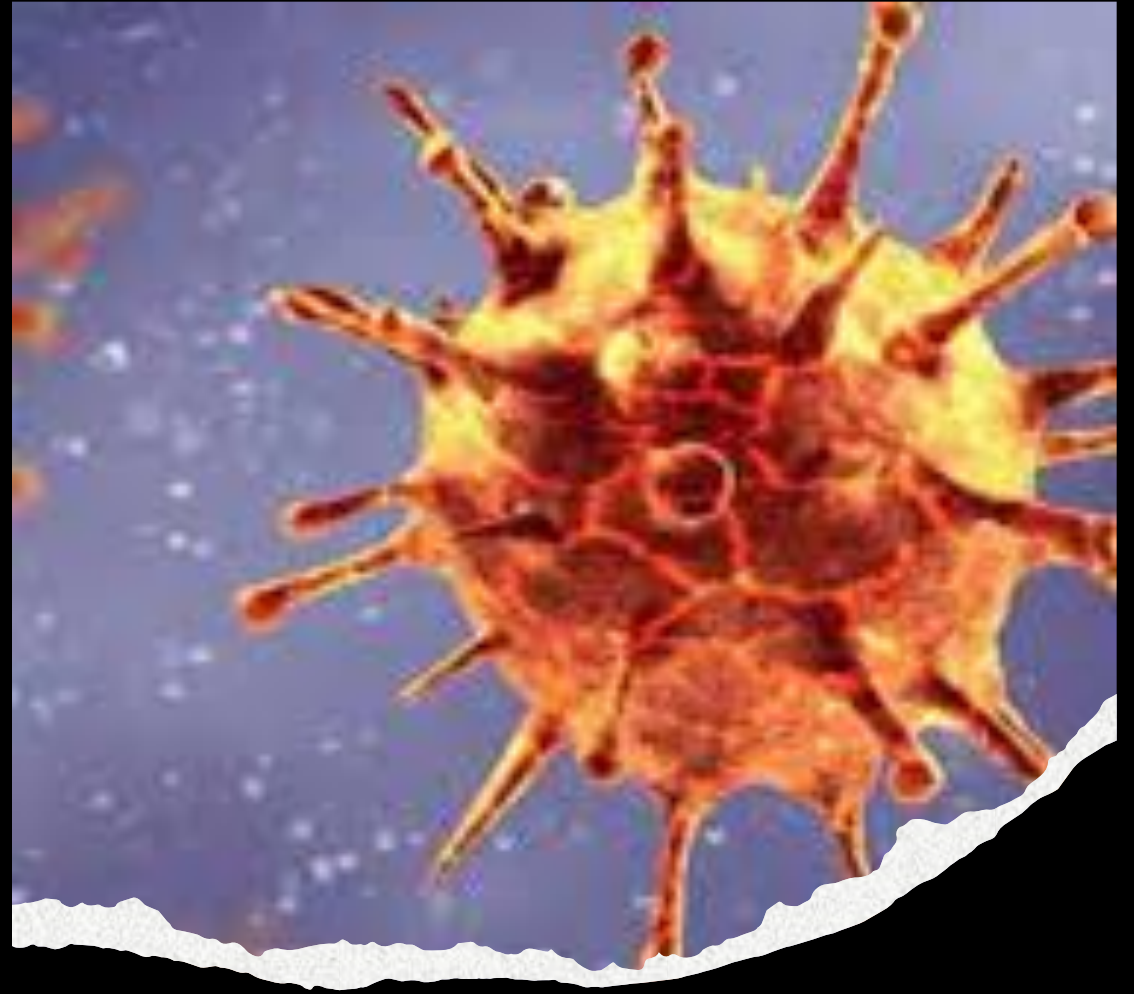


Return from DELTA 2021: Year 9+ version

by
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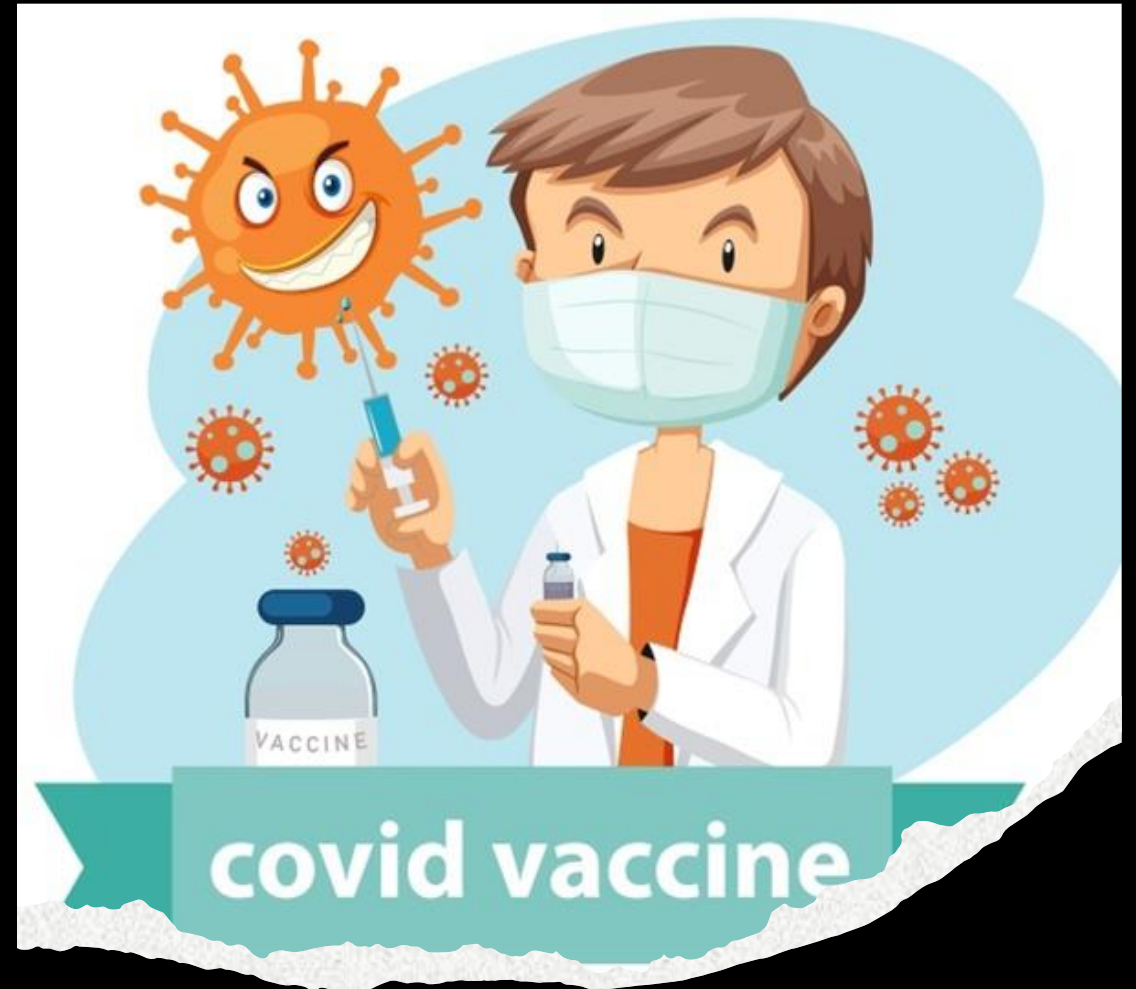
DELTA got
everyone worried

- Lockdown again ☹️
- Schools closed
- Everyone stuck at home.
- Home learning eek!!!
- Vaccination dramas.



When, things start to open up again

- We can hang out with our friends outside
- Year 11, 12 and 13 students go back to school first
- Then Year 1-10 will start to go back, a group at a time.
- Malls and cafes will open again, thank goodness!



2020 COVID Back to School was all about:

- Hand washing.
- Hand sanitizer.
- Physical distancing.
- Staying in bubbles.
- Coughing into our elbows.
- Fist bumps- so awkward!



2021 DELTA Back to School is all about....

Masks!!!!

- Tiny fine droplets suspended in air or breath (aerosols) are the problem this time
- Masks stop germs in the air getting spread so easily.
- You see more people wearing masks because of DELTA.



