

Newsletter



MOUNT ROSKILL
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

May 8, 2020: Week 4, Term 2

From the Principal



Kia ora koutou katoa.

Thank you to everyone who has continued to support our students with their learning during this extended time away from the school site. We are very pleased with the progress students are making.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister advised that in Alert Level 2 schools are safe environments for young people and staff. The time to return safely to learning on site is approaching – a moment we have been waiting for since locking the final doors back in March. When we are able to, we will be ready to welcome all students and staff back to our school site.

As we return to school, using devices such as laptops and chrome books will be one of the main ways we teach and learn. Our goal for this term is for every student to bring a device to school each day and we will be talking with families about reaching this goal as soon as students are back at school.

As we have done in Alert Level 3, you can be assured that in Alert Level 2 we will know who is at school, who our staff and students have been in close contact with and take appropriate measures to keep everyone safe. The most important things will be hand hygiene, keeping surfaces clean and contact tracing. We will manage physical distancing according to public health guidelines.

Under Alert Level 2, we advise any students and staff to stay at home if they are sick, and we will send anyone home immediately if they show any symptoms. For more information about the public health measures at Alert Level 2, you can visit the covid19.govt.nz website: <https://covid19.govt.nz/>

Following the Government announcement on Monday May 11, we will let you know the plan for each year level of students to return to on-site learning. The plan will include creative and responsive approaches to ensure students' and staff wellbeing is at the forefront as we navigate appropriate learning and assessment support.

We will be in touch again soon to update you on our plans.

Ngā manaakitanga
Greg Watson, Principal

Distance Learning

Being a parent and a teacher to your child isn't easy. We are proud of the work our students are completing at this time, and a huge part of their success is the positive support and encouragement you are providing them. This new model of learning has been a steep learning curve for teachers and students and so far some particularly important findings are emerging:

Students' Self-management - Learning from home is a much different task than learning in the classroom. Some key tips for our students is to:

- keep it manageable and chunk up the tasks you have to do
- use a timetable and schedule in breaks and rewards to stay motivated and focused
- prioritise your tasks, keeping any deadlines in mind when you create your schedule

Developing and enhancing the skills to manage your own learning will probably be one of the most valuable things that comes out of this experience for our students.

Check-in and Engage - Our teachers are working extremely hard to ensure students are learning during this time. We all want our students to do well and we know there will be times when they can't quite cope with the load. Students are encouraged to **communicate this with their teachers**, particularly when it comes to assessments and deadlines. We want to work with our students, be as flexible as possible, whilst still encouraging progress in their learning.

Lastly, please remind your student to continue completing their daily check in on the learning hub
<https://sites.google.com/mrgs.school.nz/mrgs-learning-hub/home>

Assessment

We received some encouraging signs that we will have students back at school in the near future. We know that families with students in NCEA courses will be wondering about the impact of the lockdown on assessment and NCEA. We want to reassure you that we will be supporting students to achieve their goals no matter what work was completed over lockdown.

We are in the process of collating information for every subject to ensure the assessment load is realistic and to carefully consider planned changes to assessment loads for NCEA courses. Every teacher is trying to assist students to manage their workload and in some cases, this means finding ways to generate evidence for assessment that may be different to how things have been done before.

For those with students in year 13 and aspirations for further study - tertiary institutions are well aware of the disruptions secondary students have faced and they will be working out ways to support students to enter tertiary. This will be top of mind for them because they may need to make up for the lack of international students with enrolments from the domestic market. Trust that we are looking out for your children. This disruption to the school year means that all students in New Zealand are in the same boat right now.

Support for Students

Throughout this journey, we have encouraged all students to reach out for help when they need it. Students are contacted weekly by their Form Teacher, Mentor or Dean. These people are perfectly placed to provide support and create connections between students and the help they need - from a distance of course!

If students are struggling in a specific subject, they should contact their teacher. Either do this via Google Classroom, or directly emailing their subject teacher. Their friends are also a great support which is readily utilised in the classroom environment. Your child may need a reminder that they can still work with their friends and peers in their classroom, just in a different way during Alert Level 3.

Our Counsellors are readily available to all students. Your child can email counsellors@mrgs.school.nz, or reach out via Facebook Messenger (mrgscounselling) or through Instagram direct message (counsellingmrgs). All communications are confidential, unless there is an imminent risk to safety. This is not only a platform for students who are feeling overwhelmed or anxious in the current situation, it is for anyone who feels that talking to someone would be a great support at this time. Please 'Like' our Mount Roskill Grammar School Facebook page, which will give you updates about additional 'Live' times with our Counsellors.