



# LAKES GRAMMAR

AN ANGLICAN SCHOOL

ABN 24 765 357 415

PO Box 6069 Gorokan NSW 2263  
Cnr. Sparks Road & Albert Warner Drive Warnervale 2259  
T 02 4393 4111 F 02 4393 4133  
E admin@lakes.nsw.edu.au W www.lakes.nsw.edu.au

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## Commencement of Term 2 – Junior School

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We trust that this letter finds you and your family well and having had an enjoyable and relaxing Easter, of course understanding that it has been quite different to any other year and bringing a unique set of pressures for families. Please find below some additional information around the start of Term 2, which will initially bring a continuation of the online learning at home for students for the first fortnight and then a phasing in of a return to school for the students as outlined in Mr Hannah's letter.

### Lakes @ Home

Accompanying this letter is a Lakes@Home booklet which outlines the nature of online learning at home for Junior School students. It is important to highlight that Seesaw will continue to be our main mode of delivering online learning for the children. Teachers will continue to provide an outline of the day and a video or audio introduction to most lessons. This enables the lessons to be accessed flexibly during the day by students and families with the lesson instructions and explanation of the concept readily available. Teachers will be providing some sessions via Microsoft Teams or Zoom during the week to briefly connect with their classes and enable the children to have some social interaction with each other. We are also continuing to put in place a range of strategies to support student and family wellbeing at this time.

### Initial Structure of Online Learning in Term 2

In general terms, the structure of home learning in Term 2 will include the features below. Please refer to the Lakes@Home booklet for additional details:

- Teachers will post a daily greeting message along with an overview of the activities for the day. The activities for the day will be assigned / released from the Seesaw learning platform.
- Students will be asked to start their day with Reading, Writing and Mathematics lessons. After this, they can then undertake lessons from the other Key Learning Areas. As best as they can, we would ask that students finish a task completely before moving onto another activity.
- Teachers will continue to check in throughout the day to review work, give feedback and comment on selected work.
- If your child is not online for a valid reason please contact the school in the usual manner to advise that they are absent due to sickness and the like for the day.

### Textbook and Home Learning Material Collection

A package is being made up for each student, including their textbooks and other home learning resources to supplement the activities being posted on Seesaw. We anticipate that this

will help to improve the home learning experience for children and families in light of the parent survey feedback.

These packages will be bundled in family groups and will available from collection by 'drive through' via the Junior School Kiss and Go Area on the following days and times:

- **Tuesday 28 April, 9.00am – 2.50pm** – families with **surnames beginning with A – L**
- **Wednesday 29 April, 9.00am – 2.50pm** – families with **surnames beginning with M – Z**
- **Thursday 30 April, 9.00am – 2.50pm** – for all families who were not able to collect packages on the previous days.

*Please have your family name tag that you normally use for Kiss and Go on your visor (if you have one) as you come through to help this process to run as quickly and smoothly as possible.*

### **Congratulations to Mrs Jobe-Parker**

It is also an appropriate time to congratulate Mrs Jobe-Parker, who was recognised by Seesaw during the holiday break as a Seesaw Certified Educator. Seesaw have offered this status to quite a small number of educators across the globe who have been using Seesaw for a number of years and have supported others worldwide. As well as preparing her lessons for Term 2 and having something of a well-earned break over the holidays, Mrs Jobe-Parker has also been providing a number of schools in a range of countries with Worldwide Live Seesaw support, often late at night and early in the morning due to the time zone differences.

### **Zoom**

Please be aware that the school continues to evaluate the use of Zoom as a tool for online interaction. Our current position is that where Zoom is used for this purpose, that a unique ID for the meeting will be created, a meeting password will be required, a waiting room will be used, the meeting will be invite-only and will be locked once it commences, and that private chat will be disabled. It is also important to note that we review our practice in this area on an ongoing basis with the appropriate government agencies.

### **Junior School Wellbeing blog**

Our Junior School wellbeing team, led by Mr Johns, have created a Junior School wellbeing blog. The site contains a number of helpful resources from our Junior School Psychologist, Stacey Taggart, some information from a Chaplaincy and Christian Perspective from Mr Pete Oates, our Junior School Chaplain, and a number of resources that Mr Johns has included for families, particularly in the area of cyber safety for children. We will continue to update the site with additional resources as the term progresses. The JS wellbeing blog can be found at <https://blog.lakes.nsw.edu.au/js/>

### **Parent Survey**

Thank you to the many families that were able to respond to the Parent Survey we conducted at the beginning of online learning and at the end of last term.

In response to the first survey, we increased the number of video explanations that were included with Seesaw activities for the students and were also able to send out some more information around using the different features of the Seesaw platform.

