



Rangitikei College

20 Bredins Line, Marton 4710, NZ

Towards Higher Things

**Unite
against
COVID-19**

PRINCIPAL'S SCHOOL LOCKDOWN NEWSLETTER

Number One; 4 April 2020

Kia ora parents/caregivers and whānau,

Firstly, and most importantly, I trust this finds you, and those you love and care for, well. It has been an extraordinary 10 days or so since the lockdown began, and has made a dramatic change to how we go about our lives.

This will be for the first of two emails you will receive from me this weekend.

Government provision of online learning support

As you may have heard through the media, the government has moved rapidly to ensure the continuity of some form of schooling once the holidays end next week. This includes:

- providing internet connection to student households without connectivity
- exploring broadcasting educational material on TV
- professional development to support teachers and leaders to work remotely with their students
- making provision for a range of subject-based hard-copy resources for delivery to years 11-13 students
- increasing the number of students who have access to devices.

The latter involves lending digital devices to homes that need them, and providing for internet access where necessary. To do this they need information, and that will be the focus of my second email.

Please consider this opportunity carefully. I would ask you to think about the following:

1. This is not about charity or providing handouts. It is about the government's responsibility to provide an ongoing education to our young people. At the moment, our students cannot access all the resources available on a school site that they would normally be entitled to, so the government is making up for this in other ways.
2. We do not know how long this lockdown will continue for. We must prepare for the possibility that it may last for several more months.
3. In many households I would expect there has been an increase in demand for non-phone based devices. This will increase even more as online teaching increases after the holidays, and more people work from home. Do think about whether you need an *extra* device over and above what you currently own to see you through this time. Young people should not have their learning affected because of competing demands for a device at home.

So my next email will be asking you to respond and asking about the address details we hold are correct (so devices and future resources can be delivered), whether you need support in providing a device for your child, and whether you have internet connectivity at home.

We will need a response to this by the end of Tuesday – if we have not heard from you, you will be rung by a staff member. We don't want anyone missing out because they have not received the message.

Online teaching from Rangitikei College

Last week your child will have been contacted by each of their teachers. We are now in the middle of holidays, but once the term resumes after Easter you can expect that contact to significantly increase. There are several points I would like to make about this.

1. Teachers have been asked to be available where they can during normal school hours. But please understand that our staff also have significant family and wellbeing responsibilities to manage as well at this time, so please understand this, and make allowances for it. I can assure you that they will be all doing their best.
2. This online learning is an emergency response to an emergency situation. These courses have not been designed to be delivered online, but everyone is doing the best they can to make them work, and making the necessary adaptations. There will be teething issues, and there will be frustrations. If these arise, please let us know and we will do our best to put them right. Please do not give up.
3. The nature of online and individualised learning is different to face to face learning in a classroom. Do not expect that it will look the same. Some work will be project-based, some based on reading or viewing. This won't necessarily break up into neat slots as in the regular school timetable.
4. Please be aware that no one on staff is permitted to access the school site for any reason except an emergency. Therefore, we are not able to provide any more physical resources from school.
5. Although we would ask for your support in encouraging your child to continue with their learning, and really really appreciate this, do understand that we do not expect you to be your child's substitute 'teacher'. Do not be hard on yourself if you do not understand what your child is doing.

6. If your child gets 'stuck' or discouraged, please make contact with the teacher concerned to see how they can help. Do not allow them to just give up, because if they do, they will find themselves further behind others when they return, and that will not help them.

To make this work, like never before, we need all members of our school community to fully demonstrate our school values of **Respect, Endeavour, Aroha** and **Perseverance**. Thank you again for your support – we can only do this together.

Aroha nui



Tony Booker
PRINCIPAL

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PS: Please look out for the second email, and respond as soon as you can.