

**WAITAKI BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL**



**Remote (On-line) Learning Guide for Parents and Whanau**

## Introduction

This document has been created to prepare for your son's on-line learning that begins on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2021, due to the Covid-19 lockdown.

I recognise that this is a challenging time for our school community. As well as health worries and isolation from extended family members, there are parents in our community working long hours as essential workers. Many of you have younger children at home who need your attention whilst you are also trying to work from home. Some of our teaching staff are also under similar pressure at home with young families and creating new and different resources for online teaching platforms – much of this taking longer than it would in the on-site environment. I also recognise that our students are all at different stages in the development of their self-management skills and the motivation to learn independently.

With all of this in mind, I ask for your understanding and flexibility as we go back into an on-line learning environment as we did 16 months ago.

Our advice is that for your son to focus on his school work that he is able to work (where possible) in a 'quiet' space, particularly when communicating through video conferencing.

The underlying message is that we do not want to put any undue pressure on our students at this already stressful time. Sound advice to your son would be **“do what you can when you can”**.

Be kind, keep safe and look after each other.

He waka eke noa (We're all in this together)

Darryl Paterson

Rector

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## 2. How will my child's classes work?

There will be many ways that teaching will be delivered. Most teachers have set up Teams in Microsoft 365 which is a platform that allows for teaching and learning resources to be uploaded, communication about learning that is to happen, and assessments and task instructions to be given. Some staff are creating video lessons that will be uploaded and others are using MS365 Team meetings to have face to face 'classes' with groups of students. Where it can provide valuable skills practice, other on-line programmes may also be used as a teaching and learning resource. Although this sounds complicated, we are aware that our young people adapt very quickly, and they are familiar with the different apps being used as learning platforms

We have asked that **your son adheres to his normal timetable** but appreciate that due to limitations at home along with the fact that some more 'practical' subjects (ie Agriculture, Art, Music, Physical Education, and Technology for example) are more difficult to complete on-line this will not always be possible. However, we do as a school believe adhering to normal routines will be most beneficial. We are expecting students to self-manage as much as possible. We are also encouraging exercise and activity outside (perhaps during his scheduled Physical Education class or helping in the garden or on the Farm during his Agriculture class). Students should find that they have a mixture of activities within their learning 'package'.

However, teachers will need to connect at particular times with their class or group of learners. This will happen during the usual timetabled period to stop students having to choose between subject meetings. **Please appreciate that some staff also have dependants at home and may not always be available during their timetabled period. They will have work set for your son and will clearly communicate with him when they are available.**

### 3. How can I check what my son has to do?

Your son has a school username and password which then allows him to access his email and the Microsoft 365 online learning environment.

Username: 12345678@waitakibhs.school.nz (he may forget to add the @waitaki....)

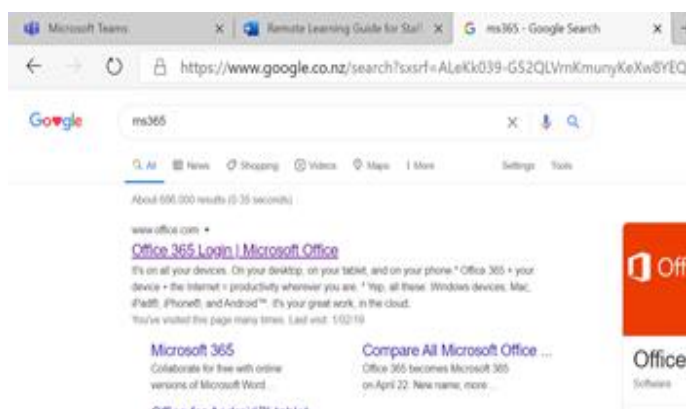
Password: plantname (each student has a single word password – randomly generated plant names generally)

He will be able to show you this.

(If he has forgotten these please contact his house group teacher or year level Dean)

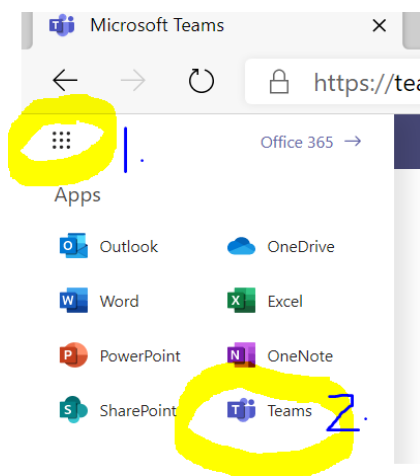
### 4. How does your son access MS365 and his school e-mail

You need to use the online version of MS365 – Google it and login with your school e-mail and password. It's best to use the Edge or Chrome browser (Edge is designed specifically to support MS365) if you have a choice on your device.



