



Ko Rāpare, tekau ma iwa o Poutū-te-Rangi : Thursday 19 March 2020

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Information about measures our school has taken regarding Covid-19 AND protecting our children from fear of the current pandemic.

Up until now we have not shared any information about the coronavirus (also called COVID-19), however in light of recent government measures, a message is timely.

On Monday we prepared a pandemic plan based on the best advice of the Ministries of Health and Education. We are constantly being advised and updated by both.

We believe we have a 'duty of care' and a responsibility to our school community to communicate and educate, but to do so without causing fear. Since the start of the outbreak in Wuhan, and the spread across the world, information about everything you need to know has been available from the media and online from the Ministry of Health. The current status is : NO COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION which means that **the virus is currently not spreading in the community** beyond people who have had direct contact with a traceable source of infection.

There is one important aspect NOT being covered in the news, and that is how to protect our children from being 'freaked out' by stories they may hear about the impact of COVID-19 worldwide. So we have put together a few recommendations that we believe are important, and can help with this:

1. We would highly recommend that you **limit 'media exposure' when your children are with you**. Please send them outside when you watch the news or check the net for updates about COVID-19. **Children are FAR more impacted by news about fatality rates and deaths than adults**. Children don't have the ability to understand that in New Zealand, we are still at very low risk of an outbreak. If children ask about fatalities, remind them that most people affected are the elderly and chronically unwell; children to date, are not affected.
2. **Hand washing is essential!** At school (as part of our pandemic plan) we have been raising the profile of hand washing and cleanliness in general. At home you could teach your children how to wash their hands like a pro. **It takes 20 seconds with soap before using water** (some classes are singing heads, shoulders, knees and toes while soaping BEFORE using water). It is especially important to wash hands before eating.
3. **Hate, fear and racism** – Please help us remind children that this is not an 'Asian illness' no matter where scientists first found it. The outbreak is not anyone's fault. When the outbreak is finally over, hate, fear and racism remain. Please let your children know to tell a teacher if they hear comments of this nature at school.
4. Please remind your children that **New Zealand is a safe place** and that it is unlikely at this stage that ALL schools will be closed in New Zealand because of this illness. **Some schools in some areas might be** but we will keep you well informed. Please encourage children to play outside and do activities that they normally do. Play with their friends and neighbours. **There is no reason in New Zealand, at this stage, to be fearful or to isolate yourselves or your children unnecessarily.**
5. It is important to remember that we are currently going through a change of season.... into the colds and flu season. Please use your good common sense with coughs and colds. As always, **if your child is feeling unwell please keep them home**. Teach them how to use and throw away tissues correctly and to cough into their elbows which is 'good practice' at any time.

While teachers have been answering questions about COVID-19 in our senior school, we are trying hard to not make this a regular topic because we do not want children to be unnecessarily frightened.

We will continue to promote 'correct hand-washing' which is the best way to stay healthy through the colds and flu season. We would like to acknowledge Eltham School for this posting which we have amended slightly.

Manaakitanga *We value ourselves, others and the environment,*

Kotahitanga, *We own what we do, we have a sense of being together, we belong, Manawanuitanga: Determination to do our best and never give up*

School Absences

We have had a number of parents responding to absence texts saying that they are keeping their children home to protect them from the virus. While we understand your concerns, there are two things to be aware of:

1. As mentioned above, there is NO community transmission, hence unless your child has contact with someone who has had direct contact, they are, according to the Ministry of Health, safe.
2. This, by law in NZ, according to the Ministry of Education, is not a valid reason for absence and we therefore have been advised that it must be recorded as 'Unjustified'. This may sound unfair, but it is one of those issues that finds the school squeezed between acting in accordance with the law and parents doing what they believe is right!



Athletics..... What a great day...

We were lucky enough to 'squeeze' in our athletics day this week before the myriad of Covid-19 closures and cancellations! Thanks to the many many **whanau who came along** during the day, to **Anna for pulling it all together**, to the **teachers and support staff for managing the stations** and to the **kids for giving everything their best shot!** Thanks Warrick for the photos.



Fundfinders 'thank you'....

A big thanks to everyone that supported and helped during our school book fair. Books to the value of \$1400 were sold and with that, the school received a number of free books for each classroom and our school library - so well done everyone!

The next meeting for this group is planned for this Friday at 7.00 pm at Focal Point where they will look at discussing fundraising events and developing a plan so that we are working towards fundraising for specific items of interest for the benefit of our children at Levin North School.

As per discussions earlier this term, this group is trying to vary meeting times so that different parents can attend either an after school meeting or an evening meeting.

They look forward to seeing new (and old) faces on Friday evening.

Lunch Box Rubbish....

Moving towards Zero Waste at Levin North School.... Our school is on a mission to reduce the amount of waste that we generate. As was mentioned last year, both students and staff can contribute to our zero waste mission by taking home any rubbish from their lunch boxes. Food scraps from lunches will be sent to

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our worm farm but all other waste will be put back into the students' lunch boxes and taken home. We encourage you all to think of ways to send lunches to school that require as little packaging as possible, and perhaps your child could have a 'nude' lunchbox. Together we can make a difference to the world!

Board of Trustees Meetings for 2020

Our **Board of Trustees** meetings are held once a month in the school staffroom and 5.30 pm and all are welcome! The dates are: Monday 23 March, 18 May, 15 June, 20 July, 17 August, 21 September, 19 October, 16 November.



SENSATIONAL SPORTS WORD

LOCATION OF THE WEEK: *Anywhere you can be active!*

COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

It is with huge sadness to announce that due to advice from different sporting associations in regards to large gatherings of people, and our current climate of protecting everyone as much as we can from the spread of the COVID-19 virus, that sports around the Horowhenua are as follows.

CRICKET: Cancelled

YEAR 4-6 INTERSCHOOL ATHLETICS: Cancelled

SUMMER SOCCER 7s: Cancelled

TWILIGHT HOCKEY: Suspended until 2 May

NETBALL: Suspended until 2 May 2

YEAR 4-6 SWIMMING SESSIONS: Rescheduled (dates to be confirmed)

And finally...

I can only hope that you will also commit to getting outside with your children for physical activity. I know that offering them time on devices can seem like an easy option and 'silent babysitter' however, using devices as a learning tool in the primary instance, is even better.

Without physical activity, ironically, not only will physical health suffer, but also our mental health and well-being. There are some options for keeping active, and enhancing your family bond such as going for walks, bike rides, heading to beaches/rivers/lakes while the weather is still favourable, scootering, skateboarding, playing frisbee/golf/tennis/squash, having throws of a ball in the backyard or at school... just to name a few.

I wish you and your whānau excellent health!

Ngā mihi nui

Anna Cooper (Sports Coordinator)

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Me mahi tahi tatou mo te oranga o te katoa

We should work together for the well-being of everyone

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