health advice.

The first step for the school is to find out if there is a positive case. This is most likely from the Ministry of Education, or we find out from a parent/caregiver.

Close contact criteria have changed

We then will notify our school community and advise that we are working to identify close contacts. What makes a **close contact** has changed. But the new requirement has been backdated to come into effect from last Friday 18 February.

*Until the change a close contact was only if within 1.5 metres of a someone who tests positive for covid, for a period of over 2 hours. This will now be classified as a **causal contact** and there is no self-isolation requirement.*

The **close contact situation** is now:

“Where the positive case has been wearing a mask, close contacts will only be identified where there may have been direct contact with respiratory secretions (for example, kissing, spitting, hongi, sharing cigarettes or vapes, singing, shouting, coughing, sneezing, contact sports or physical play in close proximity).”

Most of the activities above are not meant to happen at school, so the chances of infection are low. So long as mask wearing is the norm.

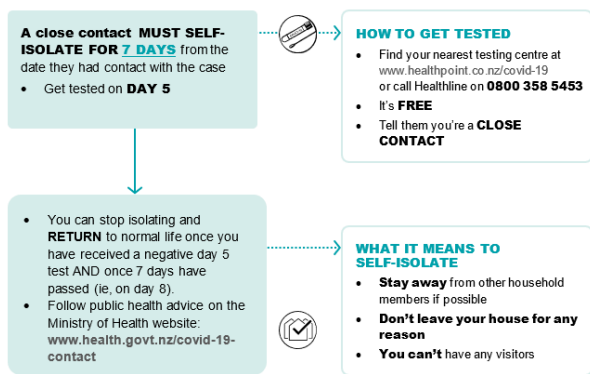
There is less control of behaviour in the playground, and that is the most likely place that close contacts may be identified.

If there is a positive case, we are asked to identify and advise close contacts as quickly as possible.

Close contacts must then self-isolate for 7 days.

For more information about being a close contact go to www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/contact-tracing-covid-19#factsheets





What happens if we have an 'outbreak'?

The plans for having many staff and students, away, whether they are sick or required to self-isolate as a close contact, we will consider the possibility of:

- rostering home for distance learning, different year levels, e.g. Year 13, Year 12, Year 11, Year 10 and staying open for Year 9 (as they are usually under 14)
- combining classes for supervision of online learning

If we cannot remain open safely because of staff numbers, then we may have the whole school with distance learning and be available for those who must come to school.

As such staff are ready to teach in a way that we call a hybrid model with a combination of onsite and online. At the same time, we need students to be ready with their devices. For those without devices, we may be able to lend devices and we will also have paper resources that can be picked up or delivered.

I know we will do our best and it will be OK, even though we may experience some disruption.

Symptoms of COVID-19

Stay aware of the symptoms of COVID-19. Please stay away from school if you have then symptoms and get advice.

- A new or worsening cough
- Sneezing and runny nose
- A fever
- Temporary loss of smell or altered sense of taste
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath

Less common symptoms include diarrhoea, headache, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, malaise, chest pain, abdominal pain, joint pain, or confusion/irritability.

For more information about symptoms, go to <https://covid19.govt.nz/health-and-wellbeing/about-covid-19/covid-19-symptoms/>

Emergency Procedures and Drills

As part of Health and Safety and emergency planning, we are required to test our procedures.

This is to ensure that all staff and students are familiar with emergency procedures, such as a fire evacuation, a lockdown for an immediate risk, or other events, like Tsunami

On Thursday last week we held an **evacuation drill**, as would happen in case of a fire. We did well, but also learnt some lessons so that next time we can have a faster "all clear".

We expect to have a 'take cover' **Lockdown** drill in the upcoming week(s). There will be a message to parents prior to it happening so any messages that come out do not cause undue concern.

A take cover lockdown may happen if there is a situation where being securely inside is the best option, like if there is an intruder, or threat from outside the school and police advise the school to secure itself.

Please be aware that if you receive any messages, it will make clear it is a drill or not. In the case of a real lockdown, we will inform everyone by a message on our website, social media, and text message. In a test we will test these systems, but only message some selected people to test our systems.

We will also have a **Tsunami** drill and earthquake drill at later dates.

Paid Union Meeting (PUM)

There is a paid union meeting for staff, in the union on Friday 25 February from 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm. Taiohi / students will finish school at **12.45 pm on Friday**.

While normal lessons will not be held, taiohi / students may remain at school and those who need to remain at school will have a designated space, the library with supervision, from 1.30 pm (following a lunch break) until the buses arrive at 3.10 pm



Senior Direction Afternoon

To limit the number of **face-to-face contacts** under the current COVID-19 settings, we have decided to hold our Direction Day virtually.

