



St Mark's

20 March 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers

The recent focus on communications from the Ministry of Education in response to COVID-19 is centered around providing ongoing Pastoral Care and continuity of learning to students and families during the time of potential school closures. I would like to thank our PYP Coordinator, **Mrs Angelee Jarrett**, and IT Coordinator, **Mr Milan Mrdalj**, for all their work and preparation with staff and management over the last few weeks with St Mark's preparations for distance learning, or remote learning some of you may have heard it called.

Staff have been working very hard to prepare learning engagements for our children in a distance learning environment should a potential school closure eventuate. Some resources have already been sent home including library books, readers and Journals for independent reading.

The wellbeing of our students is always of the highest importance to us at St Mark's. In the case of Distance Learning, we will continue to monitor pastoral care and wellbeing and encourage parents to contact us via our normal channels outlined in the Pastoral Care tree, if matters arise. The team can be contacted in normal school hours via email and will respond to parents within 24 hours.

Listed below are some helpful tips for parents to support the wellbeing of their children, if school closures should eventuate:

- Create regular routines for children
- Continue to wake and go to sleep at the normal times
- Dressing in the morning
- Eating healthily
- Daily exercise
- Time outdoors
- Set regular times for school learning
- Check in with teachers as part of the daily routine
- Support children to maintain a balance of time on screen and time off

In addition, our aim is to continue to offer a programme of learning that aligns with what children would experience if they were at school. We know it will be impossible to replicate a school day using online tools, however, we have designed a continuity of learning plan that outlines our commitment to delivering high-quality, education to all children at St Mark's. Seesaw, Google Classroom and/or Google Hangouts/Meet will be used as tools to communicate with students during online learning sessions.

Parents can expect the following in alignment with our continuity of learning plan:

- Teachers will be providing tasks for students in line with their current programmes.
- Homeroom teachers will post a message/s to students to begin each day by 9:00am with the outline for the day.
- Teachers will provide feedback for learning using digital tools.
- Subject specialist teachers will post learning engagements once weekly on their scheduled day for the year level(s).
- The resources shared are designed for independent learning. If students are finding tasks too challenging, parents are encouraged to contact the teacher.
- Platforms for online learning opportunities will include Seesaw, Google Classroom and Google Hangouts/Meet.
- Parents should ensure they are able to access Seesaw.

Parents can also expect to have access to a Parent Reference Guide Google Site where tools and tips for Distance Learning will be curated by our Senior Management Team. The link to the site will be sent via email to parents in the event of school closure.

Please contact Mrs Angelee Jarrett at angelee.jarrett@st-marks.school.nz should you have any queries in regards to our distance learning programme.

Rules on gatherings do not apply to schools

You may have seen yesterday that the Government has announced that indoor gatherings of more than 100 people are to be cancelled. This does not apply to schools, early learning services, tertiary providers, workplaces, supermarkets or public transport. The Ministry of Education will continue to provide us with guidance around events and gatherings that could be relevant to schools.

Sick children at school

We continue to ask families that if your child is feeling unwell or displaying signs of a virus or illness, such as coughing, sneezing, or has a sore throat or temperature, that you keep your child home and contact your GP or Healthline.

In the event that your child vomits or has diarrhea, please ensure that they remain at home for 48 hours (if they are in the Preschool) and 24 hours (if they are in the Main school) after their last incidence of either.

We ask that you inform us if they have a sickness bug or a specific illness, so we can support families at home and assist us in keeping illness away from St Mark's.

Please ensure that we have up-to-date contact details for your emergency caregivers in the case that your child is ill and we are unable to contact you. If you are not sure please contact our School Administrator, Mrs Persephone Georgikasis, at Reception.

We ask that if any members of your household or your child have any future travel plans overseas, that you please notify us of the dates and the destinations at erica.harvison@st-marks.school.nz. Your emails will be handled confidentially. We also ask that you keep us informed if you, or any member of your household, self-isolates.

The diagram below was sent to me by the Secretary for Education in New Zealand, **Iona Holstead** and has been developed by leading New Zealand Microbiologist **Dr Siouxsie Wiles** to assist parents when considering symptoms. What it tells us is:

- A dry cough and a high temperature are common to both flu and COVID-19
- Sneezing is not a symptom of COVID-19, however if someone has COVID-19, then sneezing can spread droplets containing the virus

SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19, FLU AND COLD

	DRY COUGH	FEVER	RUNNY NOSE	SORE THROAT	BREATH-LESSNESS	HEADACHE	BODY ACHES	SNEEZE	FATIGUE	DIARRHOEA
COVID -19										
FLU										
COLD										

FREQUENTLY SOMETIMES LITTLE RARE NOT

@SIOUXSIEW @XTOTL thespinoff.co.nz

SOURCE: WHO, CDC CC-BY-SA

For the most recent updates on COVID-19 please click on the links to the [Ministry of Health](#) and [World Health Organisation](#) websites.

If you are concerned about your own or your child/ren's health, then please contact Healthline on 0800 358 5453 or consult your GP.

Remember these key acts to assist us in keeping the virus at bay:

- wash your hands regularly with soap for 30 seconds
- do not touch your face
- cover your cough or sneezes
- no hugging, handshakes, high fives – nothing – elbow touches only.
- plenty of time outside in the sunshine

Stay well everyone this weekend. We are here to help should you need us and we fully expect to be back at St Mark's on Monday.

Yours sincerely

Kent Favel
Principal