



17 April 2020

Dear Families and Whānau

Kia ora koutou

Novel-Coronavirus (COVID-19) – The first few days of Distance Learning

As we approach the end of the week marking our first few days of distance learning, I have been reflecting on how very proud I am of the way in which our school community has adapted to the challenges of both the Alert Level 4 Lockdown and the distance learning programme that started this week when Term 2 commenced.

By now your teen should be engaging with the learning activities that their teachers have put in place. Thank you for the kindness and the understanding that you have shown to teachers who have been busy reorganising teaching programmes into a distance learning format.

Need help with getting setup for Online Learning?

The [Online Learning page on the Waimea College website](#) contains a lot of information to support students and families to get connected and to access learning activities. If you need help with accessing online work, password resets or login details, please reach out to us via email at inspire@waimea.school.nz.

Our staff will endeavour to contact families throughout next week, to check-in and connect.

Free Internet Safety Filter for Home Devices

While teens are learning from home, they are away from the online safety and security services provided by Network for Learning (N4L) at school. So together with N4L and Netsafe, the Ministry have launched www.switchonsafety.co.nz – a free way to block the worst of the web for students and teachers.

Please follow the instructions provided to set up your teen's device for safer connectivity while they learn from home. Remember, no technical solution is a silver bullet. Also, please remember to complement this with digital citizenship toolkits provided by Netsafe.

Netsafe

Netsafe provides comprehensive support and information so that everyone can stay safe as they work, learn and play online. Netsafe has new and updated resources for parents, whānau and students at <https://www.netsafe.org.nz/advice/staying-safe/>

Student Devices

To date we have issued over 100 school-owned devices to families who indicated that they didn't have access to a device. The latest set of devices were couriered from Waimea College on Thursday and should reach families early next week. We are aware that there are some families who we haven't been able to supply a device to yet and we're working with the Ministry of Education to procure more devices so that we can get them out to families as soon as possible. The Ministry of Education is also working with families who need internet connectivity. In the meantime, hard-copy physical learning resources are being couriered to families who don't yet have a device. Thank you for your patience as we work through this.

Attendance

We have been advised by the Ministry of Education that if your student is unwell on a school day during Lockdown, we need to code them as being ill. Please email attendance@waimea.school.nz or advise us via the school app if your teen is unwell and cannot participate in distance learning.

Planning for Alert Level 3

New Zealand remains in lockdown at Alert Level 4. The Prime Minister has indicated that Cabinet will review this on Monday 20 April.

Yesterday the Prime Minister [announced](#) some information about what Alert Level 3 will look like for New Zealand. The announcement indicated that **"schools will be available up to Year 10 only, but attendance is purely voluntary. For children who are able, distance learning is still the best option"**.

Principals have been advised that the Ministry of Education is preparing detailed advice to assist schools in planning for Alert Level 3. I will share this with our school community as soon as we know more.

Communication

Our school telecommunications provider has now set up call forwarding for the Waimea College telephone system to enable the office team to receive calls as they work remotely. Please feel free to call the main Waimea College telephone number 544 6099 during work hours and the office team will do their best to help you. We will continue to monitor emails and the [Waimea College Facebook page](#). Please email inspire@waimea.school.nz if you need support or require further information. If you would like to contact one of your teen's teachers, the school email address format is firstname.lastname@waimea.school.nz.

Important updates and information will continue to be shared via parent email, the [school website](#), Facebook, and the Waimea College App.

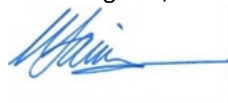
Please keep up to date with developments across the country at <https://covid19.govt.nz/>

Our Community

COVID-19 and the impacts of our collective efforts to combat it have added a layer of stress in the fabric of our communities, and in each of us and our families. I know that some families are experiencing loss of employment; many are experiencing the stress of the whole family being underfoot day-after-day; and most are simply struggling with the challenge of a changed world of isolation and uncertainty.

He Waka Eke Noa – A Waka that we are all in together.

Warm regards,



Scott Haines
Principal