

Kia ora Koutou,

Greetings to parents and members of the Marotiri School Community,

I hope you are all safe and well in your family bubbles. Term two term began this Wednesday with students, parents and teachers facing a new look education system due to the Covid-19 lock down.

Thank you to our amazing school community for your patience and resilience during this time. As a staff and Board, we are aware of the impact that the lock down may be having on families. The feedback we have received from many families has been amazingly upbeat.

We are incredibly lucky to have a dedicated team of teachers and support staff who worked through the holidays to prepare distance-learning programmes for your children. These will involve a mixture of on-line learning, hands-on activities, links to the Ministry TV channel and hard copy activities. Teachers have attempted to contact each family this week either via email, phone call or Google classroom and will regularly check in with students. Please check your email if you have not yet had direct contact from your child's teacher. While we expect all students to engage in some daily learning activities, learning from home will not replicate a normal school day. Parents, be kind to yourselves – you are not expected to replace your child's teacher. Utilise the resources and links teachers send you and make use of the TV school channel. 90 minutes 'structured' learning a day is a guide. Children can also take part in a range of practical activities.

It is exciting to see parents and students engage with teachers online. Can I please remind parents, to respect teacher's personal time. It is very easy for this to become blurred in the new learning-environment. Email queries should only be sent during school hours wherever possible. Teachers will be unavailable to answer emails from late afternoon.

Thank you to those who completed the survey concerning distance learning. The Ministry are using this data to organise learning support for families. Unfortunately, they are experiencing significant delays in processing orders. The Ministry provide very strict guidelines, which we must abide by. All school chrome books must be packaged and delivered via courier. Despite our concerted efforts, we cannot short-circuit this process. Thank you for your understanding. Any devices families receive remain the property of Marotiri School and must be used accordingly.

Following yesterday's announcement about schooling under Alert Level 3, there has been much discussion about the logistics of providing an effective school programme within the strict health and safety constraints. There is an expectation that families will keep their children at home where possible. We will communicate with all families as soon as more information comes available.

In conclusion, I would like to offer our special condolences to Elizabeth Thomsen and her family on the recent loss of her husband Donald, a well-respected member of the Marotiri/Mangakino community. Elizabeth has been our school cleaner for more than 20 years and is currently on medical leave. In her absence, I would like to welcome Vanessa McCormack as our new relief cleaner. Thank you to Sean and Ashleigh Meyer for their service as our relief cleaners over the last few months.

Colin Ottaway has now retired as our caretaker. We thank Colin for his wonderful service to our school over the past 15 months and wish him well. A special morning tea will be organised to farewell Colin on our return to school. We welcome Ian Bradley as our new caretaker and look forward to working with him.

Kind regards,

*Rose Symes*