

Inspiring a love of learning through an education that values the development of the whole child

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Kia ora koutou

News from the Ministry of Education

Yesterday the Ministry launched *Learning from home* and *Ki te Ao Mārama*, two new websites to support teachers, learners, parents and whānau so that learning for children and young people can continue.

The websites include resources for parents and whānau, teachers and leaders. Resources span the learning pathway from early learning through to senior secondary and more resources will be added as they're developed.

The information and resources are available at <https://www.learningfromhome.govt.nz/> and <https://www.kauwhatareo.govt.nz/ki-te-ao-marama/>

More resources will be added as they're developed. Hard copy packs are being prepared for learners and whānau who don't have connectivity at home.

Over the next two to three weeks we will be working on next steps to support distance learning where it is most needed and as part of contingency planning in case the 4 week period is further extended.

We are working to establish online learning and distance learning options to support all children's ongoing learning. These will be made available by the end of the school holidays.

Children with Special Needs

Ministry staff will be available to ring and Skype with families who require assistance with children who have special needs.

Further information from the Ministry

If you need to have your child cared for by someone else you will need to identify that person or people as part of your self-isolated group. This will need to be done by midnight Wednesday and the group must remain the same for the whole 4 week period. The caregiver's own group (e.g., their partner and children), your child and your own group (e.g. your parents and other children) become one group. This group needs to be limited to minimise any risk of spread and should be no more than 20 people.

Your child will be looking to you for guidance about this decision. Parents, caregivers, whānau and teachers will have a particularly important part to play in reassuring children at this time. If you haven't already done so, you may wish to read the information put together by the Ministry of Education to support your conversations with your children – [Talking to children about COVID-19](#).

As noted by the Prime Minister these restrictions are our best chance to slow the virus in New Zealand and to save lives. We all have a clear role here to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Holidays - Holidays will now start on Monday 30 March and end on Tuesday 14 April (Easter Tuesday.) After that, at home learning will resume.

Message from Matua Clifford: Knowing what matters most

We will be providing resources and ideas for continued learning over the forthcoming time of existing in “alert 4”. However, your child’s wellbeing is paramount at the moment. We are confident that any learning gaps that may result from this situation will soon be rectified. The brain learns best when there is calm, security and familiarity – therefore your home can be an ideal place for learning to continue. We will be supplying resources through the school. We also trust you to determine what your child needs and sometimes their needs may be best met through

- Sitting with you and listening to a story
- Baking a cake together
- Kicking a football outside in the back yard
- Playing a board game
- Having a fashion show
- Watching a family movie together
- Writing letters or emails to their friends
- Going for a walk
- Painting, sewing or constructing

Do not get hung up on “keeping up” at the expense of your child’s happiness. Our resources and those of the Ministry are being supplied to support you and your family, and provide the means for ongoing learning. They are not tasks that *must* be completed before your tamariki return. The work supplied will be purposeful and related to the curriculum, however if you just need some work to “keep them busy” (and keep you sane), then use it for that! The teachers are keen to keep in contact and be helpful in whatever way possible. In our view, remaining part of a class and a community is most important and we will be finding ways this can be fostered from a distance.

Otari School buildings might be closed and the playground empty, but our community remains. Onsite or offsite, we will stay connected and look forward to the time when we can resume classrooms full of kids, the buzz of busy learners, a playground of laughter and fun, of running, climbing trees and kicking balls, where “physical distance” is a term reserved for sports events and we resume, without due thought, crowded Monday morning hui and whole school waiata, shared morning teas and gardening together and most of all those oh so necessary high fives, back pats and hugs! Until then – stay safe.

Check out this website for free reading - <https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>

Ngā mihi
Clifford