



Briefing report

Education Review Office (ERO): Learning in a COVID-19 World: Supporting School Students as they Return to the Classroom

Date	14 September 2021
Security Level	N/A
ERO Priority	Medium
ERO Reference	M21-92
Date requested	ERO initiated
Date due	ERO initiated
Proactive release	Recommended

Addressee	Action sought	Deadline
Associate Minister of Education	<p>It is recommended that you:</p> <p>a) Note that ERO intends to release the two attached reports (Learning in a COVID-19 World: Supporting Primary School Students as they Return to the Classroom and Learning in a COVID-19 World: Supporting Secondary School Students as they Return to the Classroom) on Thursday 23 September 2021.</p> <p>b) Note ERO's next Covid-19 report will be released in Term 4 2021.</p> <p>c) Agree to forward this briefing and the attached reports to the Minister for COVID-19 Response Hon Chris Hipkins, and your other education colleagues: the Hon Kelvin Davis and Hon Aupito William Sio as Associate Ministers of Education.</p> <p>d) Note this briefing is recommend for proactive release at the time of publication of these studies</p>	



Attachments:

**Education Review Office (ERO):
Learning in a COVID-19 World**



Comments:

Minister's Office to complete

Noted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referred to:	
Date signed by Minister:	



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Our Ref: M21-92

14 September 2021

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

Learning in a COVID-19 World: Supporting School Students as they Return to the Classroom

Purpose

1. This briefing provides you with two short reports for schools that summarise what we have learnt so far about the impact of COVID-19 on students in the English medium education sector. The two near-final reports are attached as Appendix A:
 - a. *Learning in a COVID-19 World: Supporting Primary School Students as they Return to the Classroom.*
 - b. *Learning in a COVID-19 World: Supporting Secondary School Students as they Return to the Classroom.*
2. These reports are designed to help schools to support their students to return to the classroom. The reports cover what we have learnt about the impact of Covid-19 on students, what schools should be looking out for, and what the evidence points to in practical actions for schools to consider in supporting students as they return to the classroom.
3. We have worked with the Ministry of Education to include in these reports resources where schools can go for help to respond to the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Background

4. ERO has been monitoring the impact of Covid-19 on schools and students since the first national lockdowns in 2020. Our work has shared stories of how schools have responded to the Covid-19 crisis, what lessons have been learnt, and the challenges going forward.
5. In the past 18 months ERO has:
 - a. Last year:
 - i. Carried out 750 interviews with principals, board chairs and teachers.
 - ii. Surveyed 14,772 students, 1,380 teachers and over 1,800 principals in 2020.

- b. This year:
 - i. Followed up with the same students, teachers, and principals in Term 2 about the ongoing impacts of Covid-19 and how prepared they were feeling about another lockdown.
 - ii. Talked to a selection of schools about their experiences of the recent Level 4 lockdown.
6. In June 2020, we published the first report from this work - *Learning in Lockdown*. This was followed in August with the publication of interim findings and in February 2021 we published our full findings - *Learning in a Covid-19 World: The Impact of Covid-19 on Schools* and *Learning in a Covid-19 World: The Impact of Covid-19 on early childhood services*, as well as guides for teachers, parents, principals and board of trustees.
7. ERO intends to release a full update on the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on schools and students in Term 4 2021. The report will include a summary of the evidence so far, as well as a complete analysis of the results from our student, teacher and principal surveys run in Term 2 2021, and what we heard from schools about their experience of the recent Level 4 lockdown.
8. Despite a challenging 18 months, students and schools have been very generous with their time in supporting ERO's COVID-19 work programme. They have wanted to share their stories.

