




08 July 2021



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your email of 10 June 2021, and communication of 17 June, to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

- 1. Is it possible to get stand down, exclusion and expulsion data for this year to date for high schools in South Auckland?*
- 2. Also, do you categorise what the exclusions/expulsions/ suspensions are for? Eg. Fighting, Drug use? If so, could I get the numbers broken into categories.*

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

We have identified 26 secondary schools in scope of your request. Data for these schools have been provided to you in **Appendix A**.

It is important to note that standdowns, suspensions, exclusions, and expulsions (SSEEs) are not measures of student behaviour but measures of a school's reaction to such behaviours. What one school may choose to suspend for, another may not. The number of these events should not be used as a proxy measure for total student behaviour. Further to your correspondence with the Ministry, this data should not be used to infer links between community gang activity. The Ministry has no information that any such link exists.

The data table presents the number of standdowns, suspensions, exclusions, and expulsions from South Auckland High Schools in 2019, 2020, and 2021 year to date (YTD) broken down by behaviour category. These categories are consistent with behavioural reasons categories used for reporting on Education Counts.

When the total number of students in a contributing sub-population at a school is less than 5, we have withheld the figure under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of the individuals concerned. Where this is the case, these figures have been replaced with x. Where values less than 5 can be calculated from School Totals, Total values will also be concealed 'x'.

Definitions of measures used

A **stand-down** is the removal of a student for a period of up to five days in a school term, where the decision is made by the Principal. A student may only be stood down for a total of 10 school days in a year.

A **suspension** is the formal removal of a student from a state or state-integrated school on a temporary basis until the school board of trustees (the board) decides the outcome at a suspension meeting. The board can either:

- lift the suspension (with or without conditions),
- extend the suspension, or
- exclude the student (if under 16) or
- expel the student (if aged 16 years or over).

Exclusions and expulsions are subsets of suspension where an enrolment is terminated. If the student is aged under 16, the board may decide to exclude the student from the school, with the requirement that the student enrolls elsewhere.

The Ministry of Education often receives requests around SSEEs. There is public interest in total numbers, as well as more specific categories such as regional areas and reasons for SSEEs. Below are some examples of previous responses to Official Information Act requests of a similar nature. These may be of interest to you:

- [OIA #1254483](#) - *Stand downs, suspensions, and exclusions across NZ by reason and region for the six last years*. This request is able to provide wider context to your request by showing similar SSEE statistics at regional level, categorised by behaviour type.
- [OIA #1249128](#) - *Suspensions, exclusions, and expulsions 2016 – 2020*. This request provides real numbers rather than standardised age metrics for total SSEE's per region.

Further responses regarding SSEEs can be found on the Ministry of Education's website at the following link: [Responses to Official Information Act requests – Education in New Zealand](#)

Managing challenging behaviour is something all schools face. Schools in South Auckland use standdowns, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions in similar rates to other schools nationwide. The Ministry has no concerns over the data in Appendix A. It is not showing an unreasonable or unexpected spike compared to previous years.

We know some students display very challenging behaviours and whose situations are very complex. This puts pressure on students and staff but often has little to do with the school itself, and more to do with a range of social factors. We work with schools and other agencies to provide support to these young people and their families.

If a school identifies a student needs extra help with challenging behaviour, there are a range of supports on offer. Depending on their needs, a student might be supported by the school-based Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTL) Service, the Ministry's Learning Support team, or the Ministry's Intensive Wraparound Service.

You can find further information about suspensions and expulsions, including age standardised data on the Ministry's Education Counts website at the following link:

<https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/indicators/main/student-engagement-participation/Stand-downs-suspensions-exclusions-expulsions>

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. If you have further questions please feel free to contact our media team in the first instance at media.team@education.govt.nz. If you are unsatisfied with my response, you have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review it. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Helen Hurst
Deputy Secretary
Te Hāpai o Rāngai