

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Rimutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services



30 April 2020

Daryl Streat
President TESOLANZ
president@TESOLANZ.org.nz

Dear Daryl

Thank you for your letter of 8 April 2020 about learning from home and online learning provision for English language learners (ELLs) during the COVID-19 situation.

The Ministry of Education is working with providers of the Computers in Homes programme to get devices to recently arrived refugee families with school-aged children. This includes students from the Mangere Refugee Centre, whose families are unable to be re-settled in regions at present. The Ministry is working on translating material about internet safety and usage into languages of recently-arrived refugees, as face-to-face training that includes interpreters is not currently possible.

Hard-copy learning materials have also been arranged to supplement the teaching the centre normally provides. As teachers have been unable to meet students and create targeted material, they will tailor the learning material as much as possible to create a 'best-fit' for each student.

I understand that bilingual support workers, tutors, and liaison staff have been calling families to discuss their needs. Information has been provided to schools to help their bilingual support staff continue to connect with families and students. Ministry staff are able to communicate with bilingual families using EziSpeak, an online interpreting service, which is meeting a range of needs such as establishing the computer devices a family requires.

The Ministry is preparing messaging about learning from home, specifically for refugee and migrant families new to the country, which will be translated into 15 commonly spoken languages. The ESOL, Migrant, Refugee and International Team is also providing information specifically to support teachers working with ELLs, which can be found at learningfromhome.govt.nz/.

ESOL Professional Learning Clusters (PLC) and ESOL online forums are proving to be excellent sources of support for teachers working with ELLs via distance learning, and subscription is free at esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Community. Teachers not connected to an ESOL PLC can contact the Ministry's Senior Advisor ESOL, Kirsty MacDiarmid, at kirsty.macdiarmid@education.govt.nz to find out their nearest group.

Additional funding is being provided to enable the continued facilitation of two Virtual Learning Networks at ESOL Online to support secondary ESOL teachers offering NZQA unit standards for ELLs. A Connected Learning Advisory helpdesk will assist leaders, teachers, kaiako and whānau to make full use of online environments and resources. CORE Education run the helpdesk from 8am - 5pm business days on 0800 700 401.

I encourage schools that need support to contact the Ministry's regional office who will connect them with the nearest Senior Advisor for Refugee and Migrant Education.

Thank you again for writing, and all the very best for the weeks ahead.
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CHIPKINS', written in a cursive style.

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education