



Newsletter

COVID-19

9 April 2020

www.stheliers.school.nz

Dear Parents

I hope all school families are well and that you and your children are enjoying the school holidays, although under quite different circumstances.

Today's newsletter includes comments about preparation for the beginning of Term 2 and some specific aspects of the COVID-19 lockdown as they apply to schools.

The preface to this newsletter and my overriding comment is that focussing on family life and well-being is paramount during this time, particularly as we are only at the mid-point of the lockdown and as we head toward Term 2.

The first section of this newsletter needs to be read with the knowledge that we are in unheralded and uncertain territory, therefore each family will adapt to what is best for their family situation.

Some parents may be worried how they will 'teach' their child/children during the lockdown and that their child's learning may be compromised by not being at school.

Firstly, no one is expecting parents to be the teacher. Your role is to support your child with the learning activities and opportunities that the teachers will be providing to the children through distance connections. What works for you is good enough.

Secondly, your child's learning will not suffer from the lockdown. We need to put the lockdown in perspective in terms of time. All the children have years of schooling in front of them, so this time away from school is not significant enough to cause unnecessary worry. There are far bigger issues at stake during this unprecedented period. The children will have already learnt so much about life because of how our daily lives have changed.

When Term 2 starts next week, we are all in circumstances like none we have experienced before and teachers will be working with their classes in different ways than they usually would. Please understand that teachers will be doing their very best to support the children and if you need to contact teachers, ensure all communication is positive and respectful.

Timetable and Routines

We all understand the importance of routine for our families. Routines have been shaken up, so now in preparation for the start of Term 2 (Wednesday 15 April), we think about what a typical day might look like. Please do not try to replicate a typical school day - it is simply not possible because of all the other activities, parent work and other commitments that will be going on at home.

Routines are reassuring, and promote health and physical wellbeing. The below timetable, targeted at children, is the model promoted by the Ministry of Education and could be something your household adapts as best fits your situation, circumstances and age of child/children. Many of the suggestions are obvious and common sense, but it is good to reinforce the importance of simple, basic routines.

Before 9:00	Wake up	Eat breakfast, make your bed, get dressed, complete simple chores.
9:00 - 10:00	Morning walk	Family walk or bike ride. Yoga or some form of indoor exercise if raining.
10:00 - 11:00	Learning at home	School-led learning.
11:00 - 12:00	Creative time	Lego, drawing, crafting, play music, cook or bake.
12:00 - 12:30	Lunch	
12:30 - 1:00	Helping at home	Cleaning the kitchen after lunch. Tidying specific areas of the home. Fold washing. Take out rubbish.
1.00 - 1.30	Quiet time	Reading, puzzles, nap.
1.30 - 3.00	Learning at home	School-led learning.
3.00 - 4.00	Quiet time	Reading, puzzles, radio NZ stories.
4:00 - 5:00	Afternoon fresh air	Bikes, walk, play outside.
5:00 - 6:00	Dinner	
6:00 - 8:00	Free time	Showers. TV, family board games.
8:00 - 9:00	Bedtime	

Teachers' availability to children

Just like school days, teachers will be available to respond to requests for help and support during the hours from 9am until 3pm but, please be aware, they may not be able to reply immediately. Teachers will endeavour to respond as soon as practical.

How teachers will communicate

Teachers will communicate through emails, communication apps and online platforms depending on the age and year level of the children. Individual teachers will let you know which method or combination of methods they will use.

How often will teachers be setting learning activities

Most teaching teams will be sending learning activities once a week with teachers communicating regularly with the children during the week.

Completion of learning activities

Teachers will not be stipulating maximum or minimum work to be completed nor setting deadlines for work to be completed. We want children to be engaged in their learning activities during the time you set aside for learning at home but, at the same time, we understand and realise that every family's home

situation and circumstances will be different and so you adapt as necessary. To repeat what I said in the introduction, 'what works for you is good enough'.

Well-being

There will be adults and children in our community who are worried and anxious about work, health and family. The following are a few resources that may be helpful to you for a particular reason as well as some very good tips for us all:

- The Ministry of Health's website includes [Top ways to look after your mental wellbeing](#) during the Covid-19 lockdown.
- <https://depression.org.nz/covid-19/> - a website by the Health Promotion Agency to help New Zealanders recognise and understand depression and anxiety.
- [25 Mental Health Wellness Tips during Quarantine from Eileen M Feliciano, Psy.D.](#) Although overseas-based, this is a good list and highlights some things particularly important for children. Remember the rules of New Zealand's level 4 lockdown still apply.

IT issues

In the event that you are experiencing IT problems with school-related technology over the lockdown period (e.g., your child has forgotten their password; they cannot access Google classroom or their class blog) please contact us via email: itsupport@stheliers.school.nz. While we cannot physically assist, we may be able to fix issues remotely. Please note that this service is available for St Heliers School related IT issues only.

Ruth Hill, Resource Manager & IT Support

Childcare options for essential workers

If you are in the category of an essential worker and have not been able use your existing networks for in-home care, for example a neighbour, relative, friend or current carer/nanny who can come to your house or provide childcare in their own home (providing Public Health rules are observed) the Government is able to support you. The Government has a range of national home-based providers, with some offering care for children aged 0-14, and others aged 5-14. Please visit their website for more details;

[Home-based care options for children aged 0-14 of essential workers.](#)

Internet safety

Please discuss internet safety with your children of all ages. For expert advice, visit the links below to Netsafe. Netsafe is a New Zealand non-profit online safety organisation who partner with the NZ Police, Ministry of Education and other such organisations. They have [information for parents and caregivers](#) and have pulled together their [top tips for online safety during the lockdown](#).

School grounds closed

All school grounds and playgrounds are closed during the lockdown. If you are walking past the school and see people on the grounds or using the playgrounds, I would appreciate you reminding them politely that they are closed.

Finally, from me, if there are any families who are finding things particularly tough at the moment and think that the school may be able to help in some way, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are a community and we want to be able to support those who need extra support at this time. All contact of this nature will be confidential. As we are reminded often, we are all in this together and will come through this, so look out for one and other and be kind to yourself.

Kind regards



Principal