

# Keeping in Touch

*Kia Ora Flora & whanau,*

*On Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March at 1.30pm New Zealand's Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, broadcast that because of a virus called Covid19, New Zealand was moving into alert level 3 & that in 48 hours we would be transitioning into alert level 4 – home isolation.*

*Your whanau, Flora, has labelled this time a "Rāhui". In the Maori culture, a rāhui is defined as a temporary tapu restricting access to, or use of, an area or resource. There is so much beauty in labelling this current situation a rāhui, as we stay in or homes protecting our health & giving the environment time to heal.*

*We've all been asked to stay at home in our 'bubbles' for the next 4 weeks with the hope to eradicate this virus. This has meant that Old MacDonald's is also closed for 4 weeks, but your Kaiako & I, as well as the other staff at Old Macs are trying our very best to keep in contact with our Old Macs friends & whanau that we hold so near & dear to us. We've been organising weekly one-on-one video calls with whanau, hosting multiple group Shoots video calls & sending photos/videos back & forth to one another throughout the week. As your Kaiako, I treasure the relationship that I have with both you & your whanau, Flora. As well as having a secure & trusting relationship with my tamariki, at Old Macs we see great importance in developing strong connections with our tamariki's whanau as well. Being able to keep in touch with you & your whanau Flora has given me the greatest of opportunities to get to know more about where you come from & to learn what's important to you as a whanau. We're so lucky that we have this option to keep in touch during this time. I really appreciate how supportive & inviting your whanau has been towards keeping in touch & welcoming me into your home. I cherish the relationship that the two of us have built during our time in Te Wana & I appreciate having the opportunity to stay relevant in your life during this time. This has secured in my mind the beautiful relationship that we have & that your whanau sees importance in us keeping in touch too. It's not every day that I get to see you in your home environment, where you find happiness & have created so many memories. Home is where you feel comfortable & safe, a place that you know better than anyone else. It's a personal space that is important to you & I feel so lucky & grateful to have you sharing with me this place of significance that has played such an important part in making you, you!*

*Although this is quite an unnerving time for the world, this situation is also a great opportunity for us to focus on what we truly value. It's given us the chance to slow down our often fast-paced lives & focus on what's important, family & health. How lucky are you Flora, that you get to spend each day at home with your absolute favourite people. There's a beautiful quote by Alison Gopnik that states, "What children observe most closely, explore most obsessively & imagine most vividly are the people around them. There are no perfect toys. There is no magic formula. Parents & other caregivers teach young children by paying attention & interacting with them naturally & most of all by just allowing them to play".*

*I believe this quote captures the beauty & significance of our current circumstance. Our tamariki are observing their parents/role models & are acting like sponges, taking in all this knowledge. Our tamariki are currently in the environment where they feel their most secure & happy, so their brains are ready to learn alongside their parents as they get involved in the 'real work' that is taking place at home.*



*It's been really special video calling you & your whanau over the last couple of weeks Miss Flora. It seems that you're really enjoying your time at home! Mum has been labelled an essential worker during this time of rāhui, so you've been at home most days with Dad, Maia & Stirling. Deedee had been sticking to just her house for a couple of weeks after coming back from an overseas holiday, which you found quite upsetting Flora but over the last week or two you've been able to go visit her again, which I know you will have really cherished!*

*I had a beautiful conversation with your parents a couple of weeks ago Flora. They spoke so highly of Old MacDonald's empowering independence & child led play & that you, Stirling & Maia are so competent in creating your own play & leading your own day at home. I really cherished hearing your parents appreciate our philosophy at Old Macs. The truth is though Flora, you & your siblings are empowered individuals because of the respect & guidance your whanau provide you at home. You're seen as capable in your household & given the opportunities to explore & experiment, broadening your horizons & knowledge about your own competence & independence! This seed has been planted at home & our passion is to nurture & encourage this confidence at Old Macs.*

*It was during one of my video calls with you & your whanau Flora that your Mum & I watched on in disbelief as you lifted up a metal tilt trolley & began wheeling it from the house to the driveway, telling your Mum & I that you were "off to find Dad". Your Mum & I smiled from ear to ear, beaming with pride watching little Flora (who doesn't see herself as little Flora) determined to wheel this heavy trolley all by herself. Not only did you persevere with this task Flora, but you managed to transport it your entire intended distance without any assistance. That's you in a nutshell Flora!*

*You've been keeping busy during your days at home Flora. You've been helping Dad & your siblings in the garden, learning how to ride your scooter & been exploring the playground your Dad made for Stirling & Maia. I don't think Dad expected you to take such an interest climbing all the way to the top of the ladder, but that's totally you Flora, pushing your boundaries to the fullest!*

*It's been so beautiful catching up with you over video call Flora. Seeing you & hearing you say "my Ella" just fills me up with so much love. I miss you & love you so much my little friend! I look forward to our next video call already!*

*Arohanui, Ella  
April 2020*

