

# Instructions to Schools

## Definitions:

- “*Secretary*” means the Secretary of Education
- “*Ministry of Education Instructions To Schools*”, hereinafter referred to as **Instructions** are issued under Section 9 (d) of the education Act 1986/87 and its amendments 1989 and 1992.
- “*Student – teacher contact time*” means the time that a school is open **and** that registered teachers are responsible for the management of students for the delivery of planned and organized programmes and activities. Planned and organized activities include the delivery of the curriculum as set out in Section 7 of these **Instructions** and may also include activities such as field trips, school assemblies, sports and cultural events where these are part of the school’s curriculum.

## 1 Application:

These **Instructions** shall apply to all schools and students enrolled in any Government or Private school in the Cook Islands, which deliver education to:

- 1.1 Early Childhood students
- 1.2 Primary students enrolled in Year 1 to Year 6
- 1.3 Secondary students enrolled in Years 7 to 13

## 2 Ages of Attendance

### Early Childhood

- 2.1 Any child who has attained the age of *three and one half* years may be accepted for enrolment in an Early Childhood Education Centre.

### 2.2 Primary

A child shall be enrolled in a Primary School by the day they turn *five*.

### Secondary

- 2.3 All students are required to attend school from the date of enrolment to the end of the school year during which the student attains the age of *15* years.
- 2.4 Every secondary school shall enrol and continue to enrol any student who seeks to be enrolled beyond the age of *15* years unless the student has been expelled from a school.

## 3 Minimum Hours of Instruction

### Early Childhood Education Centre

- 3.1 An ECE Centre shall ensure there is *student – teacher contact time* for not less than **two** hours on any day that the centre is open.

### **Primary school**

- 3.2 A primary school shall ensure there is *student – teacher contact time* for not less than **four** hours on any day that the school is open.

### **Secondary school**

- 3.3 Every secondary school shall ensure there is *student – teacher contact time* for not less than **five** hours on any day that the school is open.

### **All schools**

- 3.4 Additional planned activities such as parent report sessions, gala day activities, professional development workshops may take place after the minimum hours of *student – teacher contact time* have been met.

## **4 Terms of Instruction – minimum days open**

- 4.1 The *terms of instruction* in any year shall be those set by the Secretary and conveyed to schools by way of the Ministry of Education’s official “Annual Term Calendar”. The Calendar provides the minimum **number of** days that the school is required to be open in any year.

- 4.2 A school may request in writing from the Secretary to vary the dates of the *terms of instruction* and this will be considered provided the request has the support of the School Committee and provided the minimum of number of days required by the Calendar that the school shall be kept open can be accommodated in the request.

## **5 Student-teacher contact days**

The minimum number of student-teacher contact days in any one school year shall not be less than **the minimum outlined in the Calendar**, except as provided for in Section 6.2

## **6 Closure of Schools**

- 6.1 The Secretary may give approval, either verbally and then in writing or in writing alone for any school to be closed for a period of time during *term* days for any natural cause such as epidemic, flooding, cyclone, water shortage or other due cause. The closure of a school for a health reason [e.g. epidemic] shall be made in consultation with the Secretary of Health.
- 6.2 When a school is closed by the Secretary under 6.1 the days for which the school is closed may be regarded as term days for the purpose of compliance with Section 5.

## **7 Courses of Instruction**

- 7.1 All courses and programmes of instruction at ECE, primary and secondary levels shall be based upon approved Curriculum Statements, Curriculum Guidelines and the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework as published by the Secretary from time to time.

7.2 A school that wishes to delivery a curriculum that is substantially different from those provided by the National Curriculum Statements, Curriculum Guidelines or which falls outside of the intent of the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework shall first obtain written approval from the Secretary. Application for approval shall be lodged with the Secretary no later than the commencement of the Fourth Term in the year preceding the introduction of the course(s). Application shall be made on the *Alternative Curriculum* Form, a copy of which is available on line from the Ministry of Education's website and is attached to these nstructions as Appendix A. Approval to provide alternative courses may be granted by the Secretary for specified periods of time.

### **Early Childhood Education Programme**

7.3 ECE Courses of instruction shall be those set down in the Early Childhood Curriculum Programme and should include appropriate activities in the key developmental areas of identity, inquiry and independence using:

- Language(s)
- Mathematics – including number work
- Thematically developed learning programmes – based on the interests and needs of the children at the Centre
- Motor and coordination skills
- Social skills.

