



COVID-19/CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION

Tuesday, May 5



Dear Parents/Caregivers,

This communication is to provide you with a further update as we prepare for the possibility of a move to Alert Level 2. The news that there have been two consecutive days with no new cases of Covid-19 is certainly positive and gives cause for cautious optimism, although we are not out of the woods yet, as the saying goes. The Government will make the decision on 11 May as to whether to stay in Level 3 or move to Level 2. There has, of course, been considerable discussion of late in this regard, with Ashley Bloomfield, Director-General of Health, expressing his concern that those who are breaching Level 3 restrictions could well jeopardise any potential move.

The Ministry of Education is working with Public Health in preparation for the possible return to Alert Level 2 and they will be using as a base for their planning the Covid-19 Alert Level Table that can be found on the government's website:

<https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/resources/tables/COVID-19-alert-levels-summary.pdf>

Iona Holsted, Secretary for Education, says that health and safety continue to be the primary consideration but that the Ministry will work hard to make the application of any guidelines "as practical as possible". We will be in communication with further details when they come to hand.

We have had a small group of young men return to school following the move to Alert Level 3, and one of the clear themes that have come from conversations with them has been how much they have missed contact with their friends. We understand that many people have found the isolation of the lockdown period challenging, and many young people in particular have found it a lonely and difficult time. While other forms of contact such as online chats or messaging and texting have, to some extent, allowed us to maintain contact with friends and family, there is no substitute for face-to-face contact and just simply being with people. Perhaps one of the silver linings to this very dark cloud may well be that we appreciate people more and appreciate the time we are able to spend with one another when we return to some sense of normality. In the meantime, encourage your sons to stay in regular contact with their friends, and not just message or text but actually ring their mate or video call him. Do the same with extended family – get them to give grandparents a ring to see how they are or just to say "Hi".

We are also aware that some young men are finding the expectations of what is expected of them under lockdown challenging. Guidance Counsellor, Mr Dawson, has this message for parents and whanau: ***"At such a difficult and challenging time it is paramount for us to be realistic about our expectations and priorities. Yes, it is important for the boys to have some focus on their academic studies and to do what they can to keep up to date. However, it is far more important for them, and you, to stay healthy, both physically and mentally, as this will be a far greater determinant of their ability to readapt to 'normal' school life, when we eventually get back to it"***.

Many of our young men will have been working well on the tasks that have been set by our teachers; some will have made little effort. Some may have told you that they have been doing their work but that could well be an exaggeration. Some will have found the independent nature of the work difficult, where they don't have the luxury



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of being able to ask the teacher for clarification as they are able to do in class. But, as Mr Dawson says, we need to be realistic and pragmatic about what we are expecting from our young men, and we do not expect them to place themselves under undue pressure especially when circumstances for many families are very difficult.

A number of parents have found they have become almost like a substitute teacher and have found the combination of the demands of family life, working from home, as well as teaching a real stretch. Don't feel like you have to become an instant expert in algebra or adverbial intensifiers to be able to help your son. He will need to show patience and resilience to work through his issues to the best of his ability; he may also be able to help younger siblings with their schoolwork and in doing so take some of the load off parents' shoulders.

Thank you for your continuing support of your son and our school at this challenging time.

Yours faithfully,

D M Bovey
Rector



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