



ST PETER'S COLLEGE
PALMERSTON NORTH, NEW ZEALAND

A Message from the School Counsellor re COVID-19

Dear Parents

We hear on the media daily that these times are unprecedented and filled with uncertainty with social isolating, distancing, events cancelled and other places closing for the time being including schools. As adults, how do we manage this way of living and what meaning do we give to it at this time?

Amongst all this, we need to be mindful that our children may be just as scared, worried or anxious of the future as we may be right now. Our children not only can hear everything that is going on around them, but they feel our constant tension and anxiety. They have never experienced anything like this before. Although the idea of being off school for weeks sounds awesome, they are probably picturing a fun time like holidays, not the reality of being isolated at home and not seeing their friends.

Over the coming weeks, you may see an increase in behavior with your children. Whether it is anxiety, anger or protest that they cannot do things normally. You may see more meltdowns, arguments and worried thoughts. This is normal and expected under these circumstances.

What our young people need right now is to feel comforted and loved. To feel like it is all going to be okay. You may have to let your schedules go to support your children by talking with them about what they are thinking and how they may be dealing with what they are hearing, perhaps also by playing board games, watching movies, seeking virtual trips, maybe doing a science experiment together, painting or baking. Or even snuggling under a warm blanket and do nothing or just taking time to take a deep breath, slow down and have a "check in" with each other.

As our young people feel more isolated from their friends and peers it will be natural for them to seek the connection via social media. It may be important for you as parents to set some ground rules around the length of time that is spent using social media and it is okay for you to become aware of whom your child is speaking to as a safety measure.

Don't worry about them regressing in school. Everyone is in the same boat and they all will be okay. When we are back in the classroom, we will re-evaluate where each individual student is at with their learning and catch everyone up if required. Teachers are experts at this! Try not to argue with your child because they do not want to do schoolwork! Just gently encourage.

If you can be left with one thing, it is this: at the end of all of this, your children's mental health will be more important than their academic skills and how they felt during this time will stay with them long after the memory of what they did during those weeks has gone. So keep that in mind, every single day.

Remember we are all in the same place as Covid-19 places stress on us all in different ways, as we struggle with being mindful of not being able to continue our normal way of living. For all of us we need to make sure to tell our children that we love them and the world and their lives will be okay.

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If you are worried that your child is emotionally at risk you are able to make contact with our mental services which are continuing to operate their Crisis Acute Team:-

Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Crisis Team	0800653 357
Young People can text 24 hours/7 days with their concerns	1737 (Text Only)
Youthline	0800376633

Our St Peter's Counsellor can also be contacted via the normal process of email.

If you are worried about symptoms of Covid 19, you are able to contact

NZ Covid-19 Healthline	08003585453
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Take care, keep safe and be kind

Chris Edwards
Counsellor