### **Primary Courses**

7.4 Primary courses of instruction shall be based on the essential learning areas of:

- Languages – both Cook Islands Maori (local dialect) and English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- The Arts – (including Music, Visual Art, Dance and Drama)
- Physical Well Being (Including Physical Education, Sports and Health)
- Technology and Enterprise – (as curriculum development is completed and introduced to schools)

7.5 The primary curriculum shall also ensure that the *essential skills and attitudes and values* as set out in the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework are included within the curriculum delivered

### **Secondary Courses**

7.6 *Students enrolled in Years 7 – 10*

Schools are to ensure that students enrolled in Years 7 – 10 continue to receive a broad and balanced curriculum, which builds upon the knowledge and skills developed in primary schooling and is based upon the official CI Curriculum Statements in the essential learning areas of:

- Languages – both Cook Islands Maori (local dialect) and English
- Mathematics

- Science
- Social Science
- The Arts – (including Music, Art, Craftwork, Singing, Dancing, Culture)
- Physical Well Being (Including Physical Education, Sports and Health)
- Technology and Enterprise – as curriculum development is completed and introduced to schools
- The balanced curriculum will include Careers Education and ICT. .

7.7 The secondary curriculum shall also ensure that the *essential skills and attitudes and values* as set out in the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework are included.

7.8 *Students enrolled in Year 11*

Students enrolled at Year 11 should continue to receive a balanced curriculum, whilst working towards NCEA qualifications. The curriculum for these students must include delivery of programmes of instruction from at least one language (CI Maori or English) and Mathematics. A minimum level of competency in numeracy and literacy is required for the award of NCEA Level 1. The structure and composition of the curriculum, other than for the language(s) and Mathematics requirement will be governed by the needs and interests of students, the resources available to the school and the requirements of local and international qualifications that may be published from time to time.

7.9 *Students enrolled in Years 12 & 13*

Students enrolled at Years 12 and 13 are expected to specialise in curriculum areas that meet their needs and interests; the curriculum is therefore not expected to be either as broad or balanced as that of earlier years. There is no curriculum restriction placed on students enrolled in classes at Years 12 and 13. For students entering for NCEA Level 2 or 3 qualifications schools must ensure that any course prescription or university entry criteria required by the qualification authority are met.

## **8 Minimum time allocation per essential learning area**

### **Early Childhood Education Centres**

8.1 There is no minimum time allocation for any key area of development. An ECE Centre should ensure that there is an appropriate balance of time across the several developmental areas.

### **Primary schools**

Schools should be providing instruction for their students for a minimum of 1200 minutes per week. Within this overall allocation schools should be providing for all students a balanced coverage of the Cook Islands' curriculum at the appropriate levels. This may vary over weeks or terms but must provide coverage of all essential learning areas by the end of the school year.

- 8.2 The minimum time allocation per essential learning area and by Grade level is set out in Appendices B1 & B2. The minimum time allocation is stated in minutes per week, based upon a minimum time of 1200 minutes per week. The minimum time allocation is designed to ensure delivery of a balanced curriculum.

### **Secondary schools**

- 8.3 *Students enrolled in Years 7– 10*  
 Students at this level should receive a minimum of 1500 minutes per week of instruction. Core subjects should run all year and there should be a minimum of two lessons per week of PE. The focus in planning the timetable should be on providing students with the possibility of building basic blocks of skills and developing confidence in their ability. The minimum time allocation is stated in minutes per week, based upon a minimum time of 1500 minutes per week. The minimum time allocation is designed to ensure delivery of a balanced curriculum. The minimum time allocation per week for the essential learning areas listed in Section 7 of these Regulations shall be;

	Time (in Minutes)
Cook Islands Maori language	180
English	180
Mathematics	180
Science	150
Social Science	150
The Arts	120
Physical Well-being	120
Technology	120
<b>Total minimum time</b>	<b>1200</b>

- 8.4 *Students enrolled in Year 11*
- |                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Language (CI Maori or English) | 180 |
| Mathematics                    | 180 |

## **9 Progress between Year Levels**

- 9.1 The Principal of the school is responsible for deciding on the movement of a student from one level to another. The Ministry of Education supports social promotion and unless there are exceptional circumstances, it is expected that students will proceed from one Year level to the next at the start of each school year.
- 9.2 Secondary schools with students enrolled at Years 11, 12 or 13 are to ensure that the curriculum levels meet the needs and abilities of students. This may mean that some students will need to repeat a Year level (to complete a qualification) whilst others may undertake courses at two levels (multi-levelling)

**10 Student Assessment**

All students to whom these **Instructions** apply shall be assessed regularly for the purpose of monitoring levels of achievement. Assessment may take the form of diagnostic tests at early primary (SEA tests), at the start of Year 4 and at the end of Year 6.

