

Tauraroa Area School
Special Newsletter - 23 August 2021

Kia ora kotou,

Today's announcement from the Prime Minister has confirmed that we will be remaining in Alert Level 4 until at least this Friday. It is possible that it could be several weeks (or more) before we resume normal schooling at Tauraroa at Level 1 or 2. While we hope for a quick return to normality, it is important that we plan for a longer lockdown period.

I am very grateful and impressed with the energy and initiative shown thus far by our students, teachers and parents in keeping learning going through this disruption.

We are now preparing to issue school Chromebooks, texts and other resources to students to pick up from school on Wednesday and Thursday this week. We will be following very strict protocols to allow this and will outline these in the next newsletter.

If your child requires a school Chromebook, please email ross.mccartney@tauraroa.school.nz to request one. Priority will be given to NCEA students and you will be notified when one is available for you.

Other than an individual from each bubble coming to school to pick up learning resources on Wednesday and Thursday, the school grounds are strictly off limits at this time. Please do not use the school fields, courts or playgrounds for recreation and exercise while we are in lockdown.

Learning off-site is a challenge for teachers and students alike. We want to strike a balance between overwhelming students and adding to their stress on one hand, with the need to keep learning momentum going on the other. Many people find it helpful to keep a sense of routine in these uncertain times. Even a little work everyday will prevent things from building up and overwhelming students. All students will have heard from at least one teacher by Tuesday afternoon to answer any questions and offer support.

Google Classroom is being used as the medium for communication and instruction for Year 7-13 classes.

As a rough guide, our expectations for formal learning activities each day are:

- Year 1-2: as students (and parents!) are able to cope. Teachers are keeping in touch via SeeSaw to offer suggested activities
- Year 3-6: 1- 2 hours
- Year 7-10: 2-4 hours
- Year 11-13: 4-6 hours
- This is *in addition to recreational reading* and other learning activities, which don't all need to be based on a page or screen. We understand the opportunities and obstacles various home settings provide, including poor internet connectivity for some.
- Online virtual classes will keep to their usual timetabled slots. This will avoid clashes between subjects.

I don't expect comprehensive programmes to be set up immediately - it will take time for us to really get things rolling. Please reassure your children and help them to get organised to help prevent them from feeling overwhelmed. It is always best to aim to get school work dealt with early in the day, if that is possible.

Thank you, again, for your support and patience at this difficult time.

Naku noa, na,

Grant Burns
Principal