

**14<sup>th</sup> April, 2020**

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

I hope this email finds you and your family safe and well. If you are an essential worker our staff and students would like to say thank you.

Tomorrow a very different school term begins. It is new experience for all of us! The teaching staff have worked hard during the holiday break to further develop the online resources and plans that we were putting in place when we were suddenly put into lockdown. All staff have already created google classrooms, invited students to join them and posted lessons in preparation for tomorrow's return to term 2.

The purpose of this email is to provide you with information so you know what your son's education will look like in the next few weeks. It will also help you to have a conversation with your son about what you and St Bernard's expect of him during this time. We do not want you or your son to be distressed about online learning and ask you to get in contact if this is the case.

Some Key points:

Learning:

- Your son will be following his normal school timetable. This week starts as week A and next will be week B and so on. This means that your son's normal teacher will be online and available to help your son in his google classroom according to his 'normal' timetable. So school starts at 8.40am tomorrow.
- We encourage your son to log on (especially in the next week) to all of his timetabled classes at the assigned time so that teachers are able to check he is engaging with the learning provided. If he has not logged on over the next few days either his Dean or his Tutor teacher will be in contact with you to find out if there is an issue.
- We have asked teachers to provide succinct learning instructions and activities, and to be mindful that they do not overload a period.
- We are aware that many of you are trying to manage many people wanting access to limited devices—often at the same time. It is okay if your son finishes the work set for him before the end of a period. He might also be doing the 'set work' or tasks at other times other than his timetabled period. It is also likely that as time goes on on-line learning might "look different" for different subjects and different year levels. As this continues to develop expectations/tasks will continue to be relayed through your son's google classroom by your son's classroom teacher.

NCEA:

- There is considerable effort being made by NZQA to ensure that this year's cohort of students should not be disadvantaged by this crisis. Specific details are not being released – likely because the timeframes of the current lockdown are as yet unknown.
- NZQA are in the process of finalizing rules on specific assessments. We expect to receive that advice within the next day or so. At this point some NCEA assessments will be able to be carried out on-line and specific detail will be provided to those students by HODs and classroom teachers. The College already has robust systems for ensuring the authenticity of student work.

#### Pastoral/On-line safety:

- If you are at all concerned over your son's wellbeing please do not hesitate to contact Liz Thomson Deputy Principal (Pastoral Care) [ethomson@sbc.school.nz](mailto:ethomson@sbc.school.nz) or your son's Tutor teacher or Dean in the first instance.
- During this time, we expect our students to be kind and respectful to each other when they are on-line. We will have zero tolerance for online meanness or on-line behaviours that cause disruption to others' learning or their wellbeing. Please be in contact with us should your son be treated unkindly online.
- If students do engage in disruptive, harmful or disrespectful behaviours on-line, we will be in contact with their parents and we may choose to remove that student from our online learning environment.
- The Ministry of Education along with N4L and Netsafe have provided a tool to help ensure all our students are safe online. Please find attached the relevant information but note that our college is not delivering this tool so any technical issues with its use should be directed to N4L – there is a good FAQ section and external support if required.

#### Learning Support:

- We are concerned about students who may find online learning challenging because they are still developing strong reading and writing skills. With google classroom comes a tool called READ&WRITE. It will read text and write text for students, and do many other amazing things. It is a Google Chrome extension and when installed is the purple jigsaw puzzle piece at the end of the google search bar in google **Chrome**. If it is not there, you will need to install it. If you would like to learn more, email Liz Thomson and she will send you further information.
- Here is an online video about the programme; it is nine minutes long. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhUXXBrXW0c> St Bernard's has paid for this tool so it is free to our students as long as they install it using their school username and password.
- Mrs Sue Johnson (the College SENCO) is also able to be contacted [sjohnson@sbc.school.nz](mailto:sjohnson@sbc.school.nz) should you require further general advice or support to assist your son's learning.

We know this is a considerable amount of information and do not intend to overwhelm you. Please do not hesitate to contact Liz Thomson Deputy Principal (Pastoral Care) or myself by email if you have any questions or need clarification on anything.

Kind Regards,

Simon Stack  
Principal

Liz Thomson  
Deputy Principal (Pastoral Care)