

ARAPOHUE SCHOOL

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Kia ora koutou

Wow – given everything that is happening in our world today it is incredibly surreal to sit down to write our start of term newsletter, with the awareness that in two more sleeps Term 2 will start in a way that none of us have experienced before. It is fair to say that none of us, parents, teachers or students have been trained or prepared for this and we all need to be patient with each other as we do our best to meet the needs of your children in these new learning environments.

I trust you have all had a positive three weeks to date, it has been great catching up with many of you online and hearing some of the fun activities you are doing with your children. Can I thank those parents that took the time to complete the survey sent out to you – the information you provided has been invaluable as we consider school via distance learning. Devices have been sorted and delivered to those that requested it and it is positive to know now that most of our students have the ability to connect with us in a digital platform.

While the Minister of Education has released some tentative timelines around what opening schools at the end of lockdown could look like it is fair to say that the future is incredibly uncertain and all we can do is take one day at a time. Bear this in mind as I outline our thoughts below.

Feedback from the surveys show that many of our families are in very different situations with different expectations of school work and how we can best support learning from a distance so PLEASE bear with us, be kind and know we are trying our best, but no doubt will get it wrong at least once or twice!!!

DISTANCE LEARNING @ ARAPOHUE

First and foremost it is our belief that Positive Relationships underpin everything we do here at Arapohue and connecting with our students and whānau during this time to maintain and strengthen relationships is our key priority.

Our second priority is supporting your families and your child's learning at this time. PLEASE be assured that we do NOT want to add any pressure to families, any school activities should enhance positive family life not destroy it – so if it's hard, if it causes stress, leave it and let us know!

As teachers, it will be our goal to connect (hopefully online) with all students this week, catching up with them and seeing where they are at with the learning packs provided prior to lockdown. The reality is that this time will also be spent getting used to the technology and as we become more confident we would like to do some larger group catch ups with the goal to do a virtual assembly by the end of week 2!

We have chosen to use **Zoom** as the platform for these virtual face to face meetings and to give you a head start, you could ensure you have downloaded the App onto your device. If you are not a confident user of technology we will support you, but I am also confident that most of our students are natural users of technology.

The other platform that we would like to introduce to you is **Seesaw** for which every child will be signed up to use and in its simplest form could be described as a private Facebook for kids, where we can safely interact with our students, set learning tasks and they can share their work with us. Parents and their peers will be able to see their work and can provide feedback on tasks completed. Passwords and instructions will be emailed out for **Seesaw** this week.

Online learning apps that teachers have already signed up your children with are:

Steps

Study Ladder

Matific

Prodigy - Room 3 only

E-ako – Room 3 only

Sunshine online – same password for all, user:Arapohue, pw:sunshine

Sunshine classic (passwords coming soon)

Reading Eggs (passwords coming soon)

This gives you multiple options for Literacy and Numeracy support – you do not need to do them all, just use the ones you enjoy!

While we know that establishing and maintaining routine is important at this time we are aware that for many of you it is your busy farms that dictate that routine and we appreciate that. For others, like myself who do not have a busy farm to run, I am aiming for two hours of 'learning time' a day. This may include my children working for half an hour each on their literacy and numeracy apps, some daily diary writing and reading and then remaining time on one of the challenge tasks that were included in the take home packs. (New challenges will be provided each week.) I have found this balance works well for my guys and often they spend longer as they get engrossed in the 'fun stuff'!! This is not by any means the right way, just something that works for us, find what works for you but again I reiterate:

The wellbeing of your child is the most important

At the end of this event, your child will not remember how much reading and writing they did- they will remember their time with the family and the experiences you had.

As we navigate these new territories can I please acknowledge the work of our amazing teaching staff – Sarah, Laura and Hayley all have young families at home and definitely are in the same boat as many of you, trying to juggle how to parent and work and teach their own children, with connectivity and technology challenges as well – thank you ladies for embracing this challenge whole heartedly and for being willing to be learners alongside our students and their whānau.

TERM TWO NUTS AND BOLTS

Staffing:

We have a couple of staff changes this term in that with Rachael Walkinshaws' finish last term, Laura Mitchell will now be in Room 3, 4 days a week, Hayley Crump Hooten will continue teaching on Thursdays. Leanne Brown has also reduced her hours and so we have Rochelle Cleary in the office on Mondays (as soon as we open anyway!! 😊)

Property:

We recently had a Health and Safety Audit of our playground which highlighted a number of faults that saw our playground closed. Our BoT are keen to get these concerns rectified and see our playground opened for students. This work will be underway as soon as we are able to.

Another project that has been put on hold temporarily is the extension of the verandah outside the classrooms. This will provide some much needed shade and will extend our learning spaces considerably which will be a bonus all year round.

Kidscan:

We continue to remain grateful to have the support of Kidscan for our school community. Much of the food in the packs we distributed prior to lock down came from them and they continue to support us and our families even during the lockdown. As I continue to say, if you have any needs within your family please let me know – I may be able to help or may be able to put you in touch with someone else who can!

Contact details

All teachers are available via email and will respond to any messages as soon as they are able.

You can get hold of me, at kylie@arapohue.school.nz

or try the following:

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Ngā mihi

Kylie Piper