

Dear KingsWay School community, the government recently announced a range of new measures as they seek to manage the spread and impact of Covid in New Zealand. These measures have placed a number of obligations on our school which our Board and management are responding to. The Ministry of Education provided a summary of the measures¹ that impact schools which included:

- Auckland remains at Alert level 3 (to be reviewed Monday 18th October)
- distance learning practices remain in place.
- school staff must be COVID-19 tested prior to their return to school.
- from 1 January 2022, school staff and support personnel who have contact with students must be vaccinated.
- Schools are required to maintain a COVID-19 vaccination register. This also includes all support people such as teacher-aides, administration and maintenance staff.

As a Christian Community we are commanded throughout scripture to show love to others and especially to each other. Jesus said “this is my command: Love each other deeply, as much as I have loved you. For the greatest love of all is a love that sacrifices all.” (Jn 15)

In his final days on earth Jesus prayed fervently that his followers (us) would walk in unity and by doing so, would demonstrate to the watching world the love of our Heavenly Father.

Within our school community there is a wide range of views and opinions about our government’s measures to combat Covid and the available vaccines. I respect everyone’s right to hold their own views. However, given the emphasis Jesus placed on unity amongst his followers, I would encourage everyone to personally consider how our actions and conversations are being seen by those watching our community. I wonder, at what point does insisting on our own rights begin to impact on how we demonstrate sacrificial love towards others? Is unity in our school community as important to us as it is to Jesus?

Irrespective of where we each sit with these issues or which political party we support, scripture also commands all of us to pray for our leaders, for those in authority, for our cities and land. As our nation and our school navigate these complex waters I encourage you all (especially in front of your children) to be intentional about honouring those leading our communities and school, pray for godly wisdom to flourish, pray for unity across our community and for love to abound in all situations.

As Board Chair I fully support our Executive Principal’s stance in not publicly debating the issue but focusing on fulfilling our lawful obligations and providing a safe workplace and learning environment. I want our school community to be known as one that places sacrificial love and unity above our personal views and entitlements. Finally, as you consider any decisions about this issue, or before entering into robust discussion or communication you wish to make, please first read again John 17.

E te Atua, Homai kia mātou tōu maramatanga, tōu Rangimarie, tōu kaha me tōu aroha.
O Lord [God], Give to us your knowledge, your peace, your strength and love.

Peter Wilding, Board Chairperson

¹ The full MOE summary can be viewed on www.education.govt.nz/school/ministry-bulletin-for-school-leaders-he-pitopito-korero/#latest-COVID-updates