



21 April 2021

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 8 March 2021 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

*It was reported yesterday that there are about 300,000 truants from NZ schools every day.*

- *Please comment on the accuracy of this claim*
- *Please advise how many prosecutions have been taken in the last 12 months*
- *Please advise the ethnicity of the offenders, statistically*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

The figure of 300,000 students being absent from school daily is not accurate. This would mean over one third of all students weren't at school every day. On average the correct figure of students not attending school on a given day is around 90,000.

In Term 2, 2020, almost 270,000 students were not attending school regularly. That is, they missed on average at least one day every fortnight.

Student attendance, along with effective teaching, has the greatest influence on student engagement and achievement. All students must be present at school so they can participate and engage in learning. Parents and boards of trustees are legally responsible for making sure students are regularly attending school. Schools can refer to the Attendance Service which was set up to work with students that are chronically and persistently absent and with students found not to be enrolled in any school. Every case is different, and each presents a specific set of challenges. Students that are referred to the Attendance Service often face difficult family circumstances, made more challenging by mental health issues, addiction or other factors. Tackling non-attendance is rarely done in isolation. Attendance Service advisors work closely with our regional staff, Police, Health, Oranga Tamariki, MSD and other community services to find the most suitable educational pathway for the student.

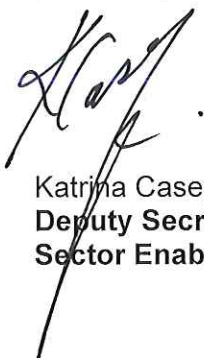
The Ministry has not been made aware of any prosecutions in the last 12 months. While prosecution for non-attendance is available, prosecuting parents is a last resort. In such cases, schools have the responsibility for prosecuting. Schools may consider prosecution after all other options for re-engagement have failed. Schools are not required to notify the Ministry of Education of prosecutions.

You can see rates of students attending school regularly, including these statistics broken down by ethnic group, online here: [Students/ākonga attending school/kura regularly | Education Counts](#)

Please note, the Ministry now proactively publishes OIA responses on our website. As such, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Katrina Casey  
**Deputy Secretary**  
**Sector Enablement and Support**