



**Te Kura Tuarua o Tūranga Wāhine
Gisborne Girls' High School**

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Kia ora koutou

Well it has been a very busy couple of days. We have issued learning packs to all our junior students, including deliveries to many around town, and provided work and chromebooks for senior students as needed.

Our school is now closed - no one is allowed on the site from today until Level Four is lifted.

School holidays have been brought forward to start from next Monday 30th March until Tuesday 14th April. That means that both our students and teachers should take a break and just settle in to our new situation. Once the new term arrives we will keep you informed as to what the learning will look like at each level.

Finally, here is a message shared with us that we thought we would pass on. It talks about 'children' but our teens will also be hugely affected by this situation and so the information is relevant. These are unprecedented times and how we respond will have lasting impacts on our young people.

"Dear parents with school aged children

School is closed and at this time you might be inclined to create a minute by minute schedule for your kids. You have high hopes of hours of learning, including online activities, science experiments, and book reports. You'll limit technology until everything is done! But here's the thing...

Our kids are just as concerned as we are right now. Our kids not only can hear everything that is going on around them, but they feel our tension and anxiety. They have never experienced anything like this before. Although the idea of being off of school for weeks sounds awesome, they are probably picturing a fun time like summer break, not the reality of being trapped at home and not seeing their friends.

Over the coming weeks, you will see an increase in behaviour issues with your kids. Whether it's anxiety, or anger, or protest that they can't do things normally - it will happen. You'll see more meltdowns, tantrums, and oppositional behaviour in the coming weeks. This is normal and expected under these circumstances.

What kids need right now is to feel comforted and loved. To feel like it's all going to be ok. And that might mean that you tear up your perfect schedule and love on your kids a bit more. Play outside and go on walks. Bake cookies and paint pictures. Play board games and watch movies. Do a science experiment together or find virtual field trips of the zoo. Start a book and read together as a family. Snuggle under warm blankets and do nothing.

Don't worry about them regressing in school. Every single kid is in this boat and they all will be ok. When we are back in the classroom, we will all course correct and meet them where they are. Teachers are experts at this! Don't pick fights with your kids because they don't want to do maths. Don't scream at your kids for not following the schedule. Don't mandate 2 hours of learning time if they are resisting it.

If I can leave you with one thing, it's this: at the end of all of this, your kids' 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 is long gone. So keep that in mind, every single day..."

Look after yourselves and those you are sharing your bubble with. May any forced downtime bring you much rest, relaxation and quality time with your loved ones. A special shout out to those in essential services who will continue to work through these challenging times. Your contribution is MASSIVE and appreciated by us all.

Let's give this COVID 19 nowhere to go but extinction so life can somehow get back to normal!

All the very best to our students and their whanau - please follow the rules and STAY IN YOUR BUBBLE.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan Kumar', written in a cursive style.

Jan Kumar
Principal