



Sunday 30th January

Dear Parents / Caregivers,

Thank you for your patience and consideration regarding the information required of how our school will operate under RED in the Traffic Light System. As a school, it is important for us to say that we are trying very hard to be pragmatic about the pandemic, and like last year, we hope that we are responding to the constant shifting sands in a way that is respectful and considered to all our families. Please be aware that our decision making is highly reliant on the Government, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to keep us updated daily to any changes and developments, but also guided by our knowledge of our community. As a small school, staff have been working behind the scenes to get the school ready and to ensure a positive start to the school year. We are really looking forward to students arriving back on Wednesday 2nd February, and we are working through the day to day implications for our school for this Term. This won't be perfect and as we have come to know with COVID, some of the rules and regulations will at times be contradictory, changing or open to interpretation, and this too is a frustration that is shared by everyone.

The current state of play is significant in that the hygiene protocols we understand with COVID still remain, the introduction of mask wearing has increased with Omicron. The school is approaching this in a similar way to our Sunsmart Policy, whereby the implementation is founded on safety and education of this health risk, rather than the policing and enforcing at the cost of a student's education. We are relying on families to make their personal decisions with the focus on ensuring families are safe as we plan to mitigate risks. As it stands, it has been strongly recommended that Year 4 and above are asked to wear a mask, in line with the latest guidelines, when they are in the classroom or inside teaching space. At times such as swimming, outdoor opportunities to learn on site (which we will encourage) and breaktimes students will not need to wear a mask. Any student's family is able to apply for a mask exemption and this can be held in the school office where it will be recorded confidentially. Parents, caregivers and other visitors to the school site during school hours or for school business must wear a mask at all times and follow the known procedures of signing in and scanning. We would really appreciate your support in these areas.

The School will be ensuring maximum ventilation is a priority throughout the day and as in the past reinforce the practical hygiene protocols that the children are familiar with, hand sanitiser, own drink bottles, daily cleaning and sanitising of high use surfaces and areas.

As always, thank you for your consideration and cooperation at this time and the school will continue to keep you informed as new requirements become known. Please be aware also that with limited relief teachers available, we ask you keep your children at home if they are unwell

so to not spread either COVID or other illnesses to students and staff. At this hard time, we are planning in a positive way to ensure your kids get the best of their schooling.

Please feel free to email me any questions at simon@tekapo.school.nz and we will continue to keep our communications open to all on a regular and timely basis, as we know things can change very quickly these days.

Please make sure your contact details we have on file are up to date, so we can get in touch with you if needed.

Preparing for COVID-19

You can also prepare for COVID-19, making sure you and your household have a plan and know what to do. This will mean your whānau and community can help each other if needed.

Find out more here:

- [Be prepared for COVID-19](#)
- [Download the COVID-19 Readiness Checklist \[PDF, 121 KB\]](#)
- [What to expect when self-isolating at home](#)

Kind regards,

Simon Waymouth and The Lake Tekapo Board of Trustees.