



Brandon Intermediate



Driver Crescent
Porirua
New Zealand

Telephone (04) 237-4599
Facsimile (04) 237-4598
Email – brandon@xtra.co.nz

Kia ora koutou,

Everyone at Brandon Intermediate is deeply saddened with regard to the events in Christchurch last Friday. Our hearts go out to the victims and their immediate families.

At school on Monday a special assembly was held for the students and staff.

We spoke about the immediate victims and we also spoke about how the police and hospital workers did such fine work. We thought about the students and teachers who were put into lock down and how all these people and systems are in place to keep our students safe.

We also spoke about the concept of hate – something we don't talk about at Brandon Intermediate. The students were reminded of the opposite of hate and how that looks for us here at school.

That is kindness, listening, respect and friendship.

Please see included in this newsletter advice that may support you and your family.

To show our support for the people of Christchurch this Friday, in conjunction with athletics day, will be:
- Colour your Day –

Students will be encouraged to wear bright colours and bring along a gold coin.



Brandon Intermediate students – doing the school and Cannons Creek PROUD!!!!

Coming up

| Date | Event | Who |
|----------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| March 22 | Athletics Day | All families and caregivers |
| April 3 | School Photos | Students and staff |
| April 10 | Rugby 7s | Selected students |
| April 12 | Last day of Term one | All of us!!!! |

Kia ora

Paul McKendry
Principal

ADVICE TO PARENTS

- * Give children as much information as they ask for.
- * Stay aware of things they might see or hear.
- * Tell children they're safe and that people are helping keep them safe.
- * Don't shy away from telling them people have been hurt and killed.
- * Remember to talk about feelings as much as facts.
- * Find a space to process their own feelings, if they're struggling they should get help.
- * Understand teenagers will want to be with their peers and parents should encourage that.
- * Let children help; find avenues where they can contribute.
- * Remember children and teenagers' reactions may be delayed.

If you haven't already, **start a conversation about the attacks with your kids**. Some of us have the privilege of being able to do this before they hear about it elsewhere because we're not in Christchurch or because our children are young. Many will be entering territory their child has already ventured into. Either way, it's really important to talk. If a subject becomes taboo, in their minds it becomes even more scary. If they hear about it from someone other than you, you can't control what they hear, or provide support as they hear it.

Let your child talk. Let them feel whatever it is they are feeling, without judgment or trying to minimise their reactions. It's very tempting to try to cheer people up, especially so children and young people. For a start just be present. Just listen.

It's also **good for your children to know how you're feeling**. Many of us are overwhelmed and sorrowful, disbelieving and angry. And with good reason. Feeling all of these things while maintaining control and projecting an air of calm can model a healthy way of working through emotions, while at the same time demonstrating that all sorts of emotion, and mixed emotion, is normal and okay.

Recent [research](#) on the impact of caregiver responses to their children seeing violent news media found "**reassuring realistically**" had the best outcomes for children and teens in terms of quelling anxiety. Age-appropriate, honest answers to questions and reminders that in their daily life they are generally very safe can help set young people's minds at rest. While we can't promise terrible things will not happen, we can **provide reassurance** about the systems in place to keep us safe, the people who care for and protect them, and the fact we are fortunate in New Zealand that these sorts of attacks are rare. The response to yesterday's violence was quick and efficient. Teachers and emergency staff in Christchurch were incredible. Pointing these things out, rather than focussing on the violence and the perpetrators is important.

Encouraging a break from social media, or at least from viewing news reports and footage, can also lessen young people's distress and anxiety. With older children and adolescents, this is an opportunity to talk about why sharing violent and upsetting content can be harmful, in terms of its impact on viewers, but also because it gives terrorists what they want – more exposure, more impact, a greater undermining of our community's feelings of safety and security.

Countering feelings of helplessness with **practical suggestions about how to help** could be useful for young people of all ages. Talk about what they could do to help the victims and their families, to show support for the Muslim community, to foster kindness and tolerance in their schools. A discussion with adolescents about the impact of intolerance on our society and how we can counter those things can give them some tools to address discrimination and racism when they see it, and the motivation to do so, even though it might be hard.