

31 March 2020

Good afternoon everyone

Part of today's message is all about the learning I have been seeing today. Yesterday was about preparing papers for the Board of Governors; today is about popping in and out of lessons to get an idea of what is going on in our online classrooms.

- The first class I saw this morning was Ms Thomson's Year 2 class: I was lucky enough to see Ms Thomson say "ata marie" and sing to her class, and to see Mrs Vien teach some Mandarin too. The children all seemed to be having fun, and I have so much admiration for the teachers of our youngest students. I loved the singing especially.
- Then I dipped into Ms Waldeck's Year 7 Scratch lesson, which was great fun; I listened to Mrs Jones-Hill's wonderfully soothing voice read a brand new story called "Hey Grandude!" By Paul McCartney; and then I saw Mrs Roberts teach her Year 3 class a very wonderful lesson about reading.
- Thanks to the wonders of Microsoft Stream, I then learned a huge amount about Maslow and Herzberg in a senior Business Studies class from Mrs Hawthorn, before watching Mrs Perrin talk to her POD on the second day of the lockdown, giving them some great advice on how to handle themselves at this difficult time. Archie helped out too (Archie is in Year 2...).

I can see lots of variety and innovation going on (thank you to our teachers!), and I'm really pleased to see it in action. In the background, our leaders are supporting teachers, checking in and trying to make sure that we are being as consistent as we can be. Thank you to all those parents who have been in touch directly with teachers, whether to say thank you for their work, or to ask questions about the online programmes. We welcome these questions, so please keep asking them.

A couple of quick bits of news today:

1. Our e-books have been very successful - so much so that we exceeded our limit in Primary already and so have upgraded our plan for both the Primary and College collections. We now have the largest plan we can, but there are still limits, so please make sure that children borrow only those books that they are going to read. We also have some age limits in place for suitable content: this is always a judgement call, and Mrs Coombridge, our Librarian, has carefully been checking each title to be as accurate as she can be. If you have any concerns, or find that your child cannot access a book they would like to read and you are happy for them to read, please contact Mrs Coombridge to talk it through. She is at michele.coombridge@pinehurst.school.nz.

2. Our Pinehurst School Facebook page has transformed itself this week. It has now become a page for ideas for activities for children (and parents!) to do. Please visit it and see some of the ideas we are generating. If you have any good links yourself, please send them to Nicki Williams at nicki.williams@pinehurst.school.nz. Nicki looks after our Facebook and Instagram pages, and also creates our newsletter each week. And yes, there will be a newsletter on Friday as usual!

Many thanks again to everyone. Remember to stay safe, to be kind to each other, and to be kind to yourselves. We are all working from home now, and everything takes longer from home. Everything! Our teachers and students are feeling this too, so we need to remember to pace ourselves, have breaks (and not necessarily food breaks - I'm finding myself straying to the food cupboard too much in the afternoons...), and to enjoy our time together. Kindness and patience are what we all need right now.

Keep letting me know how you are going, and speak soon!

Alex

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