Overall Findings

9. The reports set out the evidence so far about the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on primary and secondary school students. The reports cover:
 - a. What we have learnt about the impact of Covid-19 on secondary students.
 - b. Who should you look out for following this current lockdown?
 - c. Practical actions for re-engaging students back in the classroom and addressing any learning loss.
 - a) *What we have learnt about the impact of Covid-19 on secondary students***
 - Students felt anxious after they returned to the classroom last year and were still anxious in June this year.
 - While most students returned to school following the lockdowns last year, some had reduced attendance. In particular, students in decile 1-3 schools and year 1-2 students.
 - Disruption to learning was minimised for most students last year thanks to the range of extra support provided by schools and the education system.
 - b) *Who should you look out for following this current lockdown?***
 - NCEA students - in June this year 12 percent of NCEA students disagreed that they would be able to learn from home.
 - Students in low decile schools - in June this year, around one in ten (13 percent) of low decile secondary students ERO spoke to didn't have a device at home or were unsure, compared to one in twenty (4 percent) of high decile secondary students.
 - Auckland students – they are likely to be more anxious about Covid-19 and could find it more difficult to re-engage when they are back at school.

- Male students - in June this year, less than half (46 percent) of male students surveyed agreed they would enjoy learning from home, compared to over half of female students (54 percent).
- Māori and Pacific students - in June this year, 10 percent of Māori and Pacific students disagreed they would be able to learn from home during another lockdown (compared to 5 percent of New Zealand European students). Twenty-one percent of Māori students and 19 percent of Pacific students said they would not have access to a digital device or were unsure, compared to only 7 percent of New Zealand European students.

c) *Practical actions for re-engaging students back in the classroom and addressing any learning loss*

The emerging evidence base from here and other jurisdictions has identified six practical actions schools can take to support students in lockdown:

- *Supporting student engagement* – create a positive school climate, monitor engagement, strengthen relationships with students and their whānau.
- *Promoting student wellbeing* – create a wellbeing team, establish in-school ‘friendship groups’ or tuakana-teina arrangements for students of concern, review health and safety plans to keep staff and students safe from Covid-19.
- *Assessing students’ progress in their learning* – find out where students are at with their learning, develop differentiated and individualised teaching strategies for students.
- *Accelerating student learning* – make the student’s year level learning accessible to them and support them to be successful in their current year level.
- *Engaging with targeted programmes* – support students to re-engage or catch up on missed learning.
- *Reviewing plans for future disruption* – prepare for temporary closures, lower attendance and supporting individual students to learn remotely.

Further work

10. ERO will continue to monitor the impacts of Covid-19 and share with schools the best practice from schools in New Zealand and other countries in responding to these impacts. Our next report will be released in Term 4.

Publication

11. The reports are intended to inform school leaders and teachers about the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and provide practical actions for supporting students. ERO intends to publish the reports on **Thursday 23 September 2021** to ensure they provide timely support to schools in Auckland who have been most impacted by the current outbreak.
12. We plan to share the reports with these key groups through:
 - a. An ERO media release on the morning of publication (Appendix B).
 - b. Publication of the reports on the ERO website.
 - c. Sending the reports to peak bodies in the English medium education sector.
 - d. Sending the reports to primary and secondary school principals in the English medium education sector.

Recommendations

13. It is recommended that you:

- a) **Note** that ERO intends to release the two attached reports (*Learning in a COVID-19 World: Supporting Primary School Students as they Return to the Classroom* and *Learning in a COVID-19 World: Supporting Secondary School Students as they Return to the Classroom*) on Thursday 23 September 2021.
- b) **Note** ERO's next Covid-19 report will be released in Term 4 2021.
- c) **Agree** to forward this briefing and the attached reports to the Minister for COVID-19 Response Hon Chris Hipkins, and your other education colleagues: the Hon Kelvin Davis and Hon Aupito William Sio as Associate Ministers of Education.
- d) **Note** this briefing is recommend for proactive release at the time of publication of these studies.

Noted

Noted

Agree ~~Disagree~~

Noted



Nicholas Pole
Chief Executive

NOTED/APPROVED



Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

19/09 / 2021