



TĒNĀ KOUTOU KATOĀ,

*Nga mihi o te ra (Greetings of the day)*

Good morning on this beautiful autumn day, but also a wonderful day because it marks the return of almost all our students to Gordonton School to resume on-site learning.

Staff were waiting at the gate with hand sanitiser and a warm welcome for our students. Friends who hadn't seen each other in 8 weeks, other than on a screen, were excited to see one another and share lockdown stories - all the while maintaining a social distance. There was no anxiety at the gate as the students entered the school. Great job by our school parents on minimising any fears they might have held.



By 10am the school had settled and learning was back into swing. Mrs Rogers and I went through the classes and it was smiles and 'thumbs-up' all around. It feels really good to be back. I was surprised at how much they have all grown while they've been locked away!



Rooms 12 (right) and 4 practising social distancing in the classroom.

### *Manaakitanga - Kindness, care and respect*

We are reminding all our students to practice social distancing, practice hand-washing and sanitising, wipe down surfaces and to take their time while we form new school habits. Reminder, if your child is unwell for any reason keep them at home safe and well.

### *Awhina - Supporting others to be the best they can be*

We are giving our older learners (tuakana) the responsibility to look after and watch over our younger learners (teina). Already I'm seeing great examples around the school of student leadership in this. Staff were out at the gate this morning and will be a fixture there at the beginning and end of school days making sure there are familiar faces to greet and say goodbye.

### *Ngakau Pono - Doing the right thing*

Going around our classes today the students were able to describe and explain our hygiene messages and practices - the staff have already done a great job getting these messages embedded and we will maintain the messaging and practice so that it quickly becomes our normal. Well done to all the students for their confidence and resolve.

### *Ako - Quality teaching and learning*

School is about the business of teaching and learning. While we navigated a health crisis we avoided an education crisis by quickly adapting our learning models to accommodate distance learning. Firstly, thank you to the students. Your digital literacy and ability made it easier for you to adapt to a new learning model. Thank you to parents for stepping into the role of teacher, coach and encourager for your children in their learning. Thank you to our wonderful teachers and learning assistants, who jumped on a very steep learning curve and worked tirelessly to provide learning experiences for our tamariki. I am very proud of what we have achieved as a school and how our community has responded. My thanks to you all.



Our staff are meeting after school today to start exploring what the 'new' normal is going to look like at our school. Examining what we can take from this experience and use to improve learning outcomes for our students.

While lockdown has been difficult it has been rich with opportunities to learn new ways of doing things. To ignore those opportunities would be irresponsible. I watched and shared an interesting clip from Sir Ken Robinson - a world renowned educator - who talks about what the ideas moving forward could look like. As a rural dairying community we understand the rationale he uses. I have included a link to the clip here. It's well worth the 15 mins to watch it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=QU4Q17t4muY>

### **From the Board of Trustees:**

*The Board would like to extend a warm welcome back to our school community.*

*We are again navigating new territory with our children re-entering school under new safety measures! With these new procedures in place we continue to appreciate all the support you give the children and staff so that we can keep our community safe.*

*The Board would like to extend a huge thank you to all our staff for the dramatic change in the format of learning that occurred over lockdown. We acknowledge that many of your homes unexpectedly turned into classrooms with our children being privy to this. The feedback we have received around home learning has only been positive and so to the school staff we are truly grateful.*

*We wish everyone a safe and happy return to school and a long but productive Term 2!*

*From Shona and the Board*

### **Assembly this Friday**

We are hopeful of holding an assembly this Friday in line with the Ministry of Education's guidelines where students sit appropriately apart. This will use all our hall space but it is an important celebration of our first week back. Sadly parents are excluded but we are looking at ways to effectively and safely live stream this assembly. Once we do, on Friday morning we will share the online link with you via Seesaw so you can join us virtually.

### **School Sports**

We are still waiting to hear back from all of the governing bodies on what this winter season of school sport will look like. Once we do we will be in touch with you all to update you. Clearly we will be looking at a reduced season. We are already ¼ way through a normal season so I expect some competition modifications and restrictions on supporter attendance will be imposed. Once I know more I will share the information with you.

That's about it for Day 1 post Covid-19.

*Heoi anō tāku mō nāianeī (That's all for now).*

*Keith O'Donnell, Principal*

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