



ST THOMAS'S SCHOOL
KOHIMARAMA. AUCKLAND

Covid-19 Alert Level 3 Communication #2

Friday 14th August

Dear parents and caregivers,

As you will be aware the Prime Minister has announced that Auckland is going into Level 3 for another twelve days. Though we have all been through this before it is still disappointing and upsetting that once again teaching and learning is disrupted.

Staff have been reviewing and working on how they are going to deliver programmes to support our students until we all return onto the school site. See the information later in this communication for more information about this.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our staff for their professionalism in the lead up to the school closure and how they have worked online with their teams and students over the last few days. Like our parent community, staff are also dealing with their own issues such as children at home, partners losing their jobs, concerns around vulnerable members of their families and general anxiety around Covid-19.

To our whole community, stay safe, be kind and look after each other.

Michael Maher
Principal



Expectations around learning at home.

After our last lockdown we surveyed parents as to how St Thomas's School had met the needs of our community. Similar to Goldilocks (who found her bed either too hard, too soft or just right) our parents responses fell into similar bands. Some parents responded that their child had too much work, some parents felt they had just the right amount and some parents wanted more.

Though we will provide learning resources, my expectation is that each family or parent will decide what is in the best interest for their own family. Families know best about making decisions for their own households. We know that lots of our families are blended so children may be in different family 'bubbles' on different days.

Parents are working from home, sharing broadband, sharing spaces, looking after multiple children, tending to their businesses, shopping for parents, running their own homes and a multitude of other tasks. Please be realistic about what is achievable and what is stressful with regards to your child and their learning and your own wellbeing. Once your child is back in school our staff will work with them to ensure their learning is brought up to speed. Children all over the world are in the same space so do not panic.

Once again this is a learning curve for our staff as they work from home. We may not meet everyone's needs, we may not always get it right, but we are trying our best to ensure our programmes continue to the best of our ability.



What learning will look like in Years 1-4

Learning Task Sheet (Year 0-3) / Google Classroom (Year 4 only)

- Every Monday morning at 9.00am your child's classroom teacher will email you the Learning Task sheet for the week.
- The Learning Task sheet/ Google Classroom will cover a variety of Reading, Writing, Maths, Topic tasks. These tasks are set so your child should be able to do some of them independently and not require too much support from family members.
- The tasks are planned to engage your child and to cover most of the key curriculum areas.
- You may like to get you child a book, or a plastic sleeve where they can record their work that they have done each day.
- Teachers will not be marking these Learning Task sheets/Google Classroom but please feel free to share with your child's classroom teacher a piece of work that they have done and are proud of via email as I know their teacher would love to see it.
- The Learning Task sheet/Google Classroom can be completed on paper and/or using a device. It's up to you to decide the best form of media to use for this.
- The Learning Task Sheets/Google Classroom are optional for your child to complete so please don't feel pressured that your child has to complete everything on the Learning Task sheet/ Google Classroom each week. We understand and appreciate that many of our families have a lot of other pressures and work commitments to also attend to.



Connecting with your child's classroom teacher and class

Teachers will connect with their class via zoom (video conference) three times a week. During this time teachers will give students to opportunity to share some of their learning from the task sheet with the class, the teacher may read a book to the students, students may share something they have been doing at home over the Lockdown period etc. Your classroom teacher will email you to let you know what the three days are and what the three 40 minute times will be each week. Your child's teacher will email you an invite that you will need to open for these three sessions each week. Click on the link in the calendar invite and once you have opened it this will connect your child to the zoom conference.

- Year One: Monday, Wednesday and Friday
- Year Two: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
- Year Three: Monday, Wednesday and Friday
- Year Four: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday



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Teachers will be available via email to answer any questions that your child has to do with the Learning Task sheet/ Google Classroom from 9.00am-3.00pm Monday-Friday. Please feel free to email your child's teacher with any questions throughout the day but they will only be answering email's at these times as they will also be attending team meetings, staff meetings to via zoom as well as have their own families to support.

The above connecting sessions are optional so please do not feel pressured that your child needs to connect into these three times a week. Do what works for your own family.

What we need parents to do to make this learning happen

Check your email at 9.00am every Monday morning to upload the Learning Task Sheet/ Google Classroom for your child. This can be accessed through any device.

Email your child's classroom teacher at a time that suits you with any questions your child may have about a task and teachers will reply at some point between 9.00am-3.00pm.

Set up Zoom on your device: <https://zoom.us>

Make sure the device has access to a camera and a microphone.

Set your child up three times a week via zoom to connect with your child's class if possible.

A note on Zoom online video conferencing

Zoom is the platform we have selected to enable staff and students to connect with each other. We are aware that there has been mixed feedback around the use of Zoom and that some families may not be comfortable with their children using it. At this stage, we feel that Zoom is the best fit for our purpose. **To ensure the online safety of our staff and students, all Zoom conferences will be recorded by the teacher.** If you prefer that your child does not engage via Zoom, they will still be able to contact their teacher via email.

zoom





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What learning will look like in Years 5 - 8

Learning from home has already begun and you will have already received information from your Classroom Teachers about days and times for Zoom meetings and expectations for learning over the last 2 days.

