



19th August 2021

Dear Parents, Caregivers and Friends of our School,

It's amazing how things can change in a matter of hours and here we are again in Lockdown. Hopefully, you and your whānau are safe and are managing to readjust to the fact that this Covid variant is potentially dangerous and we must all "Do our bit" as St Mary of the Cross MacKillop would have said.

Obviously I, like you, are wondering what the next announcement by our Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern will be, but there are some things from a school perspective that need to be mentioned.

Firstly, we wish to advise that the proposed Staff Only Days scheduled for next Friday and Monday have been postponed until further notice and when we have a clearer picture of what the immediate future looks like there will be similar notices and updates that will follow.

Yesterday, I met via Zoom with our Whanau Leaders and we discussed the online learning strategy that we had prepared in the event that we ever went into another lockdown. These Leaders then met with their teaching teams who will roll out activities and online learning programmes.

I wish to reiterate that this is still a very new experience for children and your first priority is to make sure that they are comfortable with the online experience. You, as parents, can monitor the workload and regulate the time spent on the various tasks. We don't want children upset or feeling pressured during this time. Nor do we want them sitting in front of a device for extended periods of time. I encourage you to play games with your children, read to them and enjoy the learning experiences that you feel will also be of value. Take the time to connect as a family and have some fun.

In August 2020 the staff reviewed the rollout of online learning, what we had learnt and the recommendations should we ever need to go into lockdown again. Today, I wish to mention two points that were communicated in our newsletter in August last year:

1. In Years 1-3, the classroom teacher will use the Seesaw programme and Google Meet for any contact with parents, posting of work and looking at assignments. Teachers are expected to have Google Meet contact with students at least twice a week.

2. In Year 4-6, the classroom teacher will use the Seesaw programme and /or Google Classroom to stay in touch and post assignments. Teachers are expected to have Google Meet contact with students for a minimum of 2-3 times per week.

Please note that these contact sessions will begin next week should the lockdown be extended past this week.

We, the staff at St Francis Xavier Catholic School, want to reassure you of our support and invite you to contact anyone of us should you require any assistance. We have a very special school community and at times like this we need to reach out and support each other.

God bless and keep safe

Craig McKernan

(Principal)