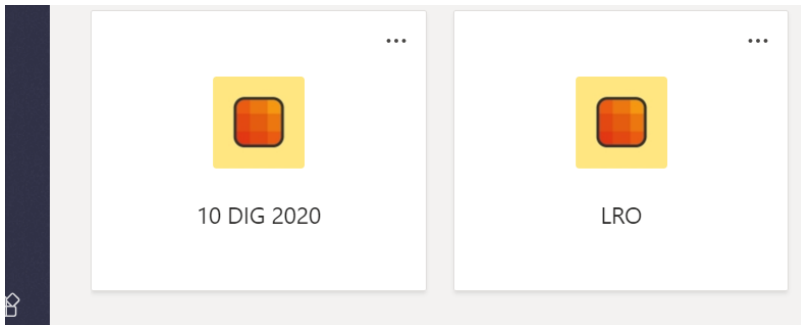
When you have logged in (be patient – it may take a few seconds) open the apps by clicking on the 9 dots (top left corner)

The email is to be found in the Outlook icon.



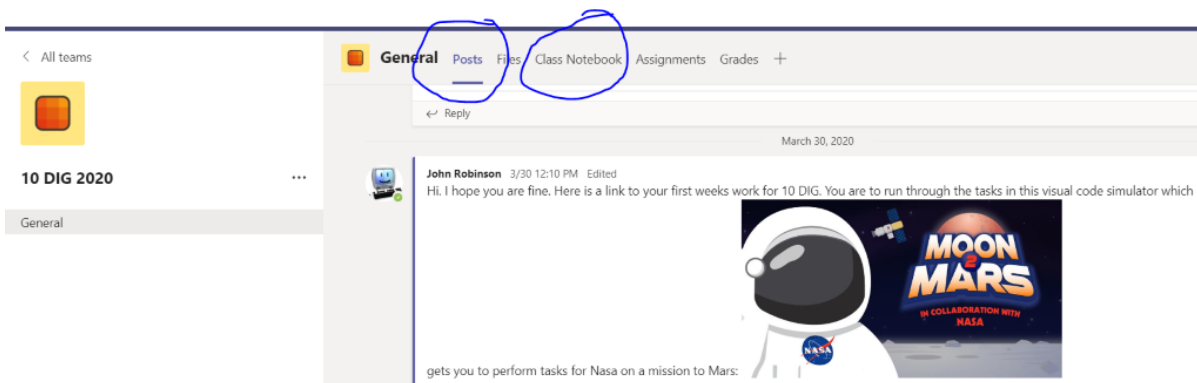
Select the Teams icon then select the team you wish to open.

You will have teams for academic classes and possibly one for his House Group



In a team the 2 tabs you will use are the Posts (where videoconferencing and messaging take place) and the Class Notebook (where students will be given resources and can post their work).

The good news is that in the school e-mail students will find invitations to class meetings and invitations to the teams their teacher has set up.



Some teachers will use Sway videos – generally they will post a link to follow. When viewing a Sway video give it a while to load as it detects the device viewing it and adjusts the file to suit it.

### **5. What if my child is unavailable at class time?**

Some students may not be able to meet their teachers when asked. It is important that they keep up email conversation with their teachers to let them know this and the reasons why. Families all have different circumstances, and teachers will be understanding and flexible as long as there is clear and timely communication. In some situations, MS365 Team meeting face to face sessions will be recorded and uploaded for student use outside of the timetabled class time. Communication between student and teacher will be very important during this lockdown period. Please support us by checking that your son is keeping in regular email contact with his teachers.

### **6. How will attendance be monitored?**

Teachers will expect students to reply to communication, engage with the tasks set, and to be available for face-to-face video meetings. If teachers find that a student is not engaging with the learning, communication or meetings, this will become an attendance concern if there is no justification. In this situation teachers will contact you and if non-engagement continues then the year level dean will be notified as per our usual process.

### **7. How will I know they are doing what they are supposed to do?**

Essentially (as previously indicated) your son (where practicably possible) will have been set work to complete by all his teachers. We would advise that you check in with your son (as per points 2 and 3 above) as to what work he has been set and therefore should be completing.

If there are any issues with your son's schoolwork (or lack of work available) contact his teacher directly in the first instance (all teachers emails are on the school website – go to 'Contacts' then 'Staff list') and if needed contact his Year Level Dean thereafter.

We will continue to post progress comments through Kamar live reporting. This will provide some indication how your son's remote learning is progressing.

## **8. Pastoral care and wellbeing are important – how will this continue?**

We are encouraging house group classes to get together at their normal times – that is Tuesday and Thursday from 9.40am until 10am. This time will primarily be used by house group teachers to ‘check in’ on the well-being of their students. We are hoping that senior students will be in touch with junior students in their house group.

The He Ara Tika reward system will continue during remote learning and we want to continue rewarding positive behaviour during this time.

School assemblies will continue. These will be emailed to all students and will also be available on the school website. The purpose of this is that students are still experiencing a sense of belonging albeit differently.

In terms of individual pastoral support for your son, he will have his house group teacher to talk to (as above), but also his year level dean will be available. If it is a more serious matter then you should contact our Guidance councillor Colin Pine ([colinp@waitakibhs.school.nz](mailto:colinp@waitakibhs.school.nz))

We also believe it is important at this time that your son does not only regularly communicate with his friends but also a mentor from within the school community – this may be a teacher, a support staff member, a sports coach, or a senior student etc. Once again this is not only for personal support but also to promote a sense of belonging. Senior students have been assigned mentors this year and those mentors will be communicating with your son during the ‘lockdown’ period.