**11 Language of Instruction – primary schools**

Each school in consultation with its community shall decide on the language of instruction for its students. The Ministry of Education supports Cook Island Maori as a first language until at least Year 3.

Appendix C provides schools with a guideline of approximate times of language of instruction to be used at different grade levels when CI Maori is the student's first language and where English is the student's first language.

**Appendix A**

**Alternative Curriculum**

The \_\_\_\_\_ School, makes application to the Secretary of Education to offer students an alternative curriculum, to that specified in the Cook Islands Ministry of Education Instructions to schools

**1 Curriculum Area** (State title): \_\_\_\_\_

**2 Grade/Form Levels** (State grade/form levels applied for): \_\_\_\_\_

**3 Curriculum Objectives** (State main course objectives):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (continued on separate sheet if necessary)

**4 Curriculum Content** (Detail scope and sequence of content):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (continued on separate sheet if necessary)

**5 Resources/Texts** (Detail the main resources/texts to be used):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (continued on separate sheet)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**For Office Use Only**

The above course is approved/ not approved. Approval for \_\_\_\_\_  
School to provide instruction as detailed above is granted for a period of \_ years  
commencing on \_\_\_\_\_ and ending on \_\_\_\_\_. Continuation to provide the  
above course is subject to audit report by the Directorate of Audit & Quality Assurance

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of Education

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B1 –These are general guidelines only. It is expected that many activities will cross several essential learning areas and therefore may be used to integrate units of learning (thematic approach)**

**PRIMARY SCHOOL AVERAGE WEEKLY MINIMUM TIME ALLOCATION**

BY YEAR LEVEL AND ESSENTIAL LEARNING AREA - for Students with **Maori** as 1<sup>st</sup> Language

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2</b>	<b>YEAR 3</b>	<b>YEAR 4</b>	<b>YEAR 5</b>	<b>YEAR 6</b>
MAORI	480 oral/read/write	420 oral/read/write	380 oral/read/write	340 oral/read/write	110 oral/read/write	110 oral/read/write
ENGLISH	120 oral only	180 oral only	250 oral only	340 oral/read/write	460 oral/read/write	460 oral/read/write
MATHEMATICS	150	150	200	250	250	250
SCI/TECH	60	60	90	90	100	100
SOCIAL SCI	60	60	90	90	100	100
PHYSICAL WELL-BEING	180	180	130	130	120	120
THE ARTS	150	150	60	60	60	60
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1200</b>

**APPENDIX B2 -**

**PRIMARY SCHOOL AVERAGE WEEKLY MINIMUM TIME ALLOCATION**

BY YEAR LEVEL AND ESSENTIAL LEARNING AREA - for Students with **English** as 1<sup>st</sup> Language

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>YEAR 2</b>	<b>YEAR 3</b>	<b>YEAR 4</b>	<b>YEAR 5</b>	<b>YEAR 6</b>
ENGLISH	480 oral/read/write	420 oral/read/write	380 oral/read/write	340 oral/read/write	340 oral/read/write	340 oral/read/write
MAORI	120 oral only	180 oral only	250 oral only	340 oral/read/write	340 oral/read/write	340 oral/read/write
MATHEMATICS	150	150	200	250	250	250
SCI/TECH	60	60	90	90	100	100
SOCIAL SCI	60	60	90	90	100	100
PHYSICAL WELL-BEING	180	180	130	130	120	120
THE ARTS	150	150	60	60	60	60
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1200</b>

## APPENDIX C - LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

### MODEL A - FIRST LANGUAGE COOK ISLANDS MAORI (local dialect)

Pre	95 %	5%
Y1	85 %	15 %
Y2	70 %	30 %
Y3	60 %	40 %
Y4	50 %	50 %
Y5	20 %	80 %
Y6	20 %	80 %

### MODEL B - FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH

Pre	95 %	5%
Y1	85 %	15 %
Y2	70 %	30 %
Y3	60 %	40 %
Y4	50 %	50 %
Y5	50 %	50 %
Y6	50 %	50 %

 **INSTRUCTION THROUGH FIRST LANGUAGE**

 **INSTRUCTION THROUGH SECOND LANGUAGE**