



COOK ISLANDS

Ministry of Education

Maraurau o te Pae Api'i

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Learning During COVID-19 Alert Level 2, 3 and 4

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REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision description
May 2020	1	First draft
Aug 2021	2	Reviewed to align with revised Alert Level system, 2021.

1. STATEMENT OF POLICY

During the COVID-19 pandemic, continuation of education services in the Cook Islands is to be guided by the Cook Islands COVID-19 4 Level Alert System. The Alert system is led by Te Marae Ora (TMO) and is aligned with New Zealand's system where each Alert Level describes the different measures required. (Appendix A).

Alert level 3 and 4 indicate threat to the country from COVID-19. During Alert level 3 and 4, all educational facilities are closed.

Alert level 2 requires schools to apply preventative measures including physical distancing and hygiene measures as per the TMO national response framework.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) acknowledges that some parents/caregivers may not want their children to attend school during this time. This policy provides guidance for learning as an interim measure during Alert level 2 and gives guidance on what to expect during Alert Levels 3 and 4.

2. PURPOSE

The MoE is committed to meeting the following legislation and guidelines:

- i.) 'Learning for Life' - Cook Islands Education Master Plan 2008-2023
Learning and Teaching.
Focus: Equitable access to quality learning and the experience of success through a range of programmes that meet individual needs and celebrate individual talents.
- ii.) 'Te Kaveinga Nui' - National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2020
Goal 8 - Inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities.
- iii.) Ministry of Education and Te Marae Ora COVID-19, 4 Level Alert System.
- iv.) Cook Islands Curriculum Framework
- v.) Education Act, Cook Islands. 2012.
Section 23. Compulsory Enrolment and Attendance
- vi.) Student Attendance, Transfer and Truancy Policy, EAP 03 003
MoE
- vii.) Public Health Act, Cook Islands. 2004.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all parties who are bound by the requirements of the Education Act (2012) including all private schools who are bound by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with MoE and parents/caregivers of enrolled students.

4. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES and OUTCOMES

- Ensure the health and wellbeing of learners during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Recognise parents/caregivers concerns for health and wellbeing of learners during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Provide guidance on expectations during Alert levels 2, 3 and 4.
- Provide guidelines for learning at home during Alert level 2.
- Ensure home learning allows for learners to be delivered the full Cook Islands curriculum
- Ensure processes are in place to outline responsibilities of home learning during Alert level 2

5. POLICY DETAIL

5.1. COVID-19 Alert Levels and Education

5.1.1. Alert Level 1 – Prepare

- Schools are open and all students enrolled and attending as per Education Act, 2012, Section 23.

5.1.2. Alert Level 2 – Reduce

- Schools are open and all students enrolled and attending as per Education Act, 2012, Section 23.
- Self-isolation and/or quarantine may be required for all staff and students who have traveled internationally until negative test results received.
- Unwell staff and students are to remain at home, following TMO guidelines.
- Increased monitoring of student and staff absences.
- Contact tracing App active and in use across all education facilities.
- School visitors, walk-in's may be restricted. All visitors are requested to tag in and physical distance, where appropriate.

- Hygiene measures reinforced across all education facilities – including regular wiping down of surfaces and items, and sanitizing.
- Restrictions on professional development opportunities, large scale national education events or school/ sporting events may be applied, upon advice from TMO.
- Continuation of NCEA examinations and assessments are guided by NZQA Alert level 2 requirements.
- Pastoral care processes active including 0800 3333 free hotline established for all school aged students and staff to access counselling support. Regular check-ins with scholarship students, and impacted staff.
- COVID preparedness revisited for schools, providers and HQ.

5.1.2.a. Home learning when schools are designated as open:

During Alert Level 2, parents/caregivers may apply to the MoE to provide home learning to specific learners, in consultation with teachers and the school.

Parent/caregivers must apply in writing to the MoE's Planning & Development division prior to the commencement of home learning with information that includes:

- i. detailed reasons why home learning is being requested
- ii. evidence that the parent/caregiver has time, resources and initiative to facilitate appropriate home learning
- iii. support from the school of which the learner is enrolled, or evidence of collaboration
- iv. a date when the learner will return to school (no longer than one term, or maximum of 12 weeks).