## **9. What about assessments – will they continue?**

NZQA are sending out material over the coming weeks as they explore options for all schools around internal and external assessments. Please do not worry about NCEA at the moment. Please assure your son that as a school we will ensure no-one is disadvantaged. Remember every student in the country is in the same situation.

Junior assessment work is likely to continue as usual. Your son may have an ongoing project, assessment, or they may have an online test that the teacher will set parameters for.

## **10. Who do I talk to if I have concerns about my son's learning?**

You may be worried that your son is not engaging with their learning, that they are struggling with motivation, or illness may be affecting learning progress. They may become overwhelmed by this different way of learning. Some of our senior students could find that they have more work in a remote learning environment compared to when they are on-site.

If you have any concerns about your son, it may be appropriate to contact the subject teacher by email if the issue is about one particular subject. If you have a general concern, please email the year level dean.

If your son has different learning needs, it is likely that they and you have already been contacted by the SENCO – Shona Campbell-Savage, RTLB – Paula Seymour or LSC – Sue Johnston, or one of our teacher aides to ensure that they are experiencing success and motivation at their level. It is our intention that during 'lockdown' our teacher aides will be in daily contact with all the students in our learning support unit.

## **11. What about the Ministry of Education online learning supports?**

The Ministry of Education has provided many new options for remote learning. You can find this information on the MOE website, and there are also resources available in the new [Learning from Home](#) website. We are confident that we have our learning packages at Waitaki Boys' ready to provide quality learning, however if your child or younger siblings require extra resources, this website could be valuable.

## **12. How do I ensure that my child is safe online?**

Netsafe NZ (<https://www.netsafe.org.nz/>) is an excellent resource for parents and caregivers.

There are many resources on this website to help you manage your child's online safety. Our staff have a set of guidelines that ensure they will be operating within the Teaching Council professional standards and students are expected to bring the schools values of respect, resilience and motivation into the online world and continue to uphold our vision that we are "inspiring young men of outstanding character."



Be aware that when your son's device is being used at school our school wide filtering system protects your child from accessing harmful sites. This filtering system will not be happening off-site in your home, therefore parental oversight is recommended.

If you have any concerns about online communication, please contact your house group teacher by email in the first instance.

### **13. Do I need to protect our home devices?**

#### Internet connections

- Make sure wireless networks are password protected. If you believe someone else is accessing your wireless network, talk to your ISP for instructions on how to change your wireless password.
- Avoid connecting to any unknown or unsecured wireless networks.

#### All devices

- Make sure your devices are regularly updated with software updates and patches. By default, most devices should do this automatically, however, you can manually check for updates and install any critical or security updates.

#### Computers/Laptops

\* Make sure anti-virus protection is installed on computers and laptops and is up to date. Periodically run a scan or have a scheduled scan set up.

\* N.B. By default, Windows 10 devices have inbuilt anti-virus software (Windows Defender) but will likely be disabled if another anti-virus software is installed on the device.

#### Chromebooks & mobile devices

- Don't enable developer modes unless you need them.
- Use official app stores to download applications.
- Pay attention to what you install and the permissions you allow.

#### Emails

- Be aware of any suspicious emails. If you don't recognise the sender or the information isn't what you would expect from a sender, don't click on any links or open any attachments.

## Data plans

- At this stage we are not sure what support internet providers are giving around data plans as they did last year. We do know that the data used by MS365 Teams is very small compared to online gaming etc.

Chromebooks' and mobile devices' operating systems are built differently to computer/laptop operating systems. They have built-in security features which makes them less susceptible to viruses etc. That said, if you have any concerns, there are anti-virus applications available for these devices.

Netsafe NZ has additional information regarding anti-virus software and also lists results from an independent German organisation, which publishes security ratings for anti-virus software. This information can be accessed from the following link: <https://www.netsafe.org.nz/what-anti-virus> HYPERLINK "https://www.netsafe.org.nz/what-anti-virus-software-should-i-use/" [software-should-i-use/](https://www.netsafe.org.nz/what-anti-virus-software-should-i-use/)

## 14. Screen time

- Our advice is to take a break after 35 minutes "intense" screen use and limit daily screen time to no more than 3 – 4 hours.

*We hope this guide will be useful to you during the coming weeks. If you have any other questions our staff will be happy to answer these. All email addresses can be found on the website.*

***As always we will keep you updated via your residential email (in the first instance) and on the school facebook page of any important developments as they happen.***

*All the best for plenty of positive learning!*

Darryl Paterson - Rector ([rector@waitakibhs.school.nz](mailto:rector@waitakibhs.school.nz))

Roger van Booma - Deputy Rector ([rogervb@waitakibhs.school.nz](mailto:rogervb@waitakibhs.school.nz))

Aisea Fifita - Assistant Rector ([aiseaf@waitakibhs.school.nz](mailto:aiseaf@waitakibhs.school.nz))

John Robinson - Head of IT Systems ([johnr@waitakibhs.school.nz](mailto:johnr@waitakibhs.school.nz))