



Monday March 18, 2019

Tēnā koutou Roseneath families

We are all feeling very heartbroken and raw, as I am sure you are too. You might have some questions around what we are doing here at school in response to Friday's events, so we thought we would let you know what we have said and done in classes today

We are not as naive as to think children won't talk about the events in the playground, but we are working hard to focus all of our children on messages of safety, hope and connection. More staff will be on duty to check in with children, and help keep conversations focused on helpful and kind topics. We will be shutting down conversations focused on the details of the event- we know that these conversations are safer had with you at home because you can gauge the level of information you share. We know that talking about scary and distressing events in a sensationalist way can cause more stress for children. Instead, we will validate the feelings- yes it was a scary thing for lots of people. Yes we are feeling safe. We will refocus on the 'resilience' messages. "So many people helped each other" "The police are so good at keeping us safe" and our own sense of safety "we are safe here and you are safe at home".

At 9am all teachers spoke with their class, and here is the main framework of the message we shared in classes today- with some slight variations for the age group we were sharing the message with.

*Lots of you know that something bad happened to people in Christchurch. People were hurt and that is not ok. Your parents and your teachers, and lots of people in NZ are feeling really shocked, upset and very, very sad about what happened.*

*I know you might have lots of questions. Some children might know more details or have more ideas- some of these might be right, but some of these might be guesses. You might have heard or seen some things on the news. Sometimes the news is right, and sometimes they make mistakes. Our job at school is to focus on our learning and on being kind and respectful to each other. If you have ideas or questions, it is good to talk to your parents about it, because they know the right way to talk about it for you. We want you to think about what you talk about in the playground and in class- is it kind, is it helpful? Talking about bad and scary things is not kind or helpful to others.*

*What I want you to know is that we are safe, I feel safe. You can feel safe here at school and at home. It is our job as your parents and your teachers to keep you safe.*

*We know how to keep you safe at school. That is why we remind you to follow our instructions and why we have rules. The rules help you to be safe, and help everyone be happy and able to learn.*

*At Roseneath we are always kind and respectful of each other. You are all very important to us. We are all different, and we have different strengths, beliefs, and interests- and that is the wonderful thing about our school. We look out for each other and we all work together to help each other feel safe, important and happy at school.*

*In Christchurch there were lots and lots of people who were heroes- they weren't superheroes like Spiderman, they were everyday people like you and me. The police, the ambulance workers, the doctors in the hospital worked very hard and very bravely and they are still working hard to make sure Christchurch people feel safe. There are lots of people in Christchurch who are looking after each other - they are giving each other hugs, giving flowers and gifts, and helping each other to feel safe. Some people have said "if you feel scared or alone, I will be your friend. I will walk with you, I can visit you". That is amazing and exactly how we want to be in NZ,*

*Lots of people in NZ are feeling very sad, but we are also working hard to make sure people know that we care, and that we are kind to each other. You might need some more hugs this week as you notice and feel some sad feelings. Hugs are really good when we feel sad. Hugs help our bodies to feel calm and safe. Your parents will appreciate some more hugs too! You can say "I feel like a hug!" (Remember we always ask first for a hug- otherwise it might give someone a fright!)"*

*I've nearly finished, but I just want to say again- you are safe, and you are special to us. We are here to learn and to help each other to feel happy and safe to learn at school. If we are feeling sad or worried we can give each other a hug, and we can talk about how we feel. Our Mums and Dads will be able to talk to us about our worries.*

Some classes have followed this conversation with some Random Act of Kindness and some friendship activities. All classes are following their usual routines, because we know predictable routines create a sense of safety for children.

We will attach the advice from the Ministry of Education here. Some other links that we have found really useful are:

<https://www.theparentingplace.com/how-to-talk-about/world-trauma/>

<http://theconversation.com/how-to-talk-to-children-about-terrorism-78290>

Some of you will have heard Nathan Mikaere-Wallis on various media outlets over the weekend. As a trauma specialist and Neuroscientist his advice is:

1. Turn off tv and media - it will reinforce trauma
2. Show you are concerned like them, but still feel safe now. If you feel safe, they are likely to.

3. Express confidence in how quickly the police responded and their ability to protect us
4. Be aware of how tweens are responding. Eleven is a vulnerable age for loss and grief.
5. Give them a sense of agency, eg people are wearing red to show support for Muslim people and Christchurch people. The red stands for Canterbury and signals love. This can help move them into action mode and relieve their feelings linked to trauma
6. Pamper them, cuddle them, support them.

At home this week you might have a few more conversations with your child- they may have some more questions for you. You might talk about their feelings. You might share some more cuddles. You might try to keep as much routine and consistency as possible.

Please get in touch with us if you have anything you want to discuss. As a community I know we wrap around our young people and give them a strong sense of belonging and safety.

Noho ora mai,

Adelle Broadmore and the Roseneath team.