



Tuesday 12th May

Good afternoon Parents and Caregivers

Like me, I am sure you followed with interest the announcements made by the Prime Minister yesterday explaining what Level 2 will mean for all of us, and especially for schools.

The good news is that we will be ready and excited to welcome all students and staff back to our school site on Monday 18th May.

We look forward to getting children back to school, to learning, to fun times and to their friends and teachers. There is a lot of important information, and I have attempted to address any frequently asked questions below. Note, this information is based on the Ministries of Health & Education guidelines for schools.

When will school start for all students?

The Prime Minister has said that schools will not open mid-week but will open on Monday 18th May under Level 2 conditions.

Who can come back to school?

Everyone (from Monday 18th May). Schools are open and considered safe to do so. The only exception will be anyone that is feeling unwell or sick, and we will send anyone home immediately if they show any symptoms.

Is there a plan to support the transition of students back into school?

Yes, We're really mindful of the wellbeing and readjustment of children back to school. We know that students will have experienced this lockdown in many different ways. Connection, belonging, kindness, learning, communication and wellbeing has always been our priority and our staff will take the time to focus on this, and to rebuild culture and relationships, in a manner similar to what we would do at the beginning of each school year. Wellbeing needs to be addressed before learning will happen. We will be living our 'One Size Fits One' School vision.

Can I send my child to school this week on Thursday and Friday when NZ moves to Level 2?

No. In the current transition period from Level 3 to Level 2, no new students can be added to the small number of students and staff that have required schooling during Level 3.

They will remain in their bubbles under Level 3 restrictions for the remainder of this week. On Thursday teachers will be given a release day to prepare for their return to the classroom Monday 18th May, so they will be unavailable for online learning at home.

Can I still keep my child home even when the school moves to Level 2?

Under Level 2, it is now deemed safe for everyone to return to school. We anticipate that some families may still be reluctant to send their child(ren) back to school, and we understand this.

If you **DO NOT** intend on sending your child back to school from Monday 18th May, please make sure you have replied to Rachel Smith by 9.00 a.m. Friday 15th May. Thank you. We will not judge and support any decision you make here.

Although please note that with all of our staff back at school, teacher focus will be on the students at school.

What Health and Safety procedures will be in place?

The key principles for Alert Level 2 are to:

- Reduce the risk of someone getting infected in the first place
- Ensure we can identify and contact anyone who becomes infected
- Understand that Level 2 is not business as usual.

Our school will follow detailed Ministry of Health guidelines to maintain the health and safety of everyone on the school site. This includes regular cleaning, use of sanitisers, handwashing, and reminding and helping children with those important habits, such as coughing into their elbows, handwashing and drying correctly. No one at school is required to wear any PPE, but some staff may choose to for personal reasons.

Can parents and caregivers come on-site at school at Level 2?

Yes – but with some conditions. Wherever possible, please drop your children off rather than coming into school, or even better, have your child bike, scooter or walk to school to avoid congestion. There will be set areas for our MPS learners to enter and exit our school.

Juniors: (Years 0,1,2) By Eddy's caretaker shed, Room 16 by the Kea crossing and the garden entrance by Room 19.

Middles: (Years 3,4) Through the Te Waharoa at the front of the school on Broadway.

Seniors: (Years 5,6) Across the main front field and basketball court.

It is fine for older siblings to drop off their younger brothers and sisters.

Please note that parents will not be able to stay for long periods of time at the start or end of each day, and visits to school should be kept as short as possible, please.

There will be an exception here for new entrant students who are starting school if they are required to settle them in.

Communication with teachers can be via email or phone calls. Parents who have children who require medication will have to sign in and drop this off at the school office. The office is a high traffic area so the main door will not be open. Jo and Leigh will be working from behind a perspex screen.

We need to maintain contact tracing registers. The Ministry of Health describes close contacts as anyone who had:

- face-to-face contact in any setting within two metres of a case for 15 minutes or more
- having been in a closed environment (eg, a classroom) within 2 metres of a case for 15 minutes or more

Please also ensure you maintain physical distancing, and also follow the necessary hygiene protocols around handwashing and use of sanitiser while onsite.

Will students be in “bubbles”?

No. At Alert Level 2 the bubble system is not required. Students and staff will still avoid physical contact as much as possible and keep personal space. The students will be free to move around the school.

Will students be using drinking fountains at Level 2?

No. Please ensure your child has a personal water bottle. Send it to school filled ready for the day. There will be designated areas used as water filling stations.

Is the Playground open?

No. For the first week the school playgrounds will remain closed. We will phase opening the playgrounds over time.

Will students be able to play sports and do PE?

Yes. We are looking forward to sports and physical activity resuming. But with compulsory hand sanitising after activities. Contact sports will start later in the term. Students are NOT to bring their own personal sports gear to school at this stage.

Will there be School/Syndicate Assemblies or large school events?

No. Although technically these are deemed okay, in the short term we will not be holding these, as they would be bringing together large groups of people. We will aim to start these again in Term 3.

Will Home Learning continue this week?

Yes. Our teachers will continue to connect with you this week and the following week.

Does my child need a device for school?

If your child has a borrowed school device they are expected to bring these to school each day to use. If you are comfortable for your child to bring a personal device to use for learning they may do at this stage but it is not expected.

How can I notify the school if my child is going to be absent?

Please use one of the following processes to advise of your child's absence:

- email office@matamataprimery.school.nz
- phone 07 888 8566
- Skool Loop and our website can also be used to record an absence.

Is there a plan to support the transition of NEW students to our school?

Yes. With an extended period of closure, we have approximately **11** students awaiting to start at our school for the very first time! They will be invited to start school at 11.00am on Monday 18th May. Then normal times from then on.

What time can my child be at school, and what time do they need to be collected or leave?

Students won't be able to enter classrooms until 8.15 a.m., and so we suggest that students arrive at school at 8.15 a.m. or later. We will be starting school at 8.55 am and finishing at 2.55 pm. All students are to be off-site by 3.10 pm. We appreciate your support with this. After school bus students are to wait by the hall as per usual.

What can we do to support the school and our kids?

Keep any students who are sick at home until they are well. Keep reminding them about the importance of hygiene and washing their hands. Ask about their school day and stay connected to us via Facebook/Skool Loop and email as appropriate.

For more detailed information at Alert Level 2, you can visit <https://covid19.govt.nz>

Thanks again for all your support and understanding over this challenging period.

We are all looking forward to welcoming our MPS Learners back to school.

Nga mihi
Glenn MacPherson