



ALBANY PRIMARY SCHOOL
Where learning makes a difference...

Dear parents and caregivers

Thank you for the wonderful support you are giving your children as we adjust to Albany Primary “virtual” School and lockdown requirements. Please know that as we head into this “uncharted space” our staff and BOT are here to support you fully. This week has given us the opportunity to “test out” all our communication systems. Teachers have developed some creative ways of ensuring they are able to connect with all learners, and we really value the way you have all rapidly responded to ensure this connection can occur sharing their learning, exemplifying totally our partnership in learning.

I will continue to update you via the school App and email, with any relevant information from the Ministry of Education (see attachment) as well as further resources included on the school website (see COVID 19 tab).

Unfortunately, I have had reports from neighbours that despite the signage advising all playgrounds are closed, some parents are allowing their children on the school playgrounds (unsupervised in some cases). **This is an official government regulation and includes the junior, middle and senior playgrounds, fitness trail, school outdoor seating and barbeques tables.** This legislation is to protect you and your child’s safety as playgrounds, and any communal outdoor furniture have uncleaned hard surfaces, on which the virus could still be live and easily picked up by any contact. Explain this to your children as it is critical this regulation is followed. The school field and bike track are currently available as a “fresh air space” as we understand the importance of maintain outdoor activity times, but please also ensure you follow the required physical distancing from any other family groups. This may change if any other COVID 19 updates require closure completely. An interesting learning activity could be to have each family member predict how far they think 2 meters is- then use a measure and see who was the closest. It is a lot further than just two arm spans!

Another fun activity could be to start an individual or family journal, or photo essay, or time capsule, as in twenty years time what an incredible memory to share on this unique period in our history, as we record the impact of the lockdown has had on us all. From my own walks through our local bush walk already the tuis, fantails and pukekoes are enjoying the lack of nearby traffic and it is delight to hear the bird song in our suburb again.

Finally, I have shared below a newsletter sent from another source, that provides the most wonderful words of wisdom for this Lockdown/ school holiday period.

Tu i te tawhiti engari kia kotahi te noho—Stand at a distance but together as one.

Maree Bathurst, Principal

Dear Parents and Caregivers

'You might be tempted to create a minute by minute timetable for your children. You may have high hopes of hours of learning, including online activities, science experiments, and book reports. You'll limit technology until everything is done! But here's the thing.....

Our kids are just as scared as we are right now. Our children not only can hear everything that is going on around them, but they feel our tension and anxiety. They have never experienced anything like this before. Although the idea of being off school for weeks sounds awesome, they are probably picturing a fun time like the summer holidays, not the reality of being at home and not seeing their friends.

Over the coming weeks, you will see an increase in behaviour issues with them. Whether its anxiety, or anger, or protest that they can't do things normally – it will happen. You'll see more meltdowns, tantrums, and oppositional behaviour in the coming weeks. This is normal and to be expected under these circumstances.

What children need right now is to feel comforted and loved. To feel like it's all going to be ok. That might mean that you tear up the perfect timetable and pour your love onto them. Play outside and go for walks. Bake biscuits and paint pictures. Play board games and watch movies. Do a science experiment together or find virtual field trips of the zoo. Start a book and read together as a family. Snuggle under blankets and do nothing.

Don't worry about them regressing in school. Every single child is in this boat and they all will be ok. When we are back in the classroom, we will all course correct and meet them where they are. Teachers are experts at this. Don't pick fights with your children because they don't want to do maths. Don't raise your voice at them for not following the timetable. Don't mandate 2 hours of learning time if they are resisting it.

If I can leave you with one thing, it's this..... When this ends, your children's mental health will be more important than their academic skills. How they felt during this time will stay with them long after the memory of what they did during those weeks is long gone. Please keep that in mind each day and enjoy this time with your precious parcels'.