­­­­April 7, 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers

I just wanted to touch base with you all and give you an update on what has been happening during these interesting times.

I trust that you all are doing okay in your personal bubbles. I am just grateful that the sun has continued to shine, although, they do say this will not be the case over Easter. I was thrilled to hear the Prime Minister reach out to our young people and has endorsed both the Tooth Fairy and Easter Bunny as essential services in their worlds.

We also know many of our parents and caregivers are essential workers, so we are incredibly proud of their resilience and strength serving our community through this time.

I am personally grateful for technology during these complex times. Not only am I able to connect with family in Chicago, Melbourne, Rarotonga and the South Island but also with the Whenuapai Staff. We have had two whole staff meetings as an opportunity to check in with everyone.

Your children will be receiving an invitation and zoom meeting code to join Mrs Fletcher, Jill and I at noon on Friday for a catchup. This will come via their class Seesaw. This is new technology and learning for us so we hope it goes to plan.

Yesterday the Leadership Team met via Zoom to discuss what going forward would look like and how we can support our teachers and learners. Our Digital Technologies Professional Learning facilitator from the Brainwave Trust-Waveney Bryant also joined our meeting to provide guidance in providing quality on-line learning for our students in Years 1-8. She also facilitated a conversation around maximising the use of Seesaw and Zoom in a safe on-line environment. We are very grateful for her wisdom and guidance including in the area of keeping our learners safe on line.

The Ministry of Education has been working on a number of initiatives to support all learners and their teachers when Term 2 starts next Wednesday.

**What the Ministry have been doing:**

They have been working on a package of supports and resources to supplement your material so learning can continue at home, including:

* providing internet connectivity to student households without connectivity
* providing insurance cover for devices our schools and kura send to student homes
* exploring broadcasting educational material on TV
* Professional Learning to support teachers and leaders to work remotely with their students
* making provisions for a range of subject-specific hard-copy resources for delivery to years 11-13 students
* increasing the number of students who have access to devices
* supporting where we can with hard copy materials for different year levels.

**The Ministry of Education have also updated their Wellbeing information including new tip sheets for families, caregivers and whānau**

We have slightly updated the [wellbeing information on our website](https://govt.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2f59fcd18a691d315b5a045cb&id=b54ff7c669&e=2735515272) to better reflect how the COVID-19 response has changed over the last weeks. Included in there are three new tip sheets for parents, caregivers and teachers:

* [Tips for teachers, parents and caregivers – supporting toddlers](https://govt.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2f59fcd18a691d315b5a045cb&id=980bdf17f3&e=2735515272)
* [Tips for teachers, parents and caregivers – supporting children](https://govt.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2f59fcd18a691d315b5a045cb&id=2ca33f15a1&e=2735515272)
* [Tips for teachers, parents and caregivers – supporting young people](https://govt.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2f59fcd18a691d315b5a045cb&id=07b3df69f2&e=2735515272)

**I have been asked to share the following message from the Ministry with you all:**

To help make sure your child can keep up with their learning at home, the Ministry has asked for up-to-date information on your child’s year level, lockdown physical address and the resources your child will need. The Ministry will use the information to identify where devices and hard copy learning resources may be needed to be delivered. We won’t be able to meet everyone’s needs all at once but we will continue to provide as much as we can, as it is available.

We may be contacting some of you to check the details we have for you are correct. Resources are limited and it will take time to get them to learners who most need them, so the sooner we are able to get this information to the Ministry the better.

If your child is learning in and through te reo Māori you can register for a te reo Māori and Māori medium hard learning pack on Kauwhata Reo. We know that some whānau don’t have internet access, so anyone can register for a pack on behalf of a child, including their kaiako and teachers. No special permissions are required. The registration form can be accessed at <https://kauwhatareo.govt.nz/mi/news-holder/ki-te-ao-marama-learning-packs/>

**Message from Skids**

**In home care services, requested by MSD**  
In addition, we have been requested by MSD to provide In Home Care to families of Essential Workers.  This is entirely voluntary on the part of our staff but I am happy to say that we have been able to provide care for over 60% of the Essential Workers requesting care so far.  We have instigated strict COVID19 guidelines throughout this process to ensure that our staff remain safe.   
  
If you know of any families in your community that need sKids In Home Care, please do forward them this link [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/skidsessential](https://skids.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d486d34e7c4e698909402e5a2&id=68f0f3e6ef&e=0a07660144) to complete and we will do our best to match them up with one of our team.  We have already received some lovely comments from parents.

To all our families we are here to walk alongside you during these complex times.

Please reach out to us should you need support in any way. We have an amazing caring school community. We are very mindful that many of our families don’t have a lot of family support in our immediate area, so please know we are only a phone call or email away.

*He waka eke noa*

*A canoe which we are all in with no exception*

To all our wonderful children, if you have had a birthday or family celebration while we are all in our bubbles, please share with your teachers how you celebrated. Photos, pictures or stories are great. I am not sure if you know but I have the privilege of seeing every one’s See Saw posts. I am so lucky.

Take care

Raewyn Matthys-Morris

*Ko te ahurei o te tamaiti arahia o tatou mahi.*

*Let the uniqueness of the child guide our work.*