



Aka Kōrero

Touchpoint - Snapshot



Te reo o ngā kura e pā ana ki te tāwharau-a-matihiko,
te hono matihiko me ngā whakatara hangarau

The voice of schools on topics of online safety,
digital inclusion and other IT challenges

Kōrero whakataki

Introduction



He kekero noa ake tēnei i ngā whakakitenga motuhenga kei roto i ngā kura puta noa i Aotearoa mā roto mai i ngā kaupapa e toru: Ko te tiaki matihiko, whai hononga ipurangi, hangarau hoki mā ngā kura. Ngā pānga o te mate kowheori-19 ki ngā kura i ngā pae mataara 3 me te 4 e āta kōrerotia ana i te kaupapa tuarua.

Ko ngā whakakitenga o tēnei pūrongo i ahu mai i ngā kura 550, he mea whakautua e rātou te uiui a N4L i kawea mai i te 8 ki 30 o pipiri, 2021. I whakautua e ngā tumuaki 56 ōrau me ngā tumuaki tuarua tae atu ki ngā taituarā hangarau. He whakaatu noa ake tēnei i ngā aupiki o te uiui.

This snapshot provides unique insights into the thoughts and concerns of schools and kura across Aotearoa New Zealand around three themes: online safety, home access to devices and internet, and IT use in schools. The impact of school closures during COVID-19 Alert Levels 3 and 4 are explored in the second theme.

The insights for this report come from 550 schools responding to an N4L survey between 8 - 30 June 2021. Responses are from principals (56%), deputy principals or the school's nominated IT representative. This snapshot reviews key highlights of the survey.

Te tāwharau-a-matihiko i ngā kura

Online safety in schools



Most schools (88%) feel confident in their ability to protect students online.

They say web filtering and education on positive online behaviours contribute to this confidence. Schools feeling less confident welcome additional expertise, knowledge and support for protecting their students online. They also ask for easy-to-use monitoring tools and the ability to filter in a more granular way.



Asking students to sign internet use agreements (86%) and the use of web filtering (84%) were cited as the most common approaches schools use to manage online safety.

Professional development for staff, hosting workshops, and bringing in guest speakers are some of the more common education-based approaches used to help with online safety, particularly in secondary and larger schools.

Challenges to managing online safety



While schools see filtering as an effective tool to manage online safety and keep students on task, students find ways to get around filters.

Further, legitimate websites may display images unsuitable for young eyes and sites like YouTube can present age-inappropriate material even when 'safe search' mode is applied. Supervising device use at school was cited as challenging and time-consuming. Schools also say issues around cyberbullying taking place outside of school can spill into school hours.



A third of schools noted that online safety and security issues are present when students learn from home where safety filters and supervision levels vary.

What are the challenges schools face keeping students safe online?

"Images are more difficult to filter than inappropriate web pages."

"New games students find online can seem ok on the surface but at a deeper level are not."

"No matter how effective the filter is, students can find ways to get around them."

"Technology solutions to online safety are only part of the solution (but an important part)."

"We need an easy way to see where students are going online."

"There is some poor online behaviour outside of school that transfers over to school."

"Social media use at home creates challenges at school."



Te hono matihiko – ako mai i te kainga

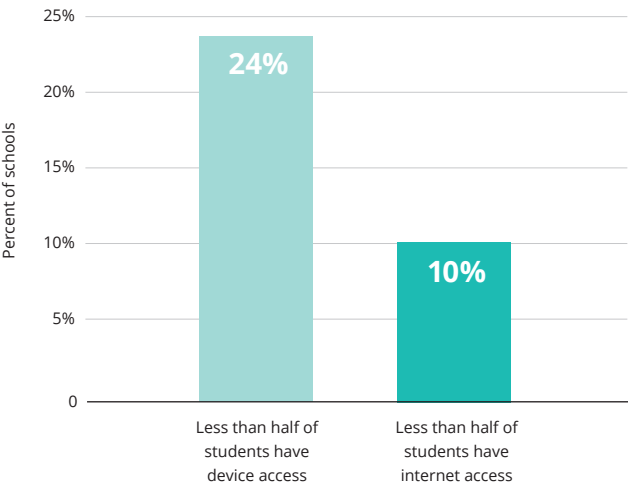
Digital inclusion - learning from home

There continue to be thousands of students living without internet access from home, and even greater numbers without access to a device that is not a mobile phone.

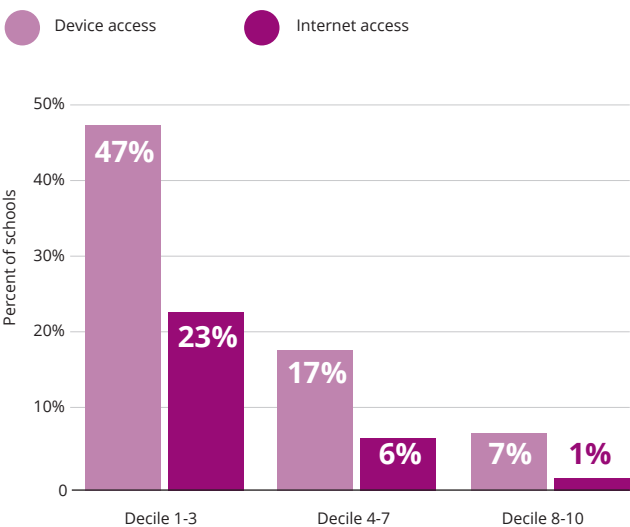
Ten percent of schools say at least half of their students can't access the internet from home, while 24% say at least half of their students can't access devices from home, with smaller and lower decile schools less likely to have access.