Home learning will entail:

- Provision of learning by the parent/caregiver upon advice from the school.
- Parents will have the responsibility to ensure a full curriculum is delivered while the student is at home. As this opportunity is only an interim measure, it is done in good faith and the MoE, through the school, will be monitoring or checking on families.
- Resourcing will be the sole responsibility of the parent/caregiver.
- Enrolment will be maintained, however parents are to inform when the child is sick and not available for learning to inform school records
- Responsibilities of parent is to update school weekly on progress
- Interim home learning ceases on the date agreed open, as per 5.1.2.a (iv), whereby the learner is expected to return back to school on the next available day the school is open. Interim home learning will also cease when there is a change to Alert Levels 3 and 4.

- Learning at home during Alert level 2 applications can be submitted during this time by families to the Director of Planning & Development, but approval is subject to meeting all application requirements as per Education Act 2012, section 24.

5.1.3. Alert Level 3: Restrict

- Schools are closed. MoE and schools are responsible to ensure continuity of learning via isolated teaching model.
- Continuation of NCEA examinations and assessments are guided by NZQA Alert Level 3 requirements.

5.1.4. Alert Level 4: Lockdown

Schools are closed. MoE and schools are responsible to ensure continuity of learning via isolated teaching model.

NCEA examinations and assessments are suspended due to school closures and NQZA will inform of alternative date options for any region experiencing Alert level 4.

6. RISK and MITIGATION

The table below lists examples of possible consequences, along with mitigating actions, that relate to this policy not being adhered to:

Issue/Risk - examples	Mitigation - examples
Parents/caregiver unable to provide adequate educational opportunities for learners via home learning	Approval for Home learning during an Alert Level 2 will only be given under meeting the strict requirements of the application process. If a school deems a parent or caregiver is no longer able to provide adequate learning for the child and has sufficient evidence of this, the approval status under this policy will be revoked and the child must return to school the next school day after notification.
Poor health and wellbeing of learners	Student support services will be informed immediately of any concerns and the support framework activated in collaboration with relevant stakeholders like Ministry of Internal Affairs if needed. Student support can visit homes when necessary.
Increased workload for teachers and schools	Communication is key between all relevant stakeholders and planning ahead of time is a necessary factor. Teachers are encouraged to utilize the online resources recommended by the MoE

7. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles	Responsibilities
Planning & Development Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process and monitor all Home learning during Alert Level 2 applications • Maintain a register of families that have applied and are granted approval • Review the impact of this policy one year after implementation.
Learning Support Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice to both parents and/or schools for curriculum related enquiries as required • Provide advice about online learning • Provide advice on relevant educational activities and other relevant learning and teaching to support a home learning environment.
School/ Learning Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain supportive and regular communication with the parents of students who have been given approval for home learning • Keep students enrolled and informed via school notices • Receive information on sick leave for students • Provide support for teachers when and where needed.
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to a relevant learning plan for student(s) in collaboration with the parent(s) of the student granted approval for home learning • Provide advice for parents on a learning plan for students • Provide support for parents to facilitate the learning of their children at home • Provide advice on relevant online learning platforms • Provide advice when requested on Curriculum detail • Receive progress reports from

	parents and relevant teaching and learning strategies that enhance student home learning environment and routine.
Parents/ Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a relevant learning plan in collaboration with teachers • Facilitate an engaging learning plan for child(ren) that aligns with a plan developed in collaboration with their child's teacher • Ensure the learning plan is sufficiently resourced and provide a sufficient learning environment for their children • Ensure 5 hours of learning for child(ren) each school day • Follow the plan to ensure that the fundamental learning requirements are covered and aligned as much as possible to the Cook Islands Curriculum Framework • Report weekly to school (Friday) • Communicate with school regularly and/or when in need of advice.
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required to participate in the identified home learning plan, collaboratively developed by parents, teachers and students for a minimum of 4 hours for Primary students and 5 hours for Secondary students per day, non-inclusive of breaks.

8. MONITORING, EVALUATION and REVIEW

The Planning & Development Division will monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of this policy and report as required. The policy will be reviewed 1 year from the date of implementation and biennially thereafter.

9. DEFINITIONS and ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Meaning
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a new respiratory illness caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2

	which was first reported in December 2019.
MoE	Cook Islands Ministry of Education
Pandemic	(of a disease) prevalent over a whole country or the world.
TMO	Te Marae Ora – Cook Islands Ministry of Health

10. APPENDICES

Appendix A – COVID-19 4 Level Alert system – Ministry of Education Response Framework, 2021.



