

SIEBA WEBINAR: TUESDAY JULY 21

UPDATES

Border reopening

The government's quarantine/managed isolation framework is nearing completion and is expected to be released at the end of August. This will detail what arrangements will be required to manage the entry of students across all sectors. It is a complex situation that not only needs to consider logistics and capacity but also wellbeing and legal challenges. While various groups are having conversations and devising plans around what an isolation programme for students could look like nothing can proceed until this framework is finalised.

The Minister has made clear to all sectors that when the framework is set it will most likely initially target specific cohorts of students to meet government priority considerations (eg PhD students) and focus on those at least risk and most able to successfully undergo managed isolation and subsequent integration (other tertiary students).

School sector cohorts may be considered after the first groups have been managed successfully. The government has gone back to a much tighter approach given recent events in NZ, in Australia and elsewhere. This means it is now unlikely that consideration will be given to having young people being in managed isolation in groups or bubbles. Income will not be an effective lever for prioritising a cohort. Considerations will more likely be around students travelling with family members, the importance of their study programme to their future plans, what countries they are coming from.

SIEBA has made submissions to government and represented the school sector in cross agency groups to provide information and lobbying to influence border opening decisions. The government has also been made aware of the impact continued border closure has for the school sector. While there are no further opportunities to influence the decision about the border, a submission is being prepared on behalf of all stakeholders to ask the government to give more certainty about what to expect in the coming months and next year. To date the timeline offered only extends to August.

Schools should remain positive and continue looking forward, anticipating that students will come next year. The recent comments from the Secretary of Education to principals were cautionary ones with regards to schools making financial commitments based on international income for 2021 rather than suggesting policy decisions had been made.

Future Focus Plan (FFP)

A recent ENZ initiative called for education sector peak bodies to develop a plan to encourage innovation and growth in their sector in response to the damage caused by Covid-19. The SIEBA plan for the school sector has been approved and is now available for sector consultation.

Information about the FFP has been sent to schools and is on the Hub.

Schools have a number of opportunities to give feedback on the proposed projects:

1. FFP Consultation Workshops – Christchurch 30 July; Dunedin 31 July; Auckland 3 August; Wellington 4 August
2. FFP consultation webinar 5 August
3. Written submissions can be made by 7 August
4. An online survey will be available from 5 – 7 August.

More information and links will be available on the Hub.

SIEBA will be looking to employ a project lead to oversee the development of the plan.

Students remaining in NZ over the summer holidays

As there is still no certainty that students who return home for the summer holidays will be able to get back into NZ for the start of Term 1 2021 schools need be communicating with students and families about their options and making plans for the students that will remain. While it may be in a school's interests to encourage students to stay and not return home, the student and family need to make the final decision.

Many schools have been proactive about this already and talked with their students, families and agents about the current border restrictions and the plans the school will put in place for students who do remain with regards to pastoral care, accommodation, any special programmes that will be run and additional fees.

Schools who do not usually have students remaining in NZ during the summer holidays will need to consider the additional resourcing and staffing that will be required to ensure their ongoing pastoral care obligations are met especially with regards to managing the 24/7 phone and providing support to students and host families.

Home stay families also need to be made aware of the additional expectations and realities of having students during this time as it will not be like normal term time when students are at school 5 days a week.

Some suggestions:

1. Collaborate with other schools to share the load, reduce costs
2. 'Exchange' students between regions
3. Work with language schools and trip operators; explore Summer School offerings
4. Share the on-call responsibilities with a number of other staff in the school
5. Consider relocating students to host families with other students or those keen to include them in family celebrations (Christmas) activities and holidays rather than have students left alone all day while host parents work.

Year 13 students at the end of enrolment

Year 13 students may wish to remain in NZ over the summer holidays so they can start university in 2021. As their enrolment with the school ends so too does the school's responsibility for them. This needs to be made clear to the students and their parents and a transfer of care plan needs to be implemented for the under 18 year olds.

If students wish to remain in their homestay it will then be by a private arrangement. The host family needs to be made aware that the school's responsibility will have ended and agree to the arrangement.

Other

NCEA

There is no further information to add since the June 24 advice from the Deputy Secretary, Early Learning and Student Achievement. This is becoming urgent as the end of year looms.

Subsidies

This is being addressed as part of the Minister's strategic plan; submissions have been considered and Treasury work has been done however, at this stage, there are no further developments.

ENROL

An email was sent to schools on 20 July by the EEL administrator with instructions for entering offshore students on ENROL.

Resource updates

Updates to the agent contract, the homestay carer agreement and the application and enrolment bundle have been made and will be released this week.

Engaging with School Principals

SIEBA maintains a strong relationship with SPANZ and intends to engage with primary principal groups. Information and updates are going out through principals' networks, but directors are also encouraged to share information with their principals.

Students unable to get home

Most students have been able to get home except for students from Colombia as their border is closed.

IATA Travel Centre website has frequently reviewed and updated information about current Covid-19 travel conditions across the world.