

Te Rapa Primary School



Newsletter

Wednesday 15th April 2020

School Student Roll : 541

Welcome Back – for Term 2 2020

Welcome back to all **students and staff, and their families**, as we move into a new school Term and a new way forward.

Priority #1

Safety and Well-Being of our Te Rapa Primary School Students and our Parents / Carers / Staff and all of our families

I hope this first newsletter for Term 2 2020 finds you all safe and well. **Safety and Well-Being** must be our first concern !

As a school our main focus over these next few days and weeks, as we look to **start up** our school again after lockdown, is to ensure we look out for each other. We do not want to add stress or anxiety for our Te Rapa families.

People are all really, really important right now, and
making sure our entire Te Rapa family and all of our loved ones are all OK must be our No.1 priority.

This last month has been an extremely difficult and stressful time for many, so checking on the health and well-being of Te Rapa students, staff and families is far more important than anything else we might try to do going forward.

This is what our teachers will look to do first. Re-building and then maintaining positive reciprocal relationships with students and families comes first, and the distance learning then follows. Please be patient while Te Rapa teachers start to move things forward remotely.

Thanks Mum and Dad and Everyone at Home in your Bubble

Every mum and dad is to be applauded for all you've been doing at home over the lockdown period to "look out" for your children and to keep them motivated and busy. Good work

You also need to know that the learning already taking place in your bubble will be hugely beneficial to your children too. They are not being disadvantaged by being at home ... and not at school. They will catch-up quickly, and any extra time with you at home is invaluable.

It is important that they know you are doing OK too, so please remember to tell them that frequently. They need to hear from you that all is OK, and they need to see / feel that you are doing well. Just as you need to know that your children are alright ... please remember they need to know you are doing alright too. Tell them and show them, even when things are tough Presenting a positive face and mood is important.

Keep doing the best you can, to the best of your ability and at all times keep your loved ones in your bubble close and safe.
Be sure to communicate regularly with your loved ones who are not in your bubble. Children worry about extended family too.

What's Most Important Right Now ?

I am pleased that the Prime Minister reinforced her position recently stating that she is on the same page as **Nigel Latta**. He has gone public with his professional opinions on what is important for NZ children right now and he is stressing the need to *keep things simple* and *keep things stress free*. The Prime Minister endorses this.

Nigel Latta asks us to avoid putting pressure on NZ households, and implies that we should reduce promoting "school related" expectations. Our parents / carers should not try to deliver a set programme (as the teacher) based on a typical school day.

We should be in no rush to leap into a **distance learning** programmes either and staying safe and staying healthy, checking on each other should be our No.1 priority. Then as we maintain this, a "drip feed" approach to **distance learning** will start to evolve from there.

Priority #2

Shaping and adopting a "Distance Learning" Strategy

All schools are working to better understand what "**education**" might look like going forward, and this is more challenging because we are getting new announcements every day from the Government and also the Ministry of Education. The direction of these announcements changes frequently just as they did prior to lockdown !

I know the Government is still working to a timeframe of a four-week lockdown, however further announcements imply that things may continue beyond 22nd April. The Prime Minister is referring to this as a "marathon" however our Minister of Education came out over Easter making reference to Wednesday 29th April being a possible date for some schools to return to "face to face" learning.

Regardless of these dates, the Government's main aim right now is secondary schools and universities, and making sure these older students are able to meet their NCEA assessment / exam requirements. Primary and early childhood institutions, along with every teacher in these institutions, are still in the "planning for every scenario" stage.

Parents / Carers **Please REMEMBER**

Weekends and Holidays – During this Self-Isolation Period at Home

- Week #1 Mon. 30th March to Sun. 5th April
- Week #2 Mon. 6th April to Tues. 14th April

This means

There was **NO SCHOOL for these 2+ Weeks**, so "thanks" for avoiding being a teacher in your bubble at these times.

Prior to lockdown I acknowledged it would be difficult and also a challenge to keep all children busy during self-isolation at home, and I was also quick to ask parents / carers to try and ***do weekend things on weekends***, and ***holiday things during the holidays***.

I was eager to not put pressure on children to do "**school stuff**" at home (or yourself) during these non-school days.

So School Starts Again Today – Wednesday 15th April

Have a set routine to start and finish, and only a couple of hours in the morning and just an hour in the afternoon. Stop for regular breaks.

Note Even if an activity is going well on a mid-week school day at home, and motivation is high, you should still stop at the agreed time (certainly before 3pm) and pack-up and ready things for the next day. Motivation is then retained for all and remember we all like to have something to look forward to tomorrow or the next day.

Parents / carers will also recall that I was also eager to make sure the ***take home Learning Packs*** were not used during the weekends or the holiday period either. These were provided by the school for use at home on recognised school days so students (and parents) should still have plenty to do as they start to unpack the contents with their teacher.

