MENPS News

Te Whare Akoranga o Maungawhau, 30 April, 2020

From The Principal

Kia ora koutou

I trust everyone is well and adjusting to the tentative loosening of restrictions under Level 3. It has been encouraging to see more life and activity, albeit with so many precautions in place.

We welcomed 5 children to school on Wednesday, all of essential workers, and it was so heartening to see even just this handful of happy, smiling children back at school. As small a step as it may be, it is hard to escape thoughts of school re-opening at some point in the hopefully not too distant future at Level 2. As teachers, working remotely and the reality of empty school corridors and playgrounds during what would usually be a busy, vibrant term is not something any of us could have begun to imagine. It takes away the lifeblood of what we do and why we do it, and I know I speak for the whole staff when I say we will be happy and relieved when we can be back with many more children at school.

Once again, I acknowledge it is difficult. We do understand the challenge of trying to maintain distance learning at home while attending to your own work and other commitments, and so I would like to thank the MENPS community for stepping up during level 3. Over 98% of the school roll is continuing at home, and we have seen so much of the values we call our 'touchstones' in the way children and families have managed to engage.

This is unquestionably a huge sacrifice, but one that we all know is worth making in the longer term. The goal is an environment in which we can safely take further steps towards the 'normality' that we all miss - sooner rather than later - and the ongoing collective effort will undoubtedly help us to get there.

Will school ever be the same? While it may not feel like it right now, the answer is that, yes, of course we can anticipate this, but we should be prepared for a gradual, incremental journey. The reality is that there is likely to be an extended period of time which we will all operate in a Covid-managed - rather than Covid-free - environment, which we may experience for some time to come.

I would like to think this has been a time for reflecting on those things we value and perhaps often take for granted, and that there may be opportunities for new perspectives on many aspects of our daily lives as a result. Not least of this will be helping our children to re-adjust after what has been a socially traumatic time. I consider us fortunate as a country to be in the

position that we are in and tracking well, but there is no room for complacency and we should not underestimate the social and emotional aspects of the shock to the system that our community and our families have been experiencing.

This is something that will be front of mind when we do reach Level 2, in terms of reflecting on what we can all do to ensure our tamariki feel as loved, safe and optimistic as ever. Yes, there will be some learning to catch up on but, in many respects, that will be the easy part. Restoring our collective identity as a learning community as we work through the phases ahead will be the real challenge, but one that I am confident we will rise to as a staff and as a community.

We will continue to pass on further information as we receive it, including when decisions are made following the Alert level review on May 11.

Ka kite anō au i a koutou

Alan Jackson
Principal

Papatūānuku (our earth mother) is Breathing

Contact Us

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