This marks a notable improvement from when we asked about internet access in 2018, when 21% of schools reported less than half of their students had home internet access. The greatest improvement was seen in low decile schools.

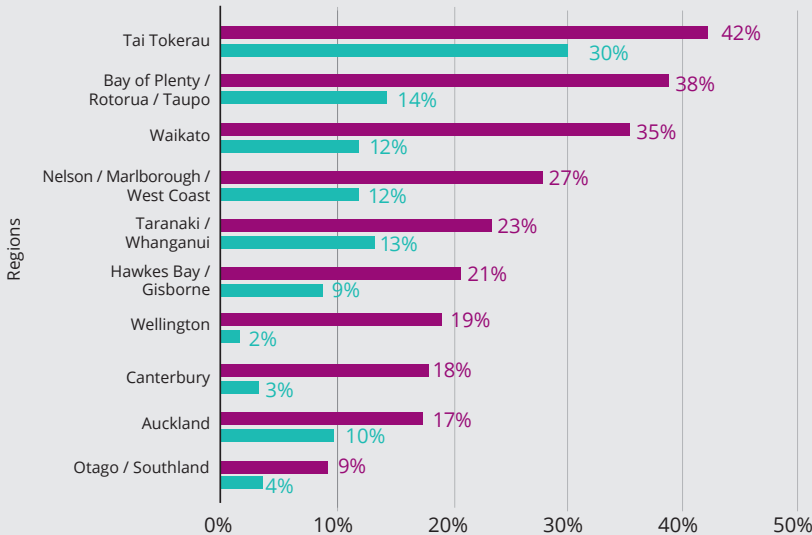
Percent of schools that say less than half their students have access to either a device or internet at home.



Decile differences in the percent of schools who say that less than half of their students can access the internet or devices.



Regional differences in the percent of schools who say that less than half of their students can access the internet or devices at home.



Schools based in Tai Tokerau, Bay of Plenty, Rotorua, and the Waikato regions are less likely to have home access to internet and devices.

Conversely, students are most likely to be able to access devices at home in Auckland, Otago, and Southland, while internet access is most common in Wellington and Canterbury.

Lockdowns



School closures during Alert Level 3 and 4 lockdowns have highlighted the importance of the internet for remote learning. The percentage of schools saying that a **lack of home internet access impacts learning increased from 25% in 2018¹ to 59% in 2021.**



Access to devices (raised by 77% of schools) and access to the internet (73%) were the biggest technological obstacles faced by schools during the COVID-19 lockdowns, followed by an unreliable internet connection (69%).



Some students need to share learning devices with other family members, which may limit their ability to participate in online learning from home. For example, working parents may use devices for their jobs during the same time remote learning takes place.

Sending school-owned devices home for learning

While most schools provide either some or all of their students with devices for use at school (96%), only 15% allow them to go home with students on a regular basis. During lockdown, an additional 44% of schools allowed students to take them home.

What happens when students can't access digital technology at home?

"Much of our content is now delivered online - so the few students who don't have quality devices and suitable internet are at a disadvantage."

"Students in lockdown may have had devices at home but many mums and dads required them to work from home so access was limited."

"These students feel left out and cannot engage in the learning. This is especially true at the senior levels with NCEA."

"Particularly during lockdown, the children are unable to connect with their peers and lose that vital relationship building."

¹ See N4L's previous [Touchpoint](#) report.

Ngā tautoko-ā-matihiko

Support for IT challenges

Schools identified they'd like support in these four areas:

- 1 Internet capacity**
This includes support for boosting wireless internet speeds and ensuring coverage is reliable throughout the school.
- 2 Device access and management**
Schools want to improve the ratio of students-to-devices and support for managing updates and repairs.
- 3 Filtering and reporting**
Schools would like more help with general advice, customisation and assurance that filters are operating correctly. Some also mentioned they'd like tools to monitor internet use and to know when attempts to access blocked content are made.
- 4 Professional development for staff**
Schools would like support to improve the digital skills of their teachers. This includes how to use Google Suite for Education, and understanding cyber security.

How N4L supports schools in these areas:



N4L is helping support schools with these challenges in a number of ways. We are upgrading the wireless networks inside schools through the Ministry of Education's **Te Mana Tūhono programme**, boosting the reliability, capacity and resilience of the internet within schools, as well as providing additional cybersecurity support. All participating schools² are scheduled to be upgraded by mid-2024.



The programme includes rolling out a cloud solution that ensures all school-owned devices, BYOD, and guest users are set up to access school wireless networks securely. N4L has appointed a panel of IT support companies to help schools with this.



N4L has designed a reporting app to make it easier for teachers to see which websites and apps are being used across its network. This includes attempts to access blocked content. Ongoing development of N4L's Reporting app will focus on providing a window of information to support schools with pastoral care, child wellbeing, and learning outcomes.



If you have any feedback or questions about this report, please contact insights@n4l.co.nz. Our dedicated helpdesk team is also available on 0800 LEARNING (532 764). [View the full report here.](#)

² Schools participating in the Ministry of Education's Te Mana Tūhono programme are eligible for this upgrade.