

Dear Parents / Caregivers,
Teena koutou ki a koutou,

I hope that you have enjoyed some downtime over the past few days. I certainly appreciated a few days space to recharge and reconnect with friends and family after what was a demanding term. Unfortunately, COVID and winter illness is continuing to have an impact on our community and my message today has important information around measures that we will have in place at CHS this term.

Facemask wearing now compulsory indoors whenever possible. The Ministries of Health and Education have strongly recommended that all schools and kura amend their mask policy for the first four weeks of term to require mask wearing in all indoor settings for students in Years 4 and above. They have taken this step to minimise the transmission risk within a school setting, especially during the winter where there is an increased quantity of illness, and the weather forces us to be indoors more.

As of Monday 25th July, it will be compulsory for all staff and students to wear facemasks in an indoor setting. Like during Term 1, we appreciated the support from our staff and students in responding to this expectation. In making this amendment to our policy we recognise the challenges it presents and that this is not the preferred position for many in our community. However, it is a step that will give us the best chance of minimising the communication of disease and keep us healthy as a community through the next term. Adding to the increase of winter illnesses and more time indoors, many of us who contracted COVID during the first wave are now more susceptible to re-infection. It is this combination that we are trying to safeguard against. Please be aware that our evidence from Term 2 indicated that the significant majority of illness was shared while in the community, where the wearing of facemasks was almost non-existent. That is still likely to be the case and I recommend that you are more vigilant in the wearing of facemasks while in the community over the next term.

In Term 1, there were some students who were exempt from wearing facemasks. We maintained a list of these students and shared it with staff, so that they could be aware of those students in their class who were exempt. We will reactivate this list so please contact us on chs1stcontact@camhigh.school.nz if you need to add your child to this list. If you are not able to get a facemask for your child by Monday, send your child before school to the Sports and Arts Office in the admin block and we will provide them with a mask.

Please note that this will have no further impacts on the normal operations of CHS. We can proceed with all planned indoor events but will need to amend our plans to include the wearing of facemasks, while indoors, for events such as assemblies.

The following is further information supplied by the Ministry of Education:

Wearing masks can reduce new cases of the virus by as much as 53%. It works alongside other measures including vaccination, good ventilation, staying home when sick, and hand washing and other hygiene measures, to protect our students and staff.

[Keep up healthy habits – Unite Against COVID-19](#)

We know that that some of our tamariki/ākonga are exempt from wearing a mask. If they have an exemption card or a letter from their health provider, or we have agreed that mask wearing is not practicable for them, we will support them to not wear a mask.

[Apply for a face mask exemption pass – Unite Against COVID-19](#)

Please make sure that tamariki/ākonga come to school ready to wear masks. Students should bring masks from home. If students cannot bring masks there will be a limited supply of masks available for students.

This recommendation does not include any situation where mask wearing might not be practicable, such as while eating and drinking, playing certain musical instruments, indoor sport, where it will have a significant impact on teaching and learning (for example, students with particular learning needs), certain activities such as singing or drama performance on stage, and PE. In these situations, particular attention should be paid to ensuring there is good ventilation during the activity, and physical distancing where practicable.

Uniform updates. There have been a couple of amendments to our uniform policy over the past few terms that I wanted to share with you.

- Our uniform is non-gender specific, but we do ask that you wear all of one 'style'.
- In keeping with this all styles can be worn throughout the year. Previously only males have worn summer uniform throughout the year. This is now inconsistent with the above point and so the summer uniform can be worn in both styles throughout the year.
- Rain jackets can be worn over a complete uniform to and from school and between classes. They are to be taken off in class and as close to the school colours as possible (predominantly blue and/or black).
- Please help us by making sure that other items are not worn in place of school uniform items. During this term some students try to wear substitutes for uniform items, such as hoodies. When we take the item off the students, we find that they don't have an alternative to wear. Please help us avoid this situation and make sure they are warmly dressed in school uniform before leaving the house.
- Get in touch with us if you need assistance in funding uniform items. We are thankful for excellent support from our community in helping out with school expenses such as uniform and sports and arts fees.

Kia ora, kia manawanui, kia haumaruru te noho.
Stay safe and look after each other out there.

Kind regards

Greg Thornton