

# School Counsellor Newsletter



## Settling back into school

Edition Twenty-two

For many of us Level 2 is an exciting and welcome change, yet for others it may bring uncertainty and worry, and some of us will sit somewhere in between those thoughts and feelings. For all of us, it is yet another period of adjustment and settling into a 'new normal'. At a Wellbeing session for staff on one of the Teacher Only Days last week, and at assembly today for students, I was able to share these ideas for how we support each other, as well as ourselves, as we settle back into school and life in general at Level 2.

### Make space for 'I' in team

As our prime minister, the Right Honourable Jacinda Adern, has said, it has taken a team effort to get to Level 2 and we can all be proud of the sacrifices we have made in lockdown to get us to where we are today. At the same time, it is very important to acknowledge that our experiences of lockdown, whilst similar in some ways, are also very individual and personal. It is important to be aware of this and to accept this without judgement so that everyone in 'our team' feels okay about what happened for them during lockdown.

- Take time to share your experiences with your son
- Take time to listen to the experiences of your son
- Respect any different experiences of lockdown and feelings about Level 2

The teaching staff will engage with your son in different ways so that he will have an opportunity to share his experience and thoughts, if he wishes to do so, as he settles back into school. At home you can check in with your son as to how he is experiencing Level 2 back at school. It could simply be by asking if it was a thumbs up, thumbs down, or thumbs sideways day, and what would be helpful for the next day.

### Taking care of ourselves

At times of change or uncertainty it is very important to notice our thoughts and feelings, and to check in with these more intentionally than you may usually do. Remember your personal signs when things might be getting tricky, for example an upset tummy or sweaty palms, finding it hard to concentrate or a thought entering your mind over and over. These are signs that you need to take a break, such as heading out for a walk, taking a moment in the sunshine, quickly calling a friend, practising mindfulness or deep breathing. It could be helpful to talk to your son about what he notices in his body or mind that tells him he needs a break. In assembly today I spoke to the students about these three ways of coping with their emotions:

1. **Ask for help:** Who can your son go to, at school and at home, to seek help, have a chat or share their experiences with so that they feel listened to and supported?

2. **Problem solve:** For example if it is hard to remember to wash his hands someone at home could set an alarm before leaving for school and when arriving home to remind him to do this. By thinking of possible solutions worries can be alleviated.
3. **Look at things a different way:** It can be very tiring and frustrating having to remember new rules. If he comes home annoyed about this he could try to look at it a different way and acknowledge his frustration but also feel proud of how he is coping and doing his bit for 'our team'.

This is not always going to be easy and that is okay. Let's all be kind to ourselves and to each other so we can get through as a team



**Jenelle Hooson**

**Jenelle is a Registered Provisional Member with NZAC (New Zealand Association of Counsellors).**

If you wish to discuss the services the school counsellor can provide please see your son's homeroom teacher or Amos Pilgrim  
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