



PRINCIPAL MATTERS

NGĀ TUMUAKI O AOTEAROA

THE MOST RESPECTED AND INFLUENTIAL ADVOCATE FOR NEW ZEALAND'S PRINCIPALS

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Issue 8, 19 March 2020

President's Message



Kia ora e te whānau

I have been thinking about you this week as you confront the threat of Covid-19 in your communities and schools. I know you are committed to assuring students, parents, staff and your community that pandemic planning is in place and that school is a safe place to be.

It is not an easy time to be a school leader. We are not epidemiologists. We can't speak from a place of expert knowledge about the response to Covid-19. We are working to the advice of our Ministries of Education and Health who, in turn, are consulting daily with a worldwide group of medical and scientific experts. The advice we receive reflects their best thinking about how we, in schools, respond.

It is important that we act on the advice we receive from the Secretary for Education. Our best response to any Covid-19 infection in our schools is to contact the Ministries of Education and Health and implement what they direct us to do.

Engaging in discussions about this advice only dilutes the message. It creates confusion and worry at a time when we need to show confidence and cohesion.

I can tell you that the Secretary for Education and her Ministry staff have robust plans for responding to the pattern of Covid

19 presenting right now. They will update and shift their advice as changes occur. To date, I am pleased with the quality and regularity of information being issued.

As free-thinking principals, you won't all agree with the Government's strategy for handling Covid-19. What I say, is that this is not the time to promote personal views. Our young people and our communities trust us and are looking to us for confidence and certainty as they themselves battle the mixed multi-media messages, conspiracy theories and rumour mills. This is the time to stick to the official advice and follow it.

We have a job to look after our whānau. Right now, our students need the order and structure of schooling and we need to support our staff who have their own personal concerns and worries.

Leadership can be incredibly challenging. I want to acknowledge the unique pressures you are experiencing as you face this global pandemic.

Keep focused on supporting those around you. Leadership, when dealing with the problems we are experiencing, is about being real, human and empathetic. In practice, this means talking openly about the challenges we are confronting and reassuring each other that we will get through this.

This afternoon the Health Minister David Clark announced that the Government will enforce a mass gatherings limit of 100 people for indoor events. Schools are exempt from this. No doubt this announcement will cause some concerns.

Don't be intimidated by the different opinions that will come your way. Hold the line. This is a planned strategy to reduce risk. Don't let the government's effort to tighten the screws on Covid-19 be derailed.

It is difficult to Captain a ship in a storm, but that is what we are doing. We need to turn to each other, shore up our collective strength and keep the ship moving forward.

Keep connected to each other, keep focused on holding to official advice, keep batting away the rumours and gossip, and remember to look after yourself. You need to be in good shape to front the job tomorrow!

Waiho i te toipoto, kaua i te toiroa. Let us keep close together, not far apart.

Ngā manaakitanga

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NZPF Notices



NZ Principal Magazine also Online

You and/or your team members can easily access the NZ Principal Magazines online, as an e-magazine or as a PDF. Additionally you can search for a previous issue, an article by title or by the author of the article. All magazines back to Term 1 2012 are available in this format. To view or search click [here](#).

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