

SOUTH OTAGO HIGH SCHOOL

20 March 2020

Dear Parent/ Caregiver

As you will be aware we are in very uncertain times. I would like to reassure you that as a school and an important part of our community we are supporting student well-being and following the guidance of the Ministries of Health and Education.

Fact or Fiction

South Otago High School remains open. If we are to close this will be under the direction of the Ministry of Health who will provide the communication to parents and our community. Please note that Facebook is not a reliable source of facts and information. Please refer to:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/>

and

<https://covid19.govt.nz/>

These sites will provide trusted information.

School closure process

With so much information and misinformation about Covid-19, I wanted to share with you what will happen if we were to have a case in our school community. We have been planning for this and are in a position to respond quickly.

- As soon as a case is confirmed in our immediate school community (eg a student, staff member or a member of their household) the Medical Officer of Health and the Ministry of Education will inform me about this and we will work together to get quick and clear messaging out to you.
- If there was a case confirmed in our school, we will likely be asked to close temporarily by the Medical Officer of Health. This will allow time for close contacts to be traced, appropriate testing to be undertaken and a careful clean of the school to be undertaken.
- If our school does need to close temporarily, we have a plan in place to support student's learning. This is detailed below.

We know that there is a great deal of anxiety about, please be assured that we are treating this seriously, we have no confirmed cases and your children are safe here at South Otago High School.

Good hygiene is a priority at our school and we are reinforcing this regularly with all students and staff. We know that practicing good hygiene is still the best thing we can all do to prevent illness.

We are getting the most up to date advice and guidance so that you can confidently make informed decisions about the safety and well-being of our school community.

What if my child is unwell?

If your child is unwell please follow the advice of the government, do not send unwell children to school. If a child reports feeling unwell at school we will make contact with the family and ask that they be picked up. Please be aware that the staff here are working to protect the health of our whole community. Please respect the schools decision to send unwell children home and the request that you pick them up. The decision is not made lightly and we are aware that it may be inconvenient but it is by working together that we can combat this illness.

Remote learning

Teachers have been talking to students about how this will happen should the school need to close. Our plan is that teachers and students will follow the timetable. Teachers will be on line and able to be contacted by students during their timetabled classes. Please be aware that if they are unwell themselves or caring for family members they may be delayed. Teachers are discussing with students about the use of Google classroom, Google Hangouts and e-mail as the means of sharing documents, discussing learning and answering questions.

Students will be expected to check in with teachers during the lesson time.

Parents will play an important part
in supporting students with their education should the school close.

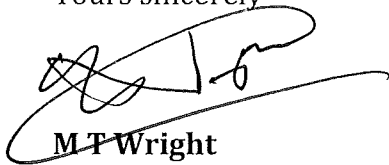
Parents can support students with their learning by:

- ensuring that distractions are minimised
- providing a quiet place for students to work
- checking in with the work which has been asked of them and the work which has been completed
- raising questions with mentor teachers early so that support can be provided if necessary.

Future communication

We will continue to put information out to parents and caregivers via the school newsletter, letters such as this, the SOHS Facebook page (our postings will be factual!) and text where appropriate. Please ensure that we have the correct contact information here at South Otago High School so that we can communicate with you.

Yours sincerely



M T Wright
Principal