These things will be *different* about
Back to School this time:

- Kids of different ages will go back to school at different times. This is so people aren't squashed in too much.
- More people will wear masks, so they don't spread germs.
- There is a vaccine now to stop COVID making people so sick.



But it's not all bad news:

- No more assemblies.
- No more singing.
- We have to keep the windows open, so now the classroom will smell way fresher! Bye bye B.O.
- Shame about the mask rash though 😞



These things about Back to School will be the **same**:

- Teachers.
- Friends.
- Assignments 😞
- NCEA courses- but at least we get COVID credits 😊
- HOMEWORK!!!!!!



You might be thinking
these things:

- Will school be ok?
- Will I get sick?
- Am I going to fail my courses?
- Who will help me if I get stressed out?



Being a bit edgy about change is normal

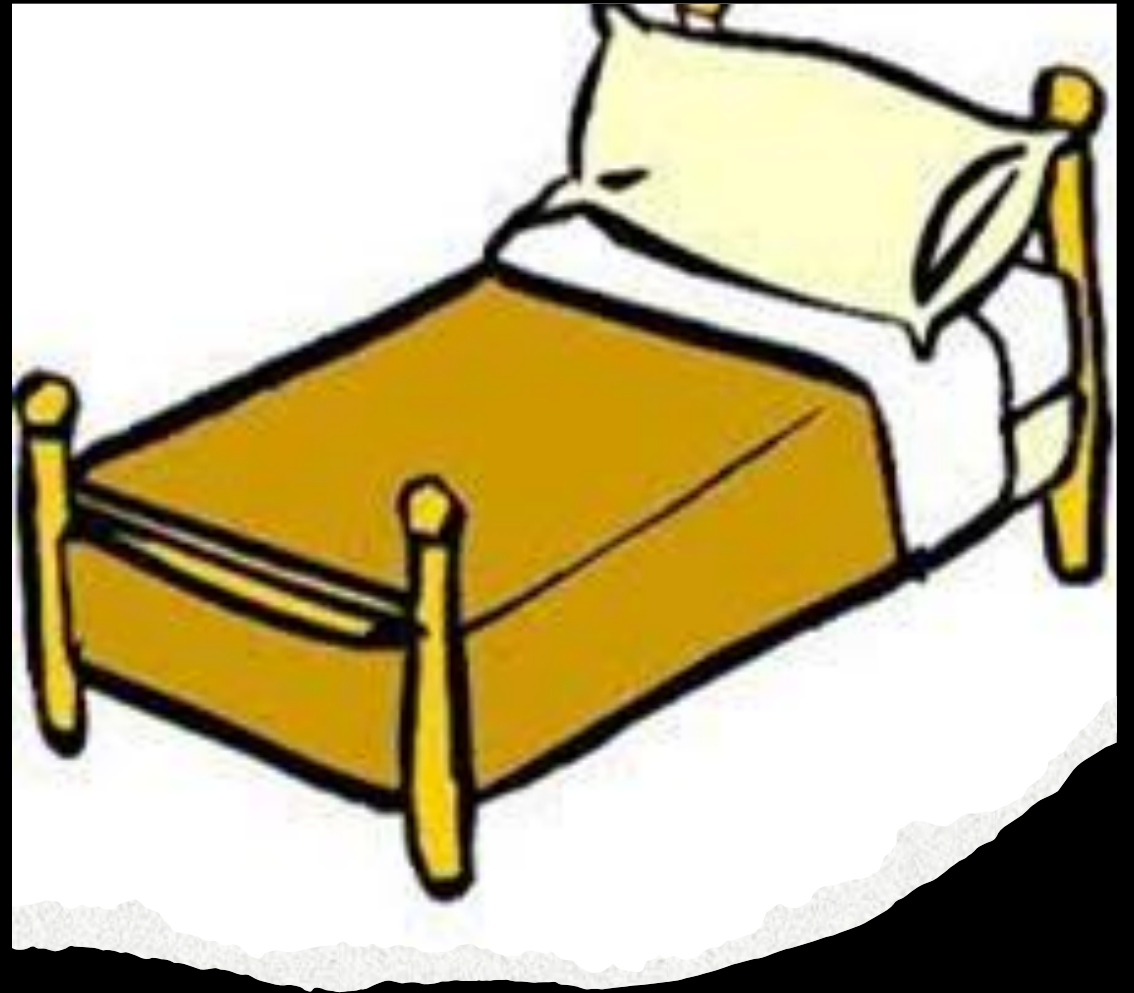
- It might take some time to get settled.
- It might feel a bit itchy wearing a mask.
- It might seem weird being out of the house after so long at home.
- But everyone will feel like this!



