CARISBROOKE
Elementary School

"Home of the Thunderbirds"

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Friday, April 3, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians and Friends,

We hope that you are well and safe. These are challenging times for all of us, but I know that we will get through this and be back together at school as soon as it is safe to do so.

As we return to learning that looks and feels quite different, we are more aware than ever of the importance of our personal and social connections. The Carisbrooke team is sensitive to the reality that we are all facing unique challenges, so our plan for the continuity of education for elementary students is extended to families with the expectation that they will engage in a way that is most meaningful and manageable for them. We wish to let you know that we are here for you and your children. We recognize that this is a very unique year, and over the coming weeks Carisbrooke staff will be available, responsive and supportive, but not expecting learning at home to look anything like our typical school day.

During this past week the school team has been very busy meeting online through Microsoft Teams. The whole staff met twice, once on Tuesday and once on Thursday, and our smaller teams – Primary, Intermediate and School Based Resource Team – met on Wednesday. Together staff has been exploring how best to provide Continuity of Education without overwhelming families. Microsoft Teams is the platform that the school will be using to connect with students. If you do not have access to technology at home, other arrangements will be made. We are very aware that many of you are juggling working from home with the responsibilities of caring for multiple children who are struggling with an enormous change in routine. We are all struggling with isolation.

Staff is working hard to be 'on the same page' to ensure communications to you are coordinated and express reasonable and flexible learning opportunities. The team is considering activities that are similar yet tailored to the developmental ages and stages of your children. We want to support coordinated and cohesive learning at home so that students can help and inspire each other, instead of sending work that becomes just one more thing to argue about. This type of thoughtful approach is taking time and we appreciate your patience. For example, each student will be asked to keep a daily journal. Your family may want to prepare by finding a special book to write in or some fancy paper to write on and set up a little 'office'.

By the end of the day you will receive an email from your teacher along with a survey of sorts to assess home needs and access to technology. Next week teachers will call students to chat and catch up, as well as reaching out to parents to find out how best to support your family. Differences between teachers and schools are to be expected. Each community, each classroom, is unique and will benefit from different supports. Please expect a range in the type and depth of contacts that teachers will make, as each teacher is unique in their own style and the tools that are using. This is new to all of us.

We are thinking of you, and sending air hugs from afar. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are here for you.

With kindest regards,

Lisa Upton and George Polymenakos
Principal Vice Principal