This will be **Wednesday 16 March** from 1.30 pm – 5.30 pm. For some people who cannot meet virtually you may arrange a face-to-face hui with a kaitiaki, but this may be at a different time. This is an opportunity for parents/whānau/caregivers to meet through a virtual platform with rōpū and whānau kaitiaki to check how your son/daughter has settled into/back to school and discuss their progress and plans. Information about how to book will be sent out next week.

Athletics - Selected Events

This year we will be not holding an all-day athletics event for the whole school due to the current Covid RED setting.

On Monday 21 February students were encouraged to participate for distance track events (like 3000 m and 1 500 m) and selected field events (like javelin and discuss). Only students who had signed up could participate.

On **Monday 28 February** there will be one further day required to complete the Short Track events (like 100 m and 200 m) and other field events. Only for those athletes who sign up.

We hope that later this year we can have a more participation-based event for house points.

THS Office Hours

Effective from Monday 28 February, our school office hours will be from 8.30 am – 3.30 pm. Please contact the school (07) 868 8688 to leave a message, outside of these hours.

Attendance/Absences

Information about attendance, absence, lateness, and leave can be found on our [school website](#).

Under Section 36(1) of The Education and Training Act (2020) – “the Act” – all registered students at a school **must attend** when it is open for instruction, unless there is a justified reason, such as sickness, sudden and serious illness of a parent, or other equally serious situation that means a student cannot attend.

The options for notification of any absences must include a clear reason for absence. to the school are the below. If there is no reason given even though it has been reported, it will be recorded as advised but unjustified (no reason). By law we must know the reason for absences.

- **Email** attendance@thameshigh.school
- **Phone** the office on **07 868 8688**
- **Text message** the school on **3255**. Please include **thsc** at the beginning of the message. Ensure that your **child's full name and Year level** are included.

[For more information, check our website.](#)

Recommended reading - on our website

[Attendance, absences, etc. including exit passes](#)

[Behaviour expectations](#)

[Stationery and BYOD \(bring your own device\)](#)

[Uniform – including shoes that are allowed and not](#)

[Our school board and meetings](#)

As always, we welcome comments.

Ngā manaakitanga

Michael Hart

Tumuaki / Principal

principal@thameshigh.school.nz



Key dates 2022

As always, dates may be subject to change and will be advised.

Mon 28 Feb	Athletics – selected track and field events (entries only)
Mon 28 Feb	Full Board Hui – 5.30 pm, Wharenui (Te Puna o Te Pito Mata)
Wed 16 Mar	Direction Afternoon (virtual) 1.30 – 5.30 pm
Mon 28 Mar	Full Board Hui – 5.30 pm, Wharenui (Te Puna o Te Pito Mata)
Thu 14 Apr	End of Term 1
Fri 15 Apr	Good Friday
Mon 18 Apr	Easter Monday
Mon 25 Apr	ANZAC Day
Term 2:	Monday 2 May to Friday 8 July
Mon 9 May	Teacher Only Day – NCEA Accord Day
Tues 10 May	THS Cross Country
Mon 30 May	Full Board Hui – 5.30 pm, Wharenui (Te Puna o Te Pito Mata)
Mon 6 Jun	Queen's Birthday
Wed 22 Jun	Year 9 Vision and Hearing checks
Mon 27 Jun	Full Board Hui – 5.30 pm, Wharenui (Te Puna o Te Pito Mata)
Fri 8 July	End of Term 2
Term 3:	Monday 25 July to Friday 30 September
Mon 28 Jul (TBC)	Full Board Hui – 5.30 pm, Wharenui (Te Puna o Te Pito Mata)
Wed 10 Aug	Sport Team photos
Tue 23 Aug	Teacher Only Day - NCEA Accord Day
Mon 29 Aug	Full Board Hui – 5.30 pm, Wharenui (Te Puna o Te Pito Mata)
Mon 5-23 Sept	Triennial school board elections 2022
Mon 26 Sept	Full Board Hui – 5.30 pm, Wharenui (Te Puna o Te Pito Mata)
Fri 30 Sept	End of Term 3
Term 4:	Monday 17 October to Friday 9 December 2022.
Mon 24 Oct	Labour Day
Tues 25 Oct	Full Board Hui – 5.30 pm, Wharenui (Te Puna o Te Pito Mata)
Wed 2 Nov	Senior Prize giving

Mon 7 Nov- Fri 2 Dec	NCEA Exams
Fri 25 Nov	Teacher Only Day - NCEA Accord Day
Mon 28 Nov	Teacher Only Day - NCEA Accord Day
Fri 9 Dec	Last day Term