Saying goodbye to your bed and Netflix



- You will have to get up early again- that is a drag if you are a teenager!
- You will have to follow school routine. That will take some adjusting to.



What if I need help?

- Its ok to get some help.
- Everyone needs a little help sometimes!
- Other people will understand that COVID is a tricky thing to deal with.



How to ask for help:

- I feel
- because
- I need

Please help me!



Getting settled back into routine

- Follow school communication so you know what will happen.
- Get ready to face the backlog of work you might need to get sorted.
- Try to do one thing at a time so as not to spin out.

**PHASED
RETURN TO
SCHOOL**



Information for parents and caregivers

- Teens get their sense of security from their peers.
- If their friends want to go back to school, so will they!
- Trust their decision. This might be hard, if there are financial reasons for them to stay off school.



Focus on the positives

- You are no longer having to put up with a salty attitude!
- There will be more food in the pantry without them snacking all day 😊
- They need to be out of the house, living their life again. Education is their path to a better future.



Dealing with concerns you may have

- If you are worried about anything, try to talk about this with your teen. Remember to LISTEN not lecture!!! Let the school know if there are issues.
- If there needs to be a solution, try to support "bravery" so your teen knows that, with help, they can make it through 😊



Being DELTA safe

- Make sure they have a mask to wear, if their setting requires it.
- Keep them home if they are sick, or if a family member is sick.



When will it all end?

Delta is going to be with us for a long time

BUT:

- We now know lots about it and have many things to keep us safe: the vaccine, masks, keeping in bubbles.....
- We will be able to do more stuff and get out and about once more than 90% of people 12 years and older are vaccinated
- In a few years, Delta will be like a winter cold...annoying but not a big deal
..YAY!!!



Information for teachers

- Your students will take their lead from you. If you are calm and confident, they will be too.
- The first few days will take a bit of getting used to. Take your time. A few more days won't matter!



Real heroes
don't wear
CAPES,

they teach.

Be mindful

- Lockdown experiences may have varied for different students- some may have been cruisy, some tense or scary.
- Attending school may take some adjustment for some, while others may simply be grateful to be back.
- Some might not return at all 😞



Monitoring coping

If a student is behaving out of character for them, don't be afraid to say:

- "Are you ok? I'm worried about you!"
- Follow up with extra support as needed.



Keep "anxiety" in perspective

- **Most** students will settle back with normal supports quite quickly.
- **Some** may need additional support within school.
- **A few** may need additional support within and outside of school. Most likely, these students had known needs prior to Lockdown.



Recognise the losses associated with COVID

For some students, COVID has robbed them of their last few experiences of school life:

- Being a Prefect
- Graduation Ball
- High profile sports competitions they have trained for.

THIS HURTS!



Recognise the stress and worry associated with leaving school

- Students may be worried about derived grades, tertiary course entry requirements etc.
- They may feel cheated out of their "senior" year.
- Listen, don't minimize their hurt. Find practical ways to ease their pathway forwards.



Don't forget your own needs

- You are adjusting too. Be gentle with yourself. You are an enabler not a magician!
- Reach out to others if you need advice or support.
- Replenish yourself so you can care for your students without becoming depleted.



useful resources and supports

- <https://www.kidshealth.org.nz/tags/covid-19>
- <https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/wellbeing-in-education/>
- <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/getting-together>
- <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/getting-together/wellbeing-for-parents-and-whanau>





About the Author

Mel Churton is an experienced teacher and practicing psychologist. She has been working in education for 30 years-teaching, coaching and supporting teachers, children and their families.

Mel advises on behaviour and learning and trauma, grief and loss repair and recovery. She has written numerous resources on emotional well-being, responding to behaviour and supporting learning and delivered professional development extensively.

More of her work can be found at:

www.yellowbubblepsychologicalservices.com