We have followed up on the most recent survey through preparing packages for each student to supplement their learning and engagement with the Seesaw activities.

We received a range of feedback around the possibility of 'livestreaming' lessons as well as a similar amount of feedback building in more flexibility around lessons and activity timing so that

these could be completed at any time during the day. We have spent a significant amount of time over the past fortnight analysing the feedback given and seeking to reconcile these two, quite different, positions.

We believe that the best way forward for the moment is that Seesaw lessons will be posted at 7.00am each morning and will remain available until 7.00am the following day, at which time they will be replaced by a new set of lessons for that day. This will allow for a greater amount of flexibility in the timing and order in which the activities can be accessed. Having some physical textbooks and resources at home from the student packages will also broaden the number of ways in which students can respond to and complete activities. The Seesaw lessons are often accompanied by video or audio instructions which are as similar to the explanation of the concepts and activity instructions that a teacher would ordinarily provide in a physical classroom, as much as the online format will allow.

### **Guidance on Home Learning**

It is important to remember that this is a new experience for us all, that each child will learn differently, that each home has its own set of circumstances with our work commitments as parents and different types of access to technology and internet.

If you are finding home learning difficult as a family, please keep in touch with your child's class teacher and our team at school as outlined in the contacts in the Lakes@Home booklet. We will also be in contact with parents who have asked for us to be in touch and recorded their contact details in the most recent parent survey.

Our school families have a range of different circumstances with work commitments, access to devices and capacity to support students at home. If you are unsure of where to start or how much to do, begin by aiming for completing English and Mathematics activities each day and one other activity that interests your child and building from that foundation as it appropriate to your family circumstances.

Whilst we are working to provide a good range of quality activities for the children to support their learning and our teachers are providing a range of tasks over the course of each week that represents the full curriculum set down for primary schools, we recognise that this will work slightly differently for each child in practice and also from day to day depending on your individual circumstances. That being said, the activities that our teachers are providing are excellent, so am sure that students will, by and large, enjoy completing a good range of these.

There was an excellent article in the Sydney Morning Herald recently that may be of interest for families which featured our NSW Education Minister, Sarah Mitchell, offering some helpful advice on navigating the new paradigm of learning from home. Some of the key advice is that trying to replicate a full school day at home could be counterproductive for younger students, and a few hours worth of maths and literacy was a good foundation and starting point.

Please finds a link to the full article below:

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/focus-on-maths-and-literacy-and-don-t-beat-yourself-up-says-minister-20200401-p54q65.html>

Likewise, Professor John Hattie is a well-known researcher in education who has taken a whole range of research studies around what is most effective in maximising student learning and synthesised these in highlighting some key techniques that can be used in the classroom. We have been using a number of Hattie's techniques at Lakes Grammar for some years with pleasing success. Professor Hattie has indicated that in other circumstances around the world in the past when schools have closed down entirely for a period of time, without an online learning option, in the event of cyclones and earthquakes for example, that student progress

has been relatively unaffected and that students by and large recovered the perceived 'gap' in learning quickly and effectively. A link to the full article around Professor Hattie's comments is also included below for your convenience.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-04-17/will-missing-school-due-to-covid-19-matter-for-school-students/12154266>

### **Progress Reports**

We are beginning the process of compiling progress reports to provide a snapshot of the children's learning so far this year. We would typically provide a half-yearly report at the end of Term 2, however, are looking at options in providing a more summarised version of the report earlier than that for our school families. We understand that many parents are interested in receiving this feedback as to how the children are progressing this year in light of the current situation and transition to home learning. We will keep families updated with this process as it is finalised.

### **A final thought**

All of us miss you - our teachers, library staff, IT team, teachers' aides, grounds staff, Chaplaincy and Counselling team and office administrators. Everyone in leadership roles is missing your family too. Your children are so preciousy unique. We are all committed to helping them do their best. Seeing them experience the joy of learning is positively energising.

I am so thankful for the efforts of our staff team. For your interest, we have a staff theme in the Junior School every year. At the beginning of the year we adopted and reflected on the theme of 'let your light shine' for 2020 which we also shared with the students. This is taken from Matthew 5: 16 where Jesus says "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven". We had no idea at the time that coronavirus was incubating overseas and about to radically alter our way of life. However it has been pleasing to see the efforts of our teachers going 'over and above' to manage these ever changing times and to let their faith shine through the outworking of their application to this ongoing task!

Likewise our School is blessed by a community who seeks God's wisdom in a changing world. God's word says we should 'encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing' (1 Thessalonians 5:11). That has been our experience. Your kindness to us has helped us get through some very challenging difficulties. I also love the perseverance in our whole school community, which is a great strength. 'Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up' (Galatians 6:9).

Blessings to you and your much loved family,



Will Wallace  
Head of Junior School