

23 August 2021

Kia ora koutou

### **Remaining at Alert Level 4**

I think we had all anticipated a further extension of Alert Level 4, and the Prime Minister has confirmed this. The Alert Level will be reviewed next Monday, but for now Alert Level 4 will remain in place until 11:59pm Tuesday 31 August.

Despite this news, it is really pleasing to see Alert Level 4 is having its impact on the number of confirmed cases, with numbers not dramatically increasing as they would likely have done if we had been at a lower Alert Level.

And so, our distance learning programme will continue! Please note, it is only in very limited circumstances that students, parents or caregivers are allowed to come to the school grounds. So please do not come to school unless you have been individually contacted by us to do so. This again includes our school playgrounds, which are now closed under Alert Level 4 otherwise, you will be in breach of the COVID-19 Health Response Order.

You may be wondering how, with so many contacts being identified of confirmed cases, we aren't seeing bigger case numbers identified. Just like the [Delta variant is different](#), so has been New Zealand's response. Previously we might have moved to Alert Level 2 or 3 if there was a new COVID-19 case in the community (which happened most recently in Wellington). This time we moved immediately to Alert Level 4, after only one case had been identified.

Health authorities are also casting a MUCH wider net to determine who is a contact of a confirmed case. Where schools may have closed for three days while contact tracing was undertaken, they are now closing for 14 days with staff and students all self-isolating for that time. As a result, there are more than 13,000 close contacts being followed up by health authorities.

There is a lot we can all do to protect our whānau and community from COVID-19 including:

- Everyone must continue to stay home in their bubble
- Do not mix with other household bubbles – if they have COVID-19, it can easily spread to your household, and every other household they and you are connecting with
- As new cases are identified, [new locations of interest are added to the Ministry of Health website](#) – please keep checking this. You can search by your location, and they are sorted by date, so you only need to check the locations which have been added when you last checked
- Wash your hands regularly, especially when you have been out in public
- Stay home if you are feeling unwell and seek advice about whether you need to get a test
- Wear a face covering when out and about, and you MUST wear a face covering in any businesses or services which are open at Alert Level 4 (unless you have specifically been exempted from doing so, which includes anyone aged under 12)
- Keep a two-metre distance from people outside your household bubble

- Check in using the NZ COVID Tracer App wherever you go or keep a manual record (a reminder the App only stores information on your own phone – no one else will know who it is that checked in, or when)

You can go to the [COVID19.govt.nz website](https://www.covid19.govt.nz) if you would like more information on Alert Level 4 requirements.

We can also make sure we are passing on good information. There is a very helpful article by [Dr Siouxsie Wiles and Toby Morris in The Spinoff](#) regarding misinformation and disinformation. Their red flags for how to spot bad information are particularly well-summarised.

Bad information will:

- downplay COVID-19 and the pandemic
- focus on survival rate
- ignore long COVID
- emphasise individual freedom
- try to sell you something
- push simple cures/treatments
- make you feel fearful or angry

*“Good information put out to help you make an informed choice won’t make you feel scared or angry. It’ll make you feel empowered.”*

Finally, we know some families in our community may be finding it difficult to access food and essential items such as medicine. This information about [how to access to food or essential items](#) summarises the supports that are available, including financial help to buy food.

As well, information about [Food Secure Communities](#) support. Have a read, as this programme was funded in Budget 2020 to help meet the additional demand during COVID-19 lockdowns on foodbanks, food rescue and other community providers.

Once again, our thoughts are with the Green Bay High School student who has returned a positive test result. Our community needs your support; stay at home, stay safe and be kind.

Ngā mihi



Anand Muthoo  
***Principal***  
**Green Bay School**