

# A Spotlight on Sylvia Park School

## Part 2 of 3

SPS Connect  
Hauora, Whanaungatanga,  
Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Kaitiakitanga



**This is the second of a series of three spotlights from Sylvia Park School in which they share what they did to ensure learning continued for ākonga during the lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, and what they learned from their experiences.**



**In this spotlight, they focus on Ngā wawata: Hauora, Whanaungatanga, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Kaitiakitanga.**

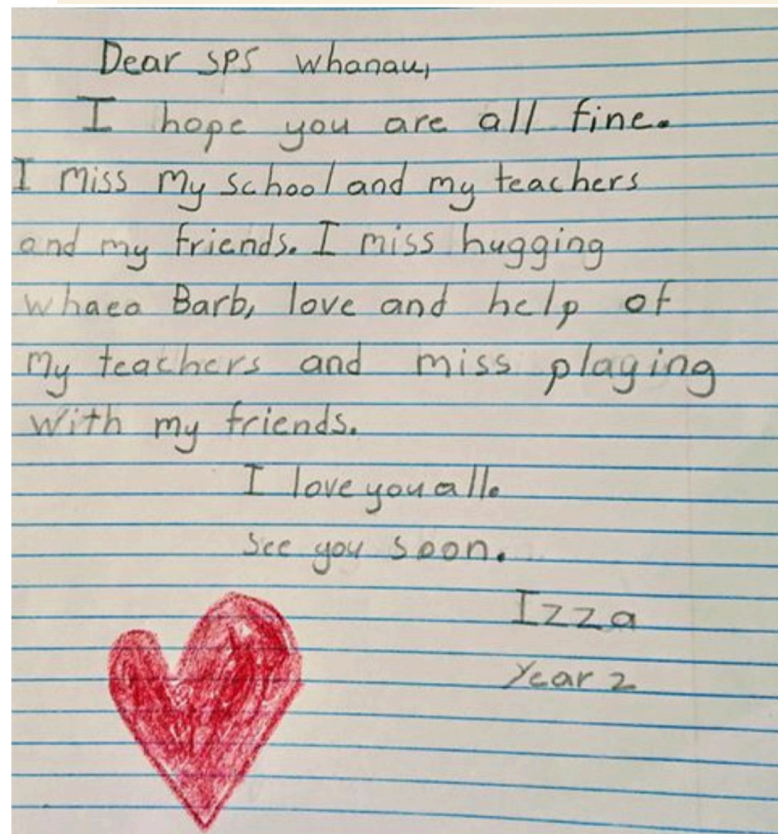
**Read on to find out more about their amazing learning journey during the pandemic.**

## **Hauora** Mind, body and soul

Right from the beginning, the well-being of our students, whānau and staff was our primary goal. Through existing relationships and careful listening by staff members, whānau that needed food, emotional or other support were given what they needed or put in touch with appropriate support organisations. A key group of staff was dedicated to organising this.

The insecurity in our environment, sudden changing needs of our work and competing pressures of personal preparations caused anxiety for many staff members at the beginning. Team leaders emphasised the need for balance and made a point of regular contact and checking in with their team, often daily at the beginning. We had several online staff meetings through Zoom and celebrated our successes while acknowledging the challenges and supporting each other.

Our students were monitored by their teachers and activities were set for them that supported hauora. Additionally, school-wide taha tinana (physical) challenges were posted on Facebook by a variety of teachers for everyone to take part in.



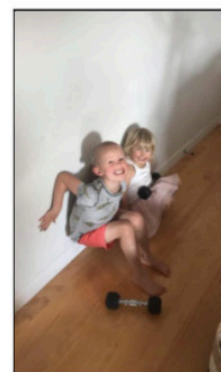
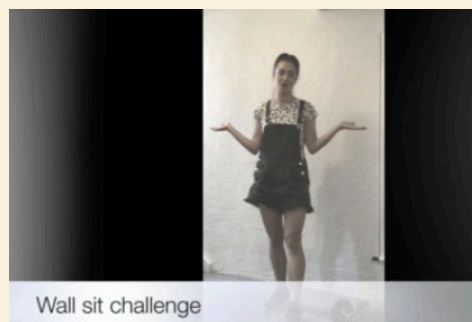


