

Kia ora koutou

Just a couple of quick updates from me today. We're now over three weeks into the latest (the 5th!) version of Pinehurst Online, and I know that we're now all anxiously tracking numbers and associated details in the hope that we'll be able to move to Level 3 next week. We're prepared, of course, and are equally prepared for a later shift. I'll write to everyone after the announcement on Monday to plot the next couple of weeks for the school.

A couple of statistics for you: I've kept a "Pinehurst Online" tally since the start of last year. In 2020, we had a total of 41 school days of online learning, and a further 36 school days of Level 2 restrictions. Presuming that we are at Level 3 or Level 4 until 21st September, we will have had 33 days this year so far at Level 3 or Level 4. We have had far fewer days at Level 2, which is why it feels that we've been able to do so much more at school - we had over a term of winter sport, for example, whereas last year we had virtually none - but the experience for all of us, and especially our students, these past years has been an extraordinary one.

We don't know where we will end the year yet, but I do want us all to reflect on these two years with our young people. For those of us who have been around a while, it's been a shock to the system, and we should be proud of the ways we have adapted and supported each other and our children. To our children, though, these are formative, unique years: they have been simply amazing, and I am so proud of them. The students in Year 2 right now, for example, have had their first two years of school formed by our strange new rhythms, and the Year 13 students have had the last two years of their schooling affected in a profound way. It's an experience we wouldn't have previously imagined. It will end, of course, and I'm actually even more optimistic about the future than I was before, seeing in action the resilience of the generations of leaders to come.

I was part of a meeting with other Cambridge Principals and people from Cambridge itself yesterday. We talked about the upcoming examinations, and I wanted to share with you the process for deciding whether we run exams or not. All Cambridge schools in Auckland have to operate in the same way. There can be a division between us and the rest of the country, but Auckland schools must be consistent. If we are at Level 3 or Level 4, the Government has just clarified the rules, and there can be no examinations in any system in school. This means that we have to make a decision about whether to run the exams before the end of this month. Our first exam is on October 1st, and so the decision will be made a few days prior to that, as late as possible to ensure that we give the Government every chance to indicate that we are heading into Level 2.

Whatever happens, the work that students are currently doing is vital and necessary. If we move to School Assessed Grades, we will run a series of assessment opportunities in the first month or so of Term 4, and these assessments, running in a variety of conditions, at home or possibly at school if we move to Level 2 during that time, will enable us to generate an assessment. I know there will be questions about how exactly these will run, but I'd ask you to wait a couple of weeks for these. If we get to that position, we will give the students and their parents a very detailed description of how it will run. **At the moment, we are expecting exams to take place**, and every single Principal is very keen to enable these. But please trust us on this: the end result will be that no students will be disadvantaged at all. Checkpoint exams will be part of the same decision. If we can't run exams, we will also generate School Assessed Grades for Year 6 and Year 9 Checkpoint, running assessments in the same way.

I'm off to teach Year 13 Literature now. Disorder, chaos and the collapse of sovereignty in King Lear. They will love it!

Have a great day, and enjoy the weekend.

Ngā mihi

Alex Reed,
Executive Principal