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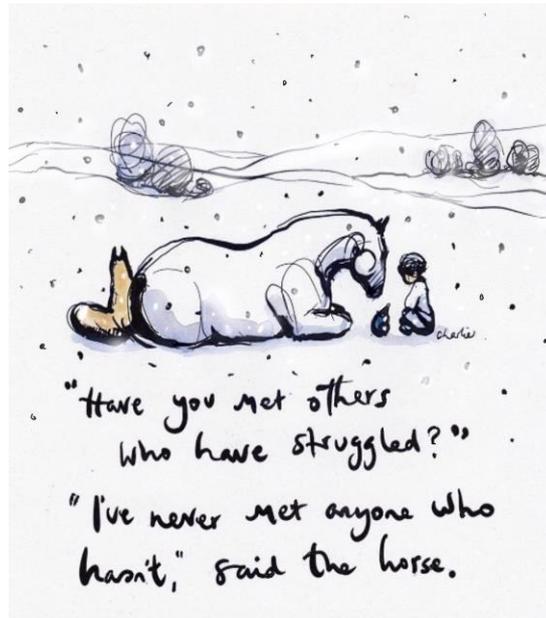


5th March 2021

Dear parents and carers,

I hope that you and your loved ones are in good health.

We are all looking forward to seeing our children again as they return to school on Monday 8th March. It has been a long time since we have been together, but we are reassured by the fact that you have kept them safe and supported them with their learning.



Although we have all been in such different circumstances during this lockdown period, we have all had one thing in common: we have experienced struggle in some form or other. What has been more apparent than ever though, is the strength and unity of our community. This has understandably been challenged at times, but together we have made it to the re-opening having given our all for the benefit of St Joseph's children. I really must thank you all for your support through this difficult period. We talk a lot about front-line key workers, and rightly so, but you have also been key workers for your children and this needs recognising and commending. Children may not

always show their appreciation, but you can be assured that you have made a huge difference to their ongoing development.

St Joseph's re-opening on Monday 8th March is a time of hope and optimism for the whole community. The following thoughts also give us hope for the future of our children.

8 Reasons to Feel Reassured about 8th March and Beyond

1. We are returning to what we know

Schools are places of routine and structure - even if these routines have had to change, the predictability of the school day will be hugely reassuring for many.

2. School staff are trained to respond to what's in front of them

There is no such thing as 'normal' when it comes to learning. All learners are individual and school staff respond to where the young person is, not where anyone says they *should* be.

3. 'Learning' (in this context) is a verb, not a noun

This means that we can't lose learning like it's a tangible thing. Some learning just hasn't taken place yet. Young people will take the lead from us, so if we don't talk of 'catching up', they won't feel they need to.

4. Equally, learning is a process, not a product

We can't buy 'learning' and we can't give 'learning'. Learners have to be ready to learn and this relies on relationships and wellbeing.

5. School staff are 'alloparents' (I had to look it up too!)

Some children will be naturally worried about returning to school, but when staff build trust first and foremost, learning will naturally follow.

6. Intrinsic motivation comes into play

In New Zealand, during the Christchurch earthquakes, young people missed huge amounts of school, however results did not suffer. Children knew what they needed to do to succeed.

7. It's back to school, not back to learning

As adults, we can look back and see that school was one place where we learned, but not the only place. Some children will have learned huge amounts during this time, just in unexpected ways.

8. We don't know what we don't know

We can only speculate what the impact of the pandemic will be on young people. Yes, unfortunately for some it will have taken a great toll, but for others they will have built their character in ways we didn't know possible – resilience, creativity, self-sufficiency are all words we have heard a lot from parents and children recently.

We are optimistic about the return of our children and look forward to continuing to provide the best possible support and education for them all.

Yours sincerely,

C. Newstead

C. Newstead
Headteacher

