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## **Covid19: Government moving quickly to roll out learning from home**

### **HON CHRIS HIPKINS**

#### **Education**

The Ministry of Education is working with partners to develop a package of options so that students can learn at home when Term 2 begins on 15 April, Education Minister Chris Hipkins said today.

Supports are also being prepared for households with children under five, to help parents and whānau keep their children engaged in learning through play, Chris Hipkins said.

“It’s important to reinforce up front that the Government is still working to a timeframe of a four-week Level 4 lockdown but we’re planning for every scenario.

“That means, in education, developing robust distance learning infrastructure and a more resilient system so that learners can receive education in any scenario.

“We’re moving so that all families will have at least one education delivery option available to them when Term 2 starts,” Chris Hipkins said.

“The Ministry has surveyed schools and about half say they are well set up currently for distance learning using the internet. But we are taking action to support new connections and resources for students at all schools.

“Starting this week, the Ministry will be rolling out, in waves, an extensive, four-channel package.

“We’re anticipating a number of logistical challenges in the short term, so our plan is broad enough to ensure every learner has at least one option either through this package or through their school or kura, and we expect many will be able to access more than one. These channels, include:

- Increasing the number of students who have internet access and devices.
- Delivering hard copy packs of materials for different year levels.
- Funding two television channels to broadcast education-related content – one for English medium and one for Māori medium, including content that is targeted to Pacific and other communities.
- More online resources for parents, available through the Learning from Home and Ki te Ao Mārama websites, and fast-tracking ways to connect Learning Support Coordinators with families remotely.

In addition, more support is being provided to assist schools to set up and make the best use of distance learning, and teachers and leaders will get access to more professional learning and development (PLD) to support them to work remotely with their students.

“We’ve fast-tracked immediate emergency funding of \$87.7 million to fund these measures and to provide ongoing nationwide access to online teaching and learning for all scenarios. Further additional funding might be required.

“We know that tens of thousands of households either lack an internet connection or an education device at home. We’re working with telecommunications companies and internet service providers to connect as many of these households as we can as quickly as possible.

“We are also working with schools to identify the students who lack a suitable device for online learning, and we plan to deliver as many devices as possible to the students who will benefit the most. We will be following public health advice as we do this.”

#### **Devices and materials rolled out in waves**

“This is a big and complex job being delivered at speed, and there are constraints around the stock of equipment in the country. Not everyone who needs them will get internet access, digital devices and hard packs at the same time,” Chris Hipkins said.

“Where we are unable to immediately connect a household with the Internet or get a device to a student, we will be working with schools and kura to provide hard-copy learning materials direct to homes.

“We will need to prioritise, and reach students and households, with an initial focus on connecting students in senior secondary school working towards NCEA – to minimise disruption for those working towards a qualification – and on those with greatest need due to disadvantage. We will then move down the year levels from years 10 to 1.”

Chris Hipkins said parents should not worry if their child doesn't receive a device or hard copy materials in the first wave.

“We know there are schools and kura that have plans in place to support students and whānau from 15 April, and will be working with the resources available to them as we can get devices and hard copy materials out to as many learners as we can.

“Principals and teachers are working hard to get ready for the start of the term and to make sure their students remain connected with learning.”

### **TV channels**

“We're also preparing education broadcasts on two channels, one for English medium schooling and one for Māori medium, starting on 15 April,” Chris Hipkins said.

“The broadcasts will run over six and a half hours during the day, and include specialised content for:

- Early learners,
- Parents, to help them support their children's education,
- A broad curriculum that includes movement, music, physical education, wellbeing, numeracy, literacy and science through an integrated approach to curriculum,
- An hour of Te Reo Māori, and
- Pacific and other communities.

“There's already a lot of good education video content available, and the Ministry is working with experts and educators to refine and further develop it.”

### **Web-based resources**

The Ministry of Education is also building up the resources it provides on the [Learning from Home](#) and [Ki te Ao Mārama](#) websites.

