

13 April 2020

Kia Ora one and all

The messages of the cross are enormous and frankly quite unfathomable - salvation, redemption, restoration, deliverance, freedom, grace, mercy, faith and resurrection to new life – hope!! It has been an Easter like no other.

To our school families please know **you don't have to be your best self at the moment**. We are all living under a cloud of stress that is weighing on us and at times can be heavy. You haven't authored this, it simply is! Everyone's bubble will be different and at times it will be great and at others times, it will be suffocating! The past two weeks might have been anything but refreshing and now you face school online! We will do our best to ease back into Term 2 as gently as possible.

As we prepare to return to school for the start of term 2, this Wednesday here are a few messages and thoughts.

Firstly, from Mrs Britten Counselling Lead: <https://youtu.be/s4GFmKmUAos>

Secondly, I have placed below some links that you may find useful. As you can imagine, the internet is littered with advice, helpful hints and frankly also a lot of nonsense. We are trying to be careful in what we as a school pass on to you our families. I know you, yourselves can source whatever it is you need and are looking for.

Thirdly, we want you to know the following regarding online learning or learning by distance:

The whole notion of distance by learning is challenging especially when in an instant we all have to be suddenly doing it. If you were to talk to a family who do or have participated in home schooling, no doubt they would say it was quite a journey to develop systems and routines that work. Previous and existing home schooling is based on at least one parent being available – many of you don't even have that option.

This is what I have shared with of our staff:

Education has always needed and thrived where there are great teachers and great families both are essential and both are currently under pressure:

- a. First up – this is a massive learning curve and we will do what we can do – staying simple is a good idea
- b. Avoid reading up too much regarding online best practice, just use what you have and stick with it. After COVID-19 we will begin 'online learning development' but not now.
- c. When posting try to envisage the fluctuating dynamics of a home and the possible age groups involved
- d. Some families have more than 1 child, with every additional school age child the challenge in the home multiplies
- e. Remember that in many families, husband and wife are both working from home and some households only have one parent.
- f. Whatever we do online with our students and their families can we aim to be **CLEAR**
 - clear – really clear in our communication
 - clear in terms of what we expect

- clear in terms of accessibility – how students and their families access you as a teacher
- clear in terms of accessibility - skills, tasks needed by families to access the work you have posted
- clear by offering less and asking for less. Yes please offer less, restrict the options
- clear and make no assumptions

I would like to encourage families with children anywhere in the Y1-10 bracket, to explore your own 'offline, hard-copy and experiential' activities. Work on your own projects of discovery. Come back and surprise teachers with what you have done and we will celebrate it!

We will be asking you as parents, for feedback on how the online or distance learning is received. Remember, none of us asked for this nor are we experts and we do feel a great pressure to be the best online we can, however we would like to hear from you when you have a quiet moment. We will design a google survey and send out the link.

Fourthly, Mrs Openshaw will be including some messages and directions from various part of the school which you can expect via email and posted on the website under communications.

Prior to the holiday break letters were sent to parents outlining the proposed new learning programmes. Please view these as a reminder prior to Wednesday – they are available on the website:

<http://www.elim.school.nz/communications/notices/>

Fifthly, here are some sources of help

"The Coronavirus has turned our world upside down in a matter of weeks. Not only is this difficult for adults to come to terms with, but young people are also affected leaving many feeling overwhelmed and disappointed. In this Special Report, adult carers will be provided with some guidelines on how to help a child process disappointment and look at the problem objectively"

Here is the link to the Special Report:

https://schooltv.me/wellbeing_news/special-report-dealing-disappointment

The following tip sheets are very down to earth and give actual words to say - modelling reassuring, kind communication, where parents and teachers might feel stuck.

- [Tips for teachers, parents and caregivers – supporting toddlers](#)
- [Tips for teachers, parents and caregivers – supporting children](#)
- [Tips for teachers, parents and caregivers – supporting young people](#)

Two online spaces went live recently: [Learning from Home](#) and [Ki te Ao Mārama](#) . These websites have resources for parents and whānau, teachers and leaders spanning early learning through to senior secondary, and new material will be added to these over the coming weeks.

Please view this great little video from one of our staff (and ex-student) Jeremy Jacobs - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dohAPQGuvi4>

Yours sincerely

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Principal