D Cochrane
Secretary of Education

30. July. 2021

Date





Cook Islands Ministry of Education – National COVID-19 Response Framework

The below framework is a prepared response to the **Cook Islands 4 – level COVID-19 Alert System**. The Alert system is led by Te Marae Ora Ministry of Health and is aligned with New Zealand's system where each Alert Level describes the different measures required.

ALERT LEVEL 1: PREPARE	ALERT LEVEL 2: REDUCE	ALERT LEVEL 3: RESTRICT	ALERT LEVEL 4: LOCKDOWN
<p>COVID-19 is not present in the Cook Islands and is controlled in New Zealand with no community transmission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarantine-free travel (QFT) between NZ and the Cook Islands is permitted, providing travelers have spent a minimum, of 14 days in either country before travel. Stay home if you're sick, report flu-like symptoms to TMO. Wash and dry hands thoroughly, cough into elbow, don't touch your face. People are encouraged to maintain a record of where they've been if they haven't registered for Cook safe or downloaded the Cook Safe + contact tracing app. No restrictions on gatherings, workplaces or services, but organisers are encouraged to maintain records of attendees to enable contact tracing. 	<p>COVID-19 is not present in the Cook Islands but there is a case of community transmission in New Zealand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Isolation and quarantine may be required for some arrivals until negative test results received. There will be intensive targeted testing and contact tracing of arrivals. Travel to the Pa Enua is restricted. Maintain physical distancing of 2 metres from people in public spaces, and 1 metre in workplaces where practical. All educational facilities remain open. Businesses can remain open if maintaining physical distancing and contact tracing. Face-coverings encouraged on public transport and aircraft. Children under 12 are exempt. No more than 100 people permitted at gathering (including weddings and funerals). Restaurants, bars and hospitality businesses must keep groups of customers separated, with maximum 100 people at a time. Health and disability care services operate as normally as possible. Sport and recreation activities allowed, subject to approval by 	<p>COVID-19 has been detected in the Cook Islands and community transmission may be occurring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-way QFT and passenger arrival suspended for a minimum of 72 hours. Intensive targeted testing of recent arrivals and close contacts from previous 14 days. Self-Isolation and quarantine required for recent arrivals for a minimum of 7 days. Closure of all educational facilities, churches, sport and social activities and other non-essential services for 72 hours. People instructed to stay home in their bubble other than for essential personal movement for a minimum period of 72 hours. People must work from home unless that is not possible. Pa Enua travel is highly restricted. Gatherings of up to 10 people allowed but only for funerals or weddings. Healthcare services must use non-contact and virtual consultations where possible. Face covering mandatory with physical distancing and hygiene practices maintain outside your bubble. Businesses cannot offer 	<p>There is more than one case of COVID-19 in the Cook Islands and community transmission may be occurring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People must stay home in their bubbles other than for essential activities, including work. Businesses closed except for essential services (example supermarkets, pharmacies, clinics, petrol stations) and lifeline utilities. Domestic/Pa Enua travel is severely limited. Two-way QFT and passenger arrivals suspended for a minimum of 14 days. Intensive targeted testing of recent arrivals and close contacts from previous 14 days. Self-Isolation and quarantine required for recent arrivals for a minimum period of 14 days Face coverings mandatory with physical distancing and hygiene practices maintained outside your bubble All gathering cancelled and all public venues and non-essential businesses closed. All educational facilities closed. Healthcare is reprioritized. Rationing of supplies and requisition of facilities is possible.

