

Dear parents and caregivers

We are sure that you have followed with interest the announcements made by the Prime Minister yesterday, as to what COVID Level 2 will mean for us all. We were also informed that under Alert Level 2 schools are considered safe environments for children, young people and staff and that additional public health control measures are in place to prevent the spread of disease and to support contact tracing.

Once the decision is made on Monday of when we move into Level 2 we will be in touch again to update you on the requirements and implications for schools. Schools will be given one full week of preparation before we are able to be fully open under Level 2 requirements.

If your situation has changed and you will now require supervision for your child next week you must contact us on the school phone (09 415 9668) or email admin@albany.school.nz before Monday morning to confirm, as we need to ensure we have adequate staff onsite for Level 3 restrictions.

If your child is going to catch the school bus to or from school next week you will also need to email or phone the school as we must let the bus company know numbers of children.

The teachers and staff who have been supervising in our bubble school have done an exceptional job of supervising children in their separate bubbles, as well as supporting their on line learning class. Our teachers working from home continue to be in regular contact to support you and your child(ren) with their learning.

We understand that the longer home learning continues the tougher it may be to maintain your child's interest and engagement. Compared to our first few weeks in Level 4 and 3 the "novelty" of learning at home is wearing off for some. You may have another sibling that is thriving and totally independent. This is because every child learns in different ways- online works well for some, others need to verbalise, share and collaborate, need time to process the task, use tactile equipment, draw, sing or create to synthesise their ideas.

Communication is also much harder online or by email, so please keep connecting with the teachers if you or your child is experiencing difficulties. Unlike a classroom the teacher is not able to see (or even hear) if the children are understanding what is required, and for some they will need a modified activity or explanation. As parents/caregivers you have multiple demands with possibly feeling you "have to keep encouraging and keep children's' learning on track" while also working from home. Your number one job is to be a parent/caregiver (not a teacher) and we know that you are all doing the very best you can for your family.

Thank you for your continued support as we move back from bubble school to our "new normal school" when we can welcome everyone back under Level 2 with our heightened hygiene, physical distancing, tracking procedures and practices as we continue to maintain a safe and sensible approach.

The words of Charles Dickens having new meaning for us in these times:

*"It was the **best of times**, it was the **worst of times**, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."*

The relevance of this quote is reflected as we continue journeying through the implications of COVID-19 on our nation we see the tensions played out in a very real light. May we all keep safe, keep strong as we look forward to being back together as a school community in the very near future.

Regards

Maree Bathurst (Principal) and Rick Pierce (BOT Chairperson)