



Friday 13 March 2020

Kia ora whanau,

**kei tau rangimārie ki ā koutou –
*peace be with you all***

We hope the term is going well for you all. We have some busy weeks ahead and we will do our best to keep you in touch. We will use our school Facebook page, eTap messages and our webpage to help you to stay informed of events.

Everyday Matters: Attendance at St Anne's School

Keeping children in education is vital for their success at school and later in life. The research tells us that the fewer days students are at school, the less chance they have of achieving. Missing school isn't just about missing learning, it's also about all the other opportunities that are missed – every day matters! For the sake of your child's learning and wellbeing you will be contacted if we see patterns of lateness or non attendance. The expectation is that your child will be at school every day unless you have contacted us. If you are intending to be away for a period of time – you need to let the classroom teacher know. We thank you for making your child's education a priority.

Staffing Changes:

It is with sadness we wish to inform you of Kerry Taylor's resignation. She has given our school 16 years of remarkable service and for that we are truly grateful. We would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her years of service and the dedication and excellence she has

provided to our students and our school to make it what we stand for today. We wish her well on her future endeavours and we hope that she gets to enjoy the time she deserves with her family. We are in the process of finding a replacement for this class and we will endeavour to let the community know as soon as this has been organised.

Road Safety

Thank you to all our students and whanau who are being proactive and remembering to leave school using the crossing to get across the road. You are fabulous role models and our school patrol students thank you.

Sport

I have heard many positive affirmations from the students playing summer sports. It is a big commitment for both our students and the amazing parent helpers and coaches to maintain the momentum for our teams. A huge thanks to all involved with this.

Swimming sports

Swimming was a lot of fun on Tuesday. Our junior demonstration was a great way to start the day and each and everyone of the students enjoyed their day.

A huge thank you to all who helped us to ensure our day was also a success. Swimming is one of those events where we need hands on deck and people are crucial, especially if you want to ensure that you can time

efficiently and properly. Your willingness to put your hands up to do the hard yards meant we could facilitate this properly.

We have had lots of lovely feedback about the day. We unfortunately had to miss a few things due to timing restraints but we did the very best with the time we had. We can definitely iron out things and aspects for our next competition in 2021. The children have all worked immensely hard to swim as well as they could and we congratulate all of them on their efforts. We look forward to seeing our top place swimmers head off to the interschool events. We will publish the children's results once we have finished making them their certificates.

**Ann-Maree Manson-Petherick
Principal**



Talking to children about COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

(Adapted from *A Parent Resource*. National Association of School Psychologists, 2020. <https://www.nasponline.org/>)

Help children cope with anxiety by providing accurate information

Children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events such as COVID-19. Parents, caregivers, whānau and teachers will have a particularly important part to play in reassuring children at this time.

Children will react to and follow your verbal and non-verbal cues. If you are able to stay informed and realistic, it will be easier for you to reassure children effectively as well.

Children need factual, age-appropriate information about COVID-19 so that they can also feel informed and in control. They need to know how they can play a part in avoiding infection and the spread of virus. They also need to feel that any fears that they may have can be talked about and addressed.

Reassure your children

- If no one in your family has COVID-19 nor has had close contact with anyone with COVID-19, emphasise to your children that they and your family are fine.
- Remind them that the right people are working hard to keep New Zealanders safe, including the adults at the children's school or early learning service.
- Let your children talk about their feelings, and help reframe their concerns into the appropriate perspective.
- You know your children best. If they have a lot of questions, consider how much extra information would or wouldn't be helpful for them to know before replying.

Tips – if your child is anxious

- Try offering children simple choices to help give them a feeling of being in control. Would they like to use the red towel or the white towel to dry their hands? Spend some time together - would they like to do a puzzle or listen while you read a story? Make sure that you choose options that are both acceptable for you, so there is no chance of getting into a power struggle.
- Help them do some deep breathing exercises. (This works for adults too.) Gently hold their thumb with your hand, have them breathe slowly in and out, and count out loud, "1". Move your hand to hold their pointer finger, have them breathe slowly in and out, and count "2". Move to your hand to hold their middle finger, have them breathe slowly in and out, and count "3", and so on. You can move across just one hand and count to "5", or both hands to count to "10". Can they do it for you? Can they learn to do it for themselves – many children are now practicing mindfulness exercises at school? Can they lie on the floor with their hand on their tummy and feel their breathe move in and out? You can ask your child if there are any other strategies that they know and use.
- Sparklers has a range of calming activities you could try <https://sparklers.org.nz/>

Make yourself available

- Children may need extra attention from you, and may want to talk about their concerns, fears, and questions. Make time for them.
- Tell them you love them, and give them plenty of affection.

Be patient; children and youth do not always talk about their concerns readily. Watch for clues that they may want to talk, such as hovering around while you do the dishes or work. It is very typical for younger children to ask a few questions, return to playing, then come back to ask more questions. Often they will ask the same questions again and again as they try to make sense of things – keep your answers simple, truthful and age appropriate. Children will be reassured by your consistent responses.

When sharing information, provide facts calmly, remind children that adults are working to address this concern, and give children actions they can take to protect themselves.

Maintain a normal routine

- Keep to a regular, predictable schedule to help show your child that their daily routines are in control and will continue as normal.
- Encourage your children to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities, but don't push them if they seem overwhelmed.

Avoid blaming others

- Explain that sometimes people blame others for events they cannot control, but that this is not correct behaviour.
- Avoid stereotyping any one group of people as responsible for the virus.
- Report any bullying or negative comments you are aware of at your children's school or early learning service.
- Be aware of the influence that other adults with different attitudes on COVID-19 have on your children. You may have to explain to them that some people have different values from the ones that you and your children will follow.

Monitor social media and TV

- Limit your children's television viewing, Internet access and social media involvement. Try to avoid watching or listening to information that might be upsetting when your children are present.
- Let your child know that a lot of COVID-19 information on the Internet may be based on rumours and inaccurate information.

Review and model basic hygiene and healthy lifestyle practices

- Talk about what you and your children what they can do to help prevent infection.
- Wash hands multiple times a day for at least 20 seconds each time (singing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star slowly takes about 20 seconds) and dry hands thoroughly.
- Cover their mouths with a tissue when they sneeze or cough, and throw away the tissue immediately; or have them sneeze or cough into the bend of their elbow.
- Do not share food or drinks.
- Practice giving fist or elbow bumps instead of handshakes. Fewer germs are spread this way.
- Discourage the child from touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Encourage your child to eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly to develop a strong immune system for fighting off illness.
- Discuss the new rules or practices at the child's school or early learning service.
- Keep in contact with your child's school or service and let them know if there have been any changes within your family.

What to emphasize when talking to children about school

- Adults at school are taking care of your health and safety.
- Not many people have the COVID-19, and most of those who do will not get very unwell.
- Teachers are being especially careful to make sure that as few people as possible get sick.
- Children and students need to treat each other with respect and not jump to conclusions about who may or may not have COVID-19.
- There are things you can do to stay healthy and avoid spreading the disease, including covering your cough or sneezing into your elbow or a tissue, then throwing the tissue in the trash.
- Wash hands often with soap and water (20 seconds) and dry them thoroughly.