	<p>TMO. Certain conditions such as physical distancing where practical, restrictions on numbers of contact tracing required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public venues can open if they comply with public health measures and ensure 2 metre physical distancing and contact tracing 	<p>services that involve close personal contact, unless it is a supermarket, primary produce retailer, pharmacy, petrol station or hardware store providing foods to trade customers, or it is an emergency or critical situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend NZ visitors to return to NZ as soon as practically able. 	
EDUCATION RESPONSE: ALERT LEVEL 1: PREPARE	EDUCATION RESPONSE: ALERT LEVEL 2: REDUCE	EDUCATION RESPONSE: ALERT LEVEL 3: RESTRICT	EDUCATION RESPONSE: ALERT LEVEL 4: LOCKDOWN
<p>COVID-19 is not present in the Cook Islands and is controlled in New Zealand with no community transmission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education sector takes lead from TMO and all education facilities are open. QFT travel between NZ and the Cook Islands for the purpose of official duty travel is taken in line with Public Service requirements. QFT travel between NZ and the Cook Islands for rest and recreation is taken in line with leave policies and at traveler's own risk. Unwell staff and students are to remain at home, following TMO guidelines. Contact tracing App active and in use across all education facilities. All visitors welcomed to education facilities and requested to tag in. Hygiene measures reinforced across all education facilities – including regular wiping down of surfaces and items, and sanitizing. No restrictions on professional development opportunities, large scale national education events or school/ sporting events. Organizers will enable contact tracing or maintain records of attendees. NCEA examinations and 	<p>COVID-19 is not present in the Cook Islands but there is a case of community transmission in New Zealand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education sector takes lead from TMO and all education facilities are open. Self-isolation and/or quarantine may be required for all staff and students who have traveled internationally until negative test results received. Official duty travel to and from the Pa Enua restricted. Unwell staff and students are to remain at home, following TMO guidelines. Increased monitoring of student and staff absences. Contact tracing App active and in use across all education facilities. School visitors, walk-in's may be restricted. All visitors are requested to tag in and physical distance, where appropriate. Hygiene measures reinforced across all education facilities – including regular wiping down of surfaces and items, and sanitizing. Restrictions on professional development opportunities, large scale national education events or school/ sporting events may be applied, upon advice from TMO. NCEA examinations and 	<p>COVID-19 has been detected in the Cook Islands and community transmission may be occurring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education sector takes lead from TMO and all education facilities are closed for 72 hours, or as directed by TMO. International travel suspended. Pa Enua travel restricted. Self-isolation and/or quarantine required for all staff and students who have traveled internationally as stipulated by TMO. Learning During COVID-19 Alert Level 3 activated - Home learning resources distributed by schools and tertiary providers, in line with TMO guidelines. NCEA examinations and assessments continue, and guided by NZQA Alert Level 3 requirements. Pastoral care processes active including 0800 3333 free hotline established for all school aged students and staff to access counselling support. Regular check-ins with scholarship students, and impacted staff. Professional development opportunities, large scale national education events or school/ sporting events postponed. 	<p>There is more than one case of COVID-19 in the Cook Islands and community transmission may be occurring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education sector takes lead from TMO and all education facilities are closed. International travel suspended. Pa Enua travel severely limited. Self-isolation and/or quarantine required for all staff and students who have traveled internationally as stipulated by TMO. Learning During COVID-19 Alert Level 4 activated - Home learning resources distributed by schools and tertiary providers, in line with TMO guidelines. NCEA examinations and assessments are suspended due to school closures. NQZA will inform of alternative date options for any region experiencing Alert level 4. Pastoral care processes active including 0800 3333 free hotline established for all school aged students and staff to access counselling support. Regular check-ins with scholarship students, and impacted staff. Professional development opportunities, large scale national education events or school/ sporting events

<p>assessments continue, and guided by NZQA requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0800 3333 free hotline established for all school aged students and staff to access counselling support. • MoE specific DRM policies and guidelines re-evaluated, if needed. 	<p>assessments continue, and guided by NZQA Alert level 2 requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral care processes active including 0800 3333 free hotline established for all school aged students and staff to access counselling support. Regular check-ins with scholarship students, and impacted staff. • MoE specific DRM policies and guidelines re-evaluated, if needed. • COVID preparedness revisited for schools, providers and HQ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential staff only working from MoE HQ – with PPE and physical distancing practices in place. • Work from home arrangements for all non-essential MoE HQ staff – Activating 'Home Bubble'. • Re-evaluated school academic calendar, if required. • MoE specific DRM policies and guidelines re-evaluated, if needed. • COVID preparedness revisited for schools, providers and HQ for Alert Level 4. 	<p>cancelled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work from home arrangements for all MoE HQ staff. • Re-evaluated school academic calendar, if required. • MoE specific DRM policies and guidelines re-evaluated, if needed.
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For further enquires, contact Planning & Development Director - PDDirector@education.gov.ck