

1 May 2020

Statement for Catholic School Families in Response to the Challenges Encountered by Covid-19

Kia ora koutou nga Whanau Katorika

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops have been mindful of the challenges many people in our community are facing during the Covid-19 crisis. We understand the anxiety for parents and caregivers created by a loss of employment or other challenges of caring for children at home during this lockdown.

Our schools offer strong pastoral care, which is the foundation of our Catholic faith and is particularly important in times of upheaval, such as when many educators and students are having to adjust to distance learning. We want to ensure all those currently enrolled in Catholic schools are able to remain at their school of choice.

The New Zealand Catholic Education Office and our Diocesan leadership teams have given Catholic school Proprietors an appraisal of the challenges parents are likely to face as a result of the impacts of Covid-19. They are looking at ways we can support the cost of attendance dues for parents who have a loss of income or other hardship. Work is being done to ensure that our community is supported during this period, and that students are not further challenged by a need to look for a new school as a result of financial hardship.

Families are encouraged to contact their diocese's schools/education office.

We remember Catholic school families, staff and communities in our prayers, and commend you all for your creative and faith-filled response during this time. We are inspired by how schools have worked to ensure the continued learning and spiritual formation of students. We look forward to continuing to support our community to remain part of the Catholic Education family.

God Bless,

- ✠ **Patrick Dunn, Bishop of Auckland and NZCBC President**
- ✠ **John Dew, Cardinal Archbishop of Wellington, NZCBC Vice President**
- ✠ **Stephen Lowe, Bishop of Hamilton and NZCBC Secretary**
- ✠ **Paul Martin SM, Bishop of Christchurch**
- ✠ **Michael Dooley, Bishop of Dunedin**
- ✠ **Michael Gielen, Auxiliary Bishop of Auckland**
- Paul Ferris, Chief Executive, New Zealand Catholic Education Office**