## What we learned

- » Supporting the hauora of our whānau was the most important thing we could do in this situation and was essential to creating effective home learning environments. We did have whānau who would not have had their needs met without school contact.
- » Anxiety was a very real issue, especially at the beginning of this period. With adapting, building confidence, and regular supportive contact, this became easier.
- » Balancing work and personal responsibilities caused stress for whānau and staff. For some people, this eased with routines and increasing independence of students. For others, it didn't ease.
- » Staying connected was vital - with teams, with classes, with leaders, and as a staff.
- » The taha tinana challenges were great for physical activity but also for students seeing a variety of teachers online. The challenges that were competitive were most popular.
- » It was very difficult for many students - and teachers - to spend so much time at the computer and several whānau expressed concern at this.
- » Student feedback was that they enjoyed being in charge of setting up their own learning environment - music/silence, open windows/learning in bed, inside/outside, alone/around whānau.
- » Routine was very important for wellbeing: things like karakia at 9am to come together and being ready and dressed for the first meeting.
- » Whānau were concerned about students not being able to spend time with their friends and classmates.
- » Students missed their friends for playing with but also strongly for learning with. The chat groups that occurred in Google Hangouts were critical to their taha whānau.

**"I have really enjoyed getting to know my class and seeing them in a different light. Many are more open than what I have seen so far this year and their confidence, humour, personality, knowledge, all of this and more has shone brightly, captured by their small cameras."**

- Ambrose (Teacher)



## Te Tiriti o Waitangi Partnership, protection, participation

Whanaungatanga and kaitiakitanga were central values during SPS Connect. We looked after our community so we could move forward together.

There were also actions that specifically integrated te reo Māori or tikanga Māori in some classes. In the Pohutukawa whānau, students learned a new waiata every week. Learning the words and actions were part of the tasks for each day and during the daily zoom meetings the classes could practice together.

Te Manawa whānau had tasks where they used online tools for learning new phrases and kupu in te reo Māori. One student took the initiative to integrate her new learning of te reo into her new learning in the NanoGirl's Labs STEM activities and shared these with her class.

In Te Puna Waioara, students began each day with karakia and waiata, as they do in class. This consistency and routine set many students up for a positive start to the day.

The Ministry of Education provided printed learning packs in te reo Māori and we ensured each student in Te Puna Waioara had access to these.

## What we learned

- » Most whānau loved being part of their children's learning in such an involved and ongoing way. Staff and parents have asked about how we can continue this when we are 'back to normal'.
- » Siblings were often included in each other's learning activities. This caused stress for some, but many times strengthened relationships and gave the chance to have fun learning together.
- » Staff, students and parents spoke very positively about the value of the 9am meetings.
- » We found that with some parents, the couple of days before lockdown when laptops were collected and packs delivered were the best opportunity to learn about their needs and expectations. In planning for potential future events such as these, how could we use those moments best?
- » Our support staff were key to doing a lot of tasks that freed teachers to focus on learning and were invaluable in enabling success in SPS Connect.
- » Learning and sharing online allowed new friendships between students to develop as they learned about each other in different ways. As well as this, there were also new friendships between whānau as they learned about each other.
- » Teachers were very conscious of being manuhiri in whānau's, and colleagues', homes. This was intimidating for some, especially at the beginning.

**“They came together to learn in the lockdown. Before that, they never listened to each other.”**

Parent, talking about her kids helping each other with their learning



## Whanaungatanga

### Growing relationships through learning

Learning at home was a wonderful opportunity to engage whānau in authentic learning and this was not wasted at SPS. Toys, pets, gardens, siblings and grown-ups not only supported learning, but often became context and characters. Students were able to celebrate their individuality and share these things with their classes. For example, in Te Manawa, passion project presentations and talent quest performances often included whānau in the learning as well as the class meetings where they were shared.

Every class met at 9am through video conference technology so that they could all see their teacher and their classmates, and be set up for learning that day. Fun activities such as mini-challenges and Kahoots contributed to engagement and relationship building in classes.

Staff meetings, team meetings and social staff gatherings were also done via video conference so that we could regularly see each other and stay connected. Barb made sure that every staff member had a valued role to play in delivering SPS Connect.

## Kaitiakitanga

If one person can change the world, imagine what a whole school can do

The teachers in our Enviro team created activities that could be used across the whole school to encourage students to interact with and learn from and through, the natural environment, in their gardens and neighbourhoods. These challenges were connected to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and integrated with learning across a variety of subject areas.

Many parents really appreciated having activities that were offline and the Enviro Challenges were a great way to get students purposefully outside and away from devices, especially for the seniors.

At school, during level 3, many tasks were completed that enhanced our learning environment and created a safe, interesting and creative place.



**“The family had fun learning together and we got to see Gabriel go from being shy to dance in front of us to being able to do it with confidence.”**

Michelle (parent)



Jadynn and Amanda practising te reo and sharing with Jadynn's class

