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## Want to learn New Zealand Sign Language?

### What is New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL)?

New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) is the natural language of the Deaf community in New Zealand and the third official language of New Zealand, following the passing of the NZSL Bill on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006. NZSL is a visual-gestural language, which conveys ideas by signs, facial expressions, body language and lip patterns and has its own grammar, rules and sentence structures, which is different from English or Maori. It means that if you follow English words in signs, it will be lost in meanings or concepts.

NZSL has originally developed over the century from British Sign Language roots, home-made and school signs. Today, there are rich variations in the use and growth in NZSL due to many factors.

### Where do I learn NZSL?

Check out our website and go to 'New Zealand Sign Language' section and click on the area you want to learn NZSL. There are local contacts and list of classes.

NZSL community education classes are usually 2 hours long, one time a week and run for either 8, 10, 12 or 15 weeks depending on location and tutor. Level one is equivalent to one year of night classes.

If you are interested to study NZSL and Deaf Culture full or part time, the 'Certificate in New Zealand Sign Language and Deaf Studies' at Auckland University of Technology is highly recommended. This course is a stepping stone to 'Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting'.

There are other opportunities to be immersed in NZSL. Our organization organises a national Silent Weekend Camp once every year or two. At these camps designed for NZSL learners, you sign all weekend with no voice. There are events happening in the Deaf community, a fantastic opportunity for you to use NZSL!

### Benefits from learning NZSL

- ✓ Communication with Deaf people e.g. work colleagues, customers, family members, friends
- ✓ Learning a new language
- ✓ Meeting new people and making new friends
- ✓ Job opportunities e.g. NZSL Interpreters, Teachers of the Deaf and other positions relating to Deaf people/field.
- ✓ Its fun!

### Standards of NZSL Tutors

It is highly recommended that NZSL Tutors are:

- ✓ In study or have 'Certificate in Deaf Studies: Teaching New Zealand Sign Language' qualification from Victoria University of Wellington
- ✓ A member of New Zealand Sign Language Tutors Association

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