

5 May 2020

Tena koutou

I hope you're well, and that the latest furious drenching isn't drowning your spirits. I have a new small leak in my office, actually, just above the heat pump, so we may need to do some investigation. The business manager took one look and sighed deeply. "It's okay" I told him. "Take a deep breath and learn to love the rain". I don't think he particularly appreciated the sentiment.

As you will know, we had good news again today: there have been no new COVID-19 cases for the second day running. This doesn't mean we are clear of the illness of course, and I hope that everyone in our community follows the rules closely while we are still at Level 3, but it's certainly very promising. If we manage to keep this going, we are hopefully in a good position to move into Level 2 next week.

I'd like to give you an idea of how decisions will be made this week, and what this may mean for the next two weeks.

1. We are expecting to be told on Thursday this week what "Level 2" will look like in schools. We haven't been given any guidance yet, so we don't know for certain what the restrictions will be. But we think we can have **everyone** in school safely (and have our plans in place), and we are hoping that we will be able to do that.
2. On Friday, I am hoping to be able to let all parents know what "Level 2" will look like at Pinehurst School.
3. On Monday, the Government will tell us if and when we are moving into Level 2. We will write to parents that same evening.

It's now more than 6 weeks since we went into lockdown, which means we have had online learning for almost four weeks. I'm going to thank our teachers again for all of their fantastic, committed work to keep our young people engaged and involved. And I want to say a huge "well done" to our students as well. I know how hard these few weeks have been for everyone, and for our young people in particular. My own daughters, who are 17 and 19, are finding it difficult, and they both had moments on Sunday when everything seemed to mount up and overwhelm them. But I am immensely proud of them, and of the resilience and strength they have shown; and I am very proud of all of our Pinehurst students too. For their commitment and resilience above all. And I know that you will be feeling the same about your children, especially those who are perhaps struggling a little at the moment. It takes courage to face things that we find hard, and to work hard to overcome them. So well done!

Can you tell that I'm missing our students? They are in all of our thoughts, and we can't wait to get them back in school. Please, if you have any worries that you need to talk through with us, just get in touch. Our academic and pastoral teams in both College and Primary are ready to help, and I know we are getting in touch directly with students and parents where we have concerns.

On that, we have 52 students in school today, and this number has been fairly consistent. The children are working hard and having fun - and we're loving having them back in school. We have posted a short video featuring our students run on our Facebook page that you might enjoy. It's also on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t70ag2qBNo8&feature=youtu.be>

For our 950 students who are at home, though, please encourage them to keep working hard, keep playing hard and keep connecting with each other. When they come back to school, it will feel a little different, but it will still be Pinehurst, and we are currently working on plans for sports, music and other school activities inside school and within our community. In the meantime, enjoy the online programme, ask every question under the sun, and let us know what else we can do to support your child's learning.

Nga mihi
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