

9 June 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

I am sure you were as pleased as I was to hear the Prime Minister's announcement about moving to Alert Level 1. We can now look forward to inter-school sport, schoolwide events and to planning increased numbers of field trips and other excursions.

We have found (as have all other schools in New Zealand) that over the last three weeks our students have developed greater self-management skills and independence through our drop off and pick up procedures. Surprisingly, reduced anxiety has been evident with parents not dropping students directly at the classroom. Teachers are valuing the 1:1 connection time with their students from 8:30 and numerous parents I have spoken with have commented on the reduced stress as their little ones bounce into school. As we move into Level 1, we would like to continue these practices to maintain the growth we have seen.

Benefits that we have observed with parents dropping off their children at the gate:

- Students independence has grown
- Students organisation and self-management have improved
- There is virtually no separation anxiety
- Relationships between teachers and students have strengthened
- Negative incidents between students which might have occurred before school have disappeared
- Incidents of students becoming injured before school, when there was no staff member in the sick bay have stopped
- No noise outside the classrooms during learning time (particularly at the end of the day when it is very distracting)
- Grounds staff can use noisy machinery before 8:30 with no students to worry about
- Staff have uninterrupted time to organise learning for the day and respond to parental emails
- Students arriving at school from 7:30 in the morning has stopped.
- There is a general air of calmness across the school

Starting this afternoon, we have new procedures for pick-ups and drop offs.

Monday to Friday.

Gates open at 8:30am for students only. Students go directly to class to be ready for learning and build relationships with their peers and teachers.

After School

Gates will open at 2:55pm and parents are welcome to pick up their child from their rooms.



Parents and students **leave the school grounds by 3:15pm** when the gates will be locked.

Note: Leaving the school grounds by 3:15pm is because of increased construction activity currently on site and once construction is complete then the school will reopen after 3:00 for the community.

Gates which will be open in the morning and afternoon:

1. The main entrance beside the office area
2. The gate on Kohimarama Road where students line up for busses

Questions and Answers

Q: Did the school put gates in because of COVID-19?

A: No. Gates were installed because we have students who are inclined to run away and out onto the road. Gates were installed as part of a Ministry of Education property modification scheme to stop children accessing the road.

Q: Why are they locked during the day?

A: Two reasons. One, to stop children running out onto the road and two, to prevent adults entering the school site without first identifying themselves to staff at the office and signing in.

Q: Do have to use the QR COVID-19 Tracer?

A: No. We have this available for use at our office entrance and it is for your own personal safety to allow tracing if you need in it the future.

Q: Do I have to sign in at the front office?

A: If picking your child up in the afternoon you do not have to sign in. If visiting during the school day, then yes you must sign in at the office and enter the grounds via the front office.

Q: Can my children play around the school after 3:00pm and on the weekends, will the school grounds be open after 3:00pm and on the weekends?

A: No. Construction of our 12-classroom block is at an intense stage and trucks, cranes and construction workers are often on our school grounds after 3:00pm and on the weekends. From a health and safety perspective and to lessen the risk to our community we will keep the grounds closed after school and on the weekends until completion of the construction project which is expected to be in Term 3.

Q: I would like to chat to my child's teacher or look at my child's work, when can I do that?

A: Teachers will be in their rooms until 3:15pm (then they go to meetings etc) and you are welcome to visit. If you need a longer time slot to chat to a teacher then you can book a time via email.



ST THOMAS'S SCHOOL
KOHIMARAMA, AUCKLAND

Q. Are there any other times when we can visit classrooms to see what my child is working on?

A. *We are working on some additional visit times at the moment and once finalised we will share our ideas with our parent community.*

Q. Will my child be required to continue to use hand sanitiser?

A. *Hand sanitiser will still be available if students choose to use it, however the emphasis will be on students washing their hands regularly.*

We are supporting contact tracing by having QR code posters at our entrances – so if you haven't already downloaded the NZ COVID Tracer app the Ministry of Health's [NZ-COVID Tracer app page](#) has information to help you do that.

Thank you all for your support as we step through reopening the school properly and it certainly feels good to be in the space we currently are.

Kind Regards,

Michael Maher
Principal