

17<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Kia ora Aidanfield whanau

Well, week one of Term 2 in our brave new world is done. I hope that it has had some sense of sanity to it? From what I have heard and seen in terms of feedback from our parent community so far, the work is happening in most places, the struggle to get connected and use the platforms (Microsoft Teams, OneNote, Notebook and See Saw) has presented some challenges but it is getting there in many homes now. The week hasn't been too bad.

**A message from Mark Larson on behalf of our Proprietor (The Christian Schools Trust)**

*Parents may be wondering about how they will manage to pay Attendance Dues. The CST has been busy assessing what it needs to do to support ACS families if necessary. It has decided to:*

- 1. Design a comprehensive program of attendance due relief to target those families who require it and ensure that financial pressure is not a barrier to children continuing to attend.*
- 2. Set 2021 attendance dues at the same level as 2020.*

*The CST are working on the detail of item 1. above at present and will be in direct touch with families in the second week of term two.*

**Devices and next steps**

Thank you to those who have indicated they need more devices. As I mentioned, I am waiting to see what Monday brings in terms of clarity for the future weeks and then we will make decisions as to how we can get devices to those that need them. It is a bit of a process! You may be wondering what the next part looks like?

The earliest that pupils will be able to be back at school is April 29 BUT, this depends on two things:

- 1. IF** we shift to Level 3 from April 23. It will take until April 29 to get the school ready to open given we have a weekend and ANZAC day in that week as well.
- 2. IF** schools are to open in Level 3. There is still some discussion to be had about this but the Prime Minister was very clear – children should stay at home during Level 3! It is only if there is no alternative that they could come to school. We still need to determine what this might look like at school if this requirement remains in place.

I will let you know as soon as there is any form of clarity about the next step. My overall impression is that you should plan to have your children at home for at least another 3 weeks. We will definitely be carrying on the distance learning throughout this time.

**Stay in touch**

Please communicate with your child's teacher and let them know how things are going, what the workload is like (is it manageable?), what are the key challenges for your family etc. At the moment in the Richardson household, one of the challenges is an ADSL broadband connection managing four people trying to work online at the same time....frankly, it doesn't manage it! We are figuring out how to manage the timetable so we can all get done what needs to get done.

The Parent Association Facebook page is a good source of help for some and makes for interesting reading. I really appreciate the support that families can give each other on this page. Feel free to list examples of what is working at your place or good ideas that others might find useful. Stay in touch, stay connected.

### **Work patterns at home**

So far our teachers have sent out the first set of work for two days and have now followed it up with the next two days work. We are sending it every two days to help families to choose when and how (or if) they do the work. Remember that we are not going to actively chase up children who have not done work because every household is different and has different constraints within it. We send the work as an invitation to you and your child. We are seeking to support you as parents not make a rod for your back. A further thought – please let the work that your children do be their work...not yours! It is sometimes tempting to improve on what they have done but then, it isn't theirs anymore it becomes yours and that can be a powerful message to your child about the value of their work.

We want to complete this lockdown and come out well when it is over. The most important thing is positive family dynamics as you spend so much time together – not completing every task. Please, do not feel the need to stress about the work and learning journeys. Your children will be fine in terms of their learning as we progress through this year and into next year. Children are generally remarkable robust and adapt, change and grow through all sorts of trials. As you look after them well you will be setting them up well to keep on learning and growing. It is going to be okay!

### **Hope for the future**

How do I know it is going to be okay? Because our hope is not in our circumstance but in the one who spoke the world into being, who separated the land from the sea, who placed the stars in space and fashioned every living thing. The same one who did all of this breathed life into your bones and then smiled and promised to care for you in every aspect, in every moment, without flinching. Our heavenly Father is our source of hope, our provision, our peace. He is the one who knows your innermost fears and calls to you to rest in him, give him all your cares and worries. He is the one who says he sees your tomorrow and it is okay!

### **Finally**

It is the weekend. Can I suggest you keep your children from doing school work over the next two days? Routines are very helpful and if we are in this state for another month it will help for them to have weekend breaks from weekday school work or routines. If you get the chance, enjoy a walk together, perhaps some games, baking (if you can find flour), binge-watching, connecting with others via whatever platform. Hopefully, you are able to connect with your church online however they are doing that.

Grace and peace

Mark Richardson

Principal/home schooler