



2 February 2021

## Ngā Mihi o te Tau Hou

### Happy New Year

Welcome back to the new year at St Thomas's School, especially our new students and whānau. We hope you enjoyed a relaxing summer holiday with friends and family.

### Gate Opening Times

The main gate, between the administration block and J1, will be opened at 8.15am each morning for students to enter. We would like parents/caregivers to say goodbye to their children at the gate in the mornings from Monday to Thursday. We will continue to have Whānau Friday for our community to come onto the school site. The gates will be locked at 9.00am and will be kept locked until 2.55pm when everyone is welcome onsite to pick up their children.

The Kohimarama Road gate will only be open in the afternoons from 2.55pm until 3.15pm.

### COVID-19 App

We are asking that all our community enables Bluetooth through the NZ COVID Tracer app as well as using the QR code when visiting the school property. We are also advising that students with smart phones have Bluetooth enabled within the NZ COVID Tracer app as well.

You will find QR codes on the entrance gate to the school and on the office door within the office. There will be one on the pool gate.

This means you can use the app to maintain a complete – and private – record of all the places you've been and the people you've seen.

Fast and effective contact tracing will be key to breaking the chain of transmission and minimising the risk or extent of any further lockdowns. NZ COVID Tracer supports this by giving contact tracers a head-start and by allowing contact alerts to be sent to people who may have been exposed to the virus.

You can find a range of information about NZ COVID Tracer on the Ministry of Health [website](#), including instructions on [how to update the app](#) if you don't have automatic updates enabled on your phone.

## Hygiene

We would like to remind our community that it is still very important to practice basic hygiene whilst the pandemic is still a threat. Can you please remind your children to:

<b>WASH HANDS</b>	Wash their hands before eating and after going to the toilet – by rubbing their hands together for about 20 seconds in warm soapy water, and then drying them on a clean towel.
<b>COVER MOUTH</b>	Cover any coughs or sneezes with a tissue, or even sneeze or cough into their elbow (but not their hands).

In addition, if your child is ill, please keep them at home.

Remind your children that they should not share water bottles, eating utensils or food with other students.

## Change of Address, Phone Numbers or Email Addresses

If you have changed your address, phone number (including mobile number) or email address email [office@stthomas.school.nz](mailto:office@stthomas.school.nz) with these updates.

It is very important that we have up-to-date information for all students on our system.

## Reporting Student Absences

We would like to remind all parents/caregivers that reporting absences is important for the safety and wellbeing of students.

We aim to deal with all unexplained absences as quickly as possible each morning.

To minimise the number of unexplained absences, if parents/caregivers take a few moments to advise the school of an absence in one the following ways:

- Via the Hero Communications app (preferred)
- Complete the form on the home page of our website
- By telephone and leave a message 09 5283938 select option 1
- Text message to 0277580542

***It is not necessary to email the class teacher.***

Absences must be reported each day, unless the office has been advised in advance of the duration of an absence. You must state the reason for absence i.e. sick, doctor's appointment, holiday or bereavement.

Any students arriving late to school must report to the office and sign in, so that their safe arrival can be recorded. (All late arrivals are recorded, should your child be late on a regular basis follow up action will be taken.

Note that we may try several alternative phone numbers to contact a parent/caregiver, if calls are not answered, where possible we will leave a voice message. If your phone numbers change at all whether it is a work, home or mobile number, advise the office.

Should you wish to collect your child early from school, come to the office and sign your child out. We do not let your children go home with someone that is not on the child's record card. **Students cannot be signed out during morning break or lunchtime** so if they have an appointment please pick them up before morning break (10.30am – 10.50am) or lunch (12.30pm – 1.30pm).

## Parent Communications App - Hero

Our parent communication app is Hero which can be downloaded for both Apple and Android systems from the App Store or Play Store.



We use the Hero app to provide important communications to you including school newsletters, sports notices and important classroom communications.



From the start of Term 2, 2021, reporting on student progress will also move to the Hero app. More information about this will be sent out to you in due course, during Term 1.

For termly invoices and optional payments to school your separate Kindo Online Shop login and password will still be valid.

### More Information About Hero

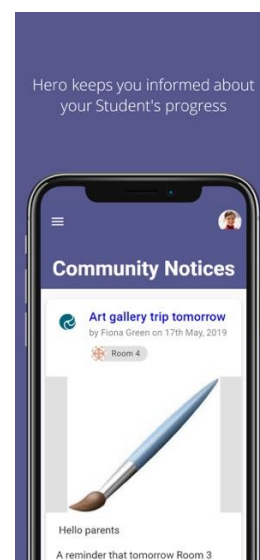
Hero has been designed with the parent experience in mind. Schools provide strong communication for their parent community to keep them up to date on school events, opportunities on offer and celebratory messages. Schools communicate student progress and achievements, next steps in learning, they provide updates on the learning that is happening in the classroom and links to the curriculum to help support those learning conversations at home. School administrators also communicate with parents regarding absences.

The challenge for the busy parent is keeping up and knowing where and how to access all current and past information quickly. Whilst technology has enabled more effective communication, parents can become overwhelmed with app overload, a full email inbox and digging around for paper at the bottom of the school bag.

Our goal with Hero is to streamline communication and create a complete solution - all information accessible, anytime through one app. All notices and student information is targeted to reach the people that need it. Whether the Principal wishes to connect with the whole school community or the choir teacher needs to get a rehearsal notice out to that specific group or a classroom teacher is sharing a window into the learning happening in their class - it's easy through Hero. Parents can then focus on what is relevant to their family and receive the information in the most effective way.

The real power of Hero is what it offers for parents to enable them to keep in touch with their children's learning. We all know that reporting to parents can be one of the most time-consuming tasks for schools and often by the time the parent receives the report the child's learning has moved on. Hero has simplified this process for schools to enable real-time reporting to take place. Our reporting tools give parents live updates of where their children are working in the curriculum and what their next steps are, at any given time. As these next steps are calibrated to the school's expectations, parents can be shown extra detail that helps them to understand more about the school's curriculum and grow a shared language of learning.

Busy parents can download the Hero app, turn on notifications and important information is easily accessed. Parents without the app will receive notifications via email, giving them a secure login into Hero. One of the really exciting things for families with children across multiple Hero schools is ALL school information can be



accessed through the one Hero app. The experience when visiting different schools through the app remains unique to the individual school's context. Hero brings it all together.

Parents and schools can be reassured that sharing and permissions are tightly controlled by school approved administration. Student work is private to those who are given access by the school and robust measures have been put in place to protect your privacy and security.

## **Sun Protection**

In Term 1 all students **must wear a hat** when outdoors during the school day and we advise that students come to school with sunscreen already applied.

Hats can be purchased from the office or from Argyle Schoolwear and cost \$12.50.