



The courts and fields at St. John's College were abuzz with activity last week, as sports training resumed.

1st XI football team captain Jayden Gordon said they're *"just happy to be back"*.

*"When we first went into lockdown we were just beginning pre-season training so we all are quite excited to get back into it. It's awesome being back and seeing all the boys."*

Jayden said lockdown was difficult, particularly as a lot of the boys were *"looking towards the season"*. *"It's just getting back into things which has been difficult because even though we've kept fit, it's still a bit more difficult coming back and then training as a group."*

He anticipates the season will only start in another six weeks. *"Usually we would have started, maybe four or five weeks ago, so it's been quite a significantly long period and obviously the season will be shortened as a result but we're just looking forward to getting back into competition."*

Head of sports and physical education Jason Pearson said sports and physical activity is a *"huge part"* of their students healing and wellbeing.

He said the boys' missed social interaction with their mates and competition.

*"We had a lot of students that were involved in pre-season training prior to lockdown and they kind of had the rug pulled out from under their feet to a degree so they've now got that opportunity to get back into it and get going, but it's having that balance."*

*"For us to come out of this and for everyone to move on because we've got families whose family dynamics have changed, people have lost jobs ... all sorts of things have happened and sports is one of those common things that we can come back to and the closer we get to getting back to the new normal, I guess the more it feels like life is returning as such."*

Despite not being able to train in their teams during lockdown, students, regardless of being in a sports team or not, were encouraged to stay active and were able to keep in contact via social media.

When school resumed in Alert Level Two, the school implemented policies and procedures which allowed them to get active again in a very “controlled and non-contact environment” while still adhering to Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education guidelines.

*“Because school groupings were slightly different to everywhere else, we had to have teams train within all of our school grounds”, Mr Pearson said.*

However, with gatherings increased to 100, they were able to relax that to some degree and resume their traditional winter sports practices – something which Mr Pearson says they are “relieved by”.

During the winter season, the school has about nine different sporting codes up and running, including rugby, football, basketball, hockey, badminton and squash. Students involved in sport outside of school such as cycling are allowed to train and are supported by the school as they can.

Every period 5 on a Thursday during terms two and three, the school has what’s called a ‘sports day’, where the final teaching period of the day is used for sports training.

Mr Pearson said it is a “very valued” part of their education by the college.

The boys’ have been and will continue to be at the centre of everything they do. *“We’ve tried to do the best for our kids,”* Mr Pearson says.

They have had contact tracing for students and staff and have detailed data on everything from how students are getting to school, to what extracurricular activities they’ve been involved in and who they’re hanging around within their own time.

*“The level of contact tracing that we’re doing is significantly higher than what’s being done in most areas but it’s given us the confidence I guess to get back and get our kids active and engaged again.”*