



COVID-19 Update 3

19 March 2020

Dear Hinuera School Parents/Caregivers,

This is a further update about our response to the COVID-19 virus as a school. Since our update on 17/3/20 there have been a few changes around the country, like the first school being closed when they had a confirmed case, but this has not changed our situation as a school. We do not have any suspected or confirmed cases as a school, and we remain open, with some changes to normal operations. Changes to be aware of:

- Cancellation of the Junior Swimming Showcase, Interschool Swimming, Triathlon and Poetry Finals. We will be running in house variations of most of these, and will share as much as we can of these with community.
- Sausage Sizzles on Fridays are cancelled until further notice.
- Assemblies are cancelled until further notice.
- Gates will be open at the start/end of the day to avoid everyone needing to touch these.
- We have added a specific COVID-19 tab on the school website ([hinuera.school.nz/our_place/COVID 19](http://hinuera.school.nz/our_place/COVID_19)), so that these updates are easier to find. We will also link you to these, for any that pick up messages on our Facebook feed.
- We are now set up to share notices and reminders on the Skool Loop App, so if you would like to access this service, download the App and then select Hinuera School in the options.

We appreciate your support at this time, and understand that it is an unsettling time. We are doing all we can to support your children through this period. The NZ School Trustees Association shared a helpful list about good reasons for schools to be open, so we share this below to finish this update:

There are a number of reasons why it is important for schools to remain open as long as possible

- *Continuity of learning – Distance learning can be a useful backup, but for most students, most teachers and most schools face to face learning is more effective. It is important that students can keep accessing the best education we can offer them for as long as possible. That means continuing to attend school until there is good reason not to.*
- *It's safer than being somewhere else – One of the biggest concerns for health authorities is untraceable social contacts. Students who are not at school are highly likely to congregate in other places where it is not possible to identify who they may have been in contact with. When students (and staff) are in school it is much easier to trace any potential contacts they may have during the school day, and notify them if any of those contacts is suspected of contracting the virus*
- *Keeping calm and carrying on – Maintaining normal routines and social contacts is important for the emotional wellbeing of students, staff and the wider school community.*
- *Pastoral care and peer support – the relationships between students, and between students and their teachers are an important emotional support in times of uncertainty. Peer support for adults in the school can also be an important source of emotional and practical support.*
- *Social cohesion – Although it's at the bottom of our list, the consequences of a school closing can be severe for the whole community. While we need to be ready to manage this when it becomes necessary, there is no advantage in prolonging the disruption beyond what is needful. (Source NZ School Trustees Association)*

Kind Regards - Dean McDonnell, Principal, and the Hinuera School Board of Trustees