Chris Hipkins said public health remains the Government's number one focus, but families, learners and schools are increasingly focused on preparations for Term 2.

“The Government wants to reassure people that we are mobilising our resources at great speed during this extraordinary time so that we can provide the best possible level of education in all potential scenarios.

“I am proud of and grateful for the efforts of the Ministry and the entire education sector and our other partners in the public and private sectors to enable distance learning during the Covid-19 emergency.

“The Ministry has received more than 100 offers of extra resources and assistance from businesses wanting to do their bit to help, and is working on the best way to mobilise them as quickly as possible.

“I would also like to thank parents and learners for their understanding.

“It's important to remember that despite these resources becoming available in homes, parents aren't expected to become teachers. Teachers will continue to have the primary role in students' learning.

“Together we will support New Zealand’s efforts to save lives through physical distancing, while minimising the impact on children’s learning and wellbeing.”

#### **Notes to editors:**

Here are the links to b-roll footage of the hard-packs being assembled –

<https://vimeo.com/404830943>

<https://vimeo.com/404831237>

<https://vimeo.com/404831208>

<https://vimeo.com/404831180>

<https://vimeo.com/404831157>

<https://vimeo.com/404831121>

<https://vimeo.com/404831065>

<https://vimeo.com/404831006>

#### **Q and A**

##### **What is the estimated flow of modem deliveries?**

We are working on the commercial arrangements with Internet Service Providers (ISPs). As supplies become available, we expect to ramp up to sending out thousands of modems each week. Around 2000 this week.

We believe there are about 350 students where there is currently no internet potential of any kind. We are exploring the possibility of satellite coverage for these households.

##### **What is the estimated flow of internet-ready devices for students to work on?**

About 17,000 devices have been ordered and are confirmed to be shipped to students and ākonga in April. Not all will arrive before 15 April, and it may take up to a month for all of them to be sent to households. Many schools already have their own stocks.

We are working to secure thousands more devices from offshore.

##### **What materials will be available in hard copy?**

Information about the content of the packs can be viewed on line at <https://learningfromhome.govt.nz/supporting-learning>.

##### **What kind of devices are being supplied?**

Typically schools and kura will have the option of selecting from laptops or Chromebooks, depending on what they are already using.

##### **What about insurance cover – who pays for replacement/repair if something goes wrong?**

The Ministry is providing insurance cover for devices sent to student homes where they are not already covered by the school’s insurance.

##### **Will accessories like a mouse and keyboard be provided?**

The device comes with a power supply cable but not additional accessories.

##### **Do families get to keep the devices after children go back to school?**

The devices are registered to schools and kura and that decision will rest with them.

### **Will my child's time online be monitored?**

The devices we supply are pre-loaded with a content filter to block inappropriate content.

As always with the internet, parents and whānau are encouraged to supervise their children's online activities. Schools and kura may have suggest software or apps for this purpose, and there is helpful information for parents and children about staying safe online on the Netsafe website.

There will be no central monitoring.

### **How many hard copy packs are being printed and for which years?**

Depending on demand, and subject to printing and delivery logistics, we are prepared to ship tens of thousands of packs if required over the coming weeks.

A variety of packs are being prepared for all age groups – early learners and from year 1 through NCEA, including for learners in Māori medium. We will start by prioritising delivery these to younger students and those who are disadvantaged. NCEA students will be able to request packs across up to six subject areas each.

A variety of educational resources will be available, including books, literacy, maths and science resources and some stationery. The packs will include a parent and whānau guidance sheet on supporting their child's learning, and with suggestions for activities.

Schools will be advised when students receive a pack so teachers can connect with learners as they work on the packs where they can.

Information about the content of the packs can be viewed on line at <https://learningfromhome.govt.nz/supporting-learning>.

We will be able to provide updates over the coming days as demand becomes clearer and distribution begins.

Around 20,000 packs will be delivered this week, and 40,000 will be available for delivery next week.

**[TOP](#)**