Teaching teams will be in contact with their classes with learning instructions at the beginning of each week for the duration of Alert Level 3. Parents can find details of learning expectations for their child on our online learning portals as follows:

[Year 7&8 online learning portal](#)

[Year 6 online learning portal](#)

[Year 5 online learning portal](#)

Students in Years 5-8 will mostly be working on tasks set for them within Google Classroom. Details of task requirements are outlined on the online learning portals, and you can ask your child to show you through their Google Classroom at any time. **Teachers love to see parent comments within student work, so feel free to engage with your child's learning as frequently as you like.**

Any queries students or parents have about learning tasks can be sent directly to their teacher via Google Classroom or email. Teachers will be checking and responding to emails and Google Classroom queries regularly. As teachers have differing home situations (e.g. children/families of their own to care for, partners/children to share internet bandwidth with), response times may vary, but will be daily on normal school days between 9am and 3pm.

Each teacher will host a minimum of three online chat session via Zoom each week. Teachers will notify students of the time they are available for face-to-face Zoom chats.



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School Library Opening Hours

Under Alert Level 3, we will be opening our school library for families to visit in pre-booked time slots to borrow reading material.

The library will be open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 9am and 12pm. **You must pre-book an appointment via the process below to visit the library. Please do not just turn up. For health and safety reasons, families without bookings will not be able to enter the library.**

If you wish to visit the library, please book a time slot via the following link.

<https://www.schoolinterviews.co.nz/code?code=3xe6p>

The event code is: 3xe6p

During your visit you will have 15 minutes to choose your books and exit the library. Social distancing guidelines must be followed.

School Protocols

The remainder of this newsletter is only relevant to those who will be sending their child to school during Alert Level 3.

If you intend to send your child/children to school during Alert Level 3, you must complete this form by 12pm Sunday 16th August to enable us to prepare. [Link to Alert Level 3 Attendance Form.](#)

Attendance at School

- The school will only be open for students whose parents have completed the survey form informing us that their child will attend. No unplanned attendance allowed.
- School uniform must be worn.
- If a student cannot attend due to illness, then you must contact the school office before 9am on the morning of their absences.
- If your family situation changes and your child can work from home, then inform the school office and have your child study from home.



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Drop Off and Pick Up

- Students attending school must be dropped off at the main gate between 8.30am and 9am. Students should report to the front office to sign in. No parents on the school site please.
- During pick up and drop off we request that social distancing be observed by parents and students.
- Once school is over, students must immediately leave the school site and no loitering is allowed outside of school boundary.

School Operations

- At school learning will involve staff monitoring students to ensure they are completing their learning eg Year 1-3 Learning Task Sheets, Year 4 Google Classroom and Year 5-8 Online Learning Portal work.
- There will not be separate classroom programmes as teachers will still be providing an online teaching service to the majority of students. Most teachers and students will be working from home.
- Students must bring their own food and must not share food. There will be no lunch orders.
- Students must bring their own drink bottle.
- Students will be placed into a learning bubble of mixed ages.

Health and Safety

- All students must be kept at home if unwell. Please seek medical advice if you think your child requires Covid-19 testing.
- If your child presents with one or more of the following symptoms, then they must remain at home
 - High temperature
 - A cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Sore throat
 - Sneezing and runny nose
- If a student arrives at school sick, then they will be sent home. Parents or nominated primary caregivers must be available and contactable.
- Hand sanitiser will be available in learning spaces and in the bathrooms.

In summary, your child can only attend school (starting Monday 17th August) if:

- They are the children of essential workers and alternative arrangements for supervision at home cannot be made.
- They are not ill in any way.



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General information

Q. Will teachers send home new reading books to our child if the lockdown continues?

A. The library will be opened at scheduled times during the lockdown and parents must pre-book a visit time. For details on how to book, see the details earlier in this communication.

Q. Can my child access any of their personal belongings/ exercise books from school?

A. Parents are prohibited from entering the school site during the lockdown however if you contact school we may be able to access critical equipment for your child.

Q. My child is in Year 2 and has no laptop, will the school supply one?

A. No. We prefer that students in the juniors do not spend large amounts of time on devices and are better off with learning through play. Also, it is demanding on parents when juniors are on devices and require help.

Q. Student Led Conferences were supposed to have taken place, when will they happen?

A. These are postponed until the lock down is lifted and we expect them to take place two weeks after we return onto our school site.

Q. What if my child/ children cannot complete the learning that has been set by the teacher or can only do parts of it?

A. If your child is in Year 1 to 4 then email the teacher and let them know. If your child is in Year 5 to 8 they should be able to email their own teacher and explain what is happening for them.

Q. Can family members help my child/ children with the learning that has been set for them?

A. Yes, this is a lovely way to build relationships during this time (as long as it is done in a considerate way!)

Q. My child is feeling anxious can the school counsellor phone or email them?

A. No. Counselling by its nature requires the forming of a trusting relationship between the counsellor and the student (client) which is not possible with an email or call from someone the students does not know. If you feel your child needs support, please feel free to call Kidslife on 0800 54 37 54 which is for young people up to 18 years of age and is open 24/7.

Q. How much of the 'set learning' (Learning Task Sheet/ Portal/ Google Classroom) should my child be doing every day?

A. Teachers have set work that they believe is appropriate for your child and have some time suggestions attached to the work. However, each family will need to manage this in line with the complexities of their own family situation.



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Q. Will my child's learning deteriorate due to not being at school?

A. Childrens' learning always dips when they are away from school for a prolonged period of time such as the Christmas break or when families take their children overseas on holidays or to visit their homeland. This dip is natural and occurs throughout their schooling life, but in the longer scheme of their education makes little or no difference. Most of our students will go onto high school for 5 years, then University for another 3 to 5 years and then start their careers where they will continue to be life-long learners. They are going to be successful adults and this is but a bump on their learning journey.