Before that starts let's introduce

- ***Mr Isacc Hunia - Room 20*** **Special Welcome**

Mr Hunia had been teaching part-time in our school throughout Term 1, and beginning Term 2 he will formally begin teaching full-time in Room 20. It all happened very fast with Miss Whitfield taking maternity leave and finishing in the teaching role just prior to lockdown commencing. Fortunately Mr Hunia was able to work with Miss Whitfield as part of the transition process, and he is now able to find his way around with the school so he is well placed to support his Year 7 & 8 students.

- ***Ms Cara MacKenzie - Room 18*** **Special Welcome**

Over the lockdown period we have formally welcomed Ms MacKenzie into our school. She has made the trek south to the Waikato (from Auckland) and will teach full-time in Room 18 following the departure of Mr Marsh who has moved to new adventures. The Senior Syndicate has already held on-line planning meetings, and have made every effort to help Ms MacKenzie settle into her new position. With the support of all Te Rapa students / colleagues we all look forward to helping her transition into her new role.

Moving Forward

Te Rapa Primary School does have an outline of what the next few days might look like and this is outlined below, but please appreciate that things might have looked quite different had we enjoyed 6 x months to plan this, rather than just a few weeks.

Please be patient and work with us (at home) as we come out of the holiday period and start to navigate our way forward together (with you).

Please also be patient with your children who are about to become your students at home, and remember things are evolving each day.

Day #1 – Wednesday 15th April Today !

Class teachers to make “student well-being” our first priority today, and

- double check they have the correct / up-to-date email address for every child in their class.
- share a “Welcome Back to Term 2” newsletter / notice relevant to their class.
- spend Day #1 checking up on their students via. email with a focus on student well-being.

Start engaging with students in their class with the view to re-connect with their students / families.

Invite email communication to better appreciate what students have been doing over the school holidays and during the lockdown period.

Invite students to share written responses, photos, pictures etc. with their class teacher via. email.

Class teachers to share a little about their bubble, and what they have been doing over the school holidays / lockdown period too.

Start drawing attention to what the next few days, and what next week might look like.

Day #2 – Thursday 16th April Tomorrow !

Class teachers to share a Day #2 email message with their students.....

Start to gather more information about each student, and their bubble, with the view to better support their needs for distance learning.

Start to think about sharing a Syndicate-wide newsletter / notice with your students.

- the aim is to start pulling Year groups of students together remotely, and communicating again as a Syndicate Team.

Start to unpack the contents of the **Take Home Learning Packs** collected from school on Wednesday 25th March 2020.

Invite students to share what they have done with the pack contents, and how they have made best use of each of the items.

With or without the take home learning packs invite students / parents / carers to share what they have done when ...

- reading together, or when parents / carers have read to their younger children,
- what stories have been shared with each other and over the phone, skype, email etc with those outside the bubble
- what TV / Netflix / SKY etc. have been enjoyed together,
- has any budgeting been done together as a bubble, and any other some simple maths at home,
- any drawing, construction, art work, design, outside projects etc.
- any writing tasks or letters shared with a friend or family member,
- any “communication of thanks” to essential workers sharing appreciation for all that they are doing to help us.

Teachers are to also check the courier delivery address for each student’s bubble.

Some students may not be residing at their usual home address.

Teachers are to also askthe following questions (please see below).

We are seeking this information to better support Te Rapa Primary School students and their needs for distance learning :

- (1) please clarify how have the contents of the take home learning packs (collected on Wed. 25th March) been used so far ?
- (2) please identify what support may be needed for your child(ren) ?
- (3) please confirm if you would like your child registered to receive a Ministry of Education take home pack ?

Our school will explore in greater detail when Ministry of Education issued ‘take home’ packs are available to Te Rapa Primary School students, and if we can we will look to register those interested students to receive one of these packs.

Day #3 – Friday 17th April The “next day” !

Class teachers to share a Day #3 email message with their students.....

They will start to promote

- the details of the recently introduced “educational” TV Channels available to NZ students.
- specific on-line sites available to NZ students.

Class teachers to start shaping up and sharing a suggested **distance learning** daily / weekly programme for the students in their class.

This will start to commence in greater detail beginning next week – Monday 20th April, and will run through to Friday 24th April.

Day #4 to Day #8 Monday 20th – Friday 24th April

Teachers will continue to liaise with the students in their classroom via email.

- They will begin sharing specific guidelines / expectations of what should / could be covered, and
- what parents can do at home to facilitate this learning, and what students should / could do to help themselves.

Teachers will invite students to access on-line sites and encourage students to step their way through programmes.

- These sites, programmes and tasks will be selected suited to the age and ability of their students.
- Some will be selected to stimulate students, while others will be fun to do or perhaps challenge.

Some advice and guidance from parents at home will be required for some of these.

Please do not persevere to the point that you or your child are frustrated. Side-step those tasks that will cause too much difficulty.

Key Date Wednesday 22nd April

This is when the lockdown is due to finish however this date may change.

Please continue to “stay tuned” to what the Government is communicating, and stay safe and stay healthy.

Mother’s Day

Sunday May 10th

Thank you for your continued support of Te Rapa Primary *Waikato Top School* 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 & 2019

..... a full primary school where “everyone knows your child’s name”

V W Franklin (Principal) and Staff