

## TEACHING COUNCIL

NEW ZEALAND | Matatū Aotearoa

17 April 2020

Tēnā koe e te Minita,

Ka nui rā āku mihi ki a koe, mōu i kaha rawa te arataki i te haumaruru mō ngā tangata katoa.

Teachers and leaders have again risen to a challenge life has thrown their way, facing down the daunting task of teaching and supporting learners and their whānau online with resiliency and ingenuity. Parents across the country will be further realising just how irreplaceable and crucial teachers are in their children's lives.

When the call comes to move into Alert Level 3 some teachers and leaders will move into the frontlines, returning to centres, schools and kura. This level of commitment by teachers to learners, the profession and whānau is reflected in the Code of Professional Responsibility and shows the dedication of the teaching profession to support Aotearoa during these challenging times. However, Level 3 looks likely to be the most complex level to navigate for teachers. They are reflecting normal feelings of uncertainty, which will be helped by taking the below into consideration.

We agree now is the time to begin planning for what a move into Level 3 will look like for centres, schools and kura, but there will be no one one-size-fits-all plan. Leaders in each setting must have the autonomy to determine their own plan for *when* and *how* they will safely re-open to children and teachers, taking into consideration the personal circumstances of each. They are the experts in their communities and have the ability to construct a flexible, creative and resilient approach to making Level 3 work for the good of their teachers, learners and community. As always, they will continue to seek support as needed and work together in their communities. We ask for a reiteration of a message you gave recently, that it is unlikely all schools and centres will go back at the same time.

Leaders, with support of their staff, also need the authority and autonomy to agree to children attending or not. This decision-making should not rest entirely with parents and caregivers on a voluntary basis. We strongly suggest authority is given to principals and centre leaders/owners to make decisions based on their resource planning, which will inform how many children and families they can safely support and educate onsite and offsite. Principals and centre leaders should be entrusted to work with their families, communities and fellow schools and centres to ensure all needs are met, with consideration of parents who are essential workers or are returning to work.

The Teaching Council requests to be included in conversations around planning for Level 3 to ensure education outcomes are met alongside health and economic considerations.



Finally, we would like to acknowledge your leadership, Minister Hipkins, and that of your government, and thank you for listening to all voices as you guide us through this uncharted territory.

Nāku ā ngākau whakaiti nei,



Nicola Ngarewa  
Board Chair



Lesley Hoskin  
Chief Executive

