



13 August 2021



Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 6 July 2021 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

- 1. The number of school students, primary or secondary, who have died while enrolled at school in the 10 years ending June 30 2021.*
- 2. The date the ministry was informed of each death and the name of each school the student was enrolled in.*
- 3. The number of school staff, primary or secondary, who have died during their employment in the 10 years ending June 30 2021*
- 4. The date the ministry was informed of each death and the name of each school the staff member was employed in.*
- 5. Of these deaths (staff and student), please identify those that happened during school-related activities (in and out of normal school hours) and/or on the school grounds.*

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

In response to part one of your request, we are able to provide the data in the below table from our ENROL system. When viewing this table, please take the following caveats into account:

- Data provided is as at 19 July 2021. This data is subject to change and may differ if re-run at a later date. The Ministry cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information as we are reliant on the school recording the information in the ENROL system.
- The year breakdown provided is based on the last date of attendance recorded. This date does not necessarily mean the date that the Ministry or the school was informed about the death. We are reliant on schools manually entering the correct information in the ENROL database.
- The count provided only includes students that were enrolled at a primary or secondary school at any point between 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2021 with a leave reason of "deceased".

**Table 1: The number of school students from ENROL with a leave reason of "Deceased" broken down by year (based on last day of attendance) and education sector (primary or secondary).**

Year	Education Sector	
	Primary	Secondary
2011	24	33
2012	59	82
2013	47	60
2014	48	64
2015	51	62
2016	42	70
2017	39	65
2018	47	79
2019	70	59
2020	47	66
2021	19	27

Regarding part two of your request, we are unable to provide the date of death as the Ministry only holds information related to the last day of enrolment. Therefore, we are refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Act. We are also withholding the names of schools under sections 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(ba)(ii) of the Act to protect the privacy of the students, their families and to protect the continued supply of information provided under an obligation of confidence and where release would otherwise damage the public interest.

In reaching this decision we are conscious that releasing identifying details could re-traumatise the families or community that are aware of the passing of students and staff and we find that we consider the greater public interest lies in protecting the families and students at this time.

Regarding parts three and four of your request, relating to school staff, we are providing the following table.

**Table 2: The number of school staff from Education Payroll with a leave reason of "Deceased" broken down by year and education sector (primary or secondary).**

Year	Education Sector	
	Primary	Secondary
2012	20	7
2013	35	30
2014	34	19
2015	27	31
2016	42	21
2017	46	21
2018	41	33
2019	39	23
2020	28	22
2021	13	9

The following caveats attach to this data:

- The data represents the people whose death was recorded in the school payroll system since 22 August 2012. The date provided is the last date of work held in the payroll. Data prior to 22 August 2012 is not recorded in a manner that can be reported on.
- An individual is recorded as being deceased when Education Payroll Limited (EPL) is notified by the deceased employee's school(s). Schools can notify EPL that a staff member is deceased by selecting "deceased" as the reason for leaving when terminating the individual's job in EdPay or by completing a NOVO6 (Termination/End of Employment) application form.
- The reason for leaving is an optional field and is not verified in any way by the Ministry or EPL. As no verification is completed the Ministry cannot comment on the accuracy of this data nor can we confirm that all deceased employees are appropriately recorded.
- Each sector has been counted in isolation. This means that an individual will be represented more than once if they had multiple jobs in different sectors when they died. An individual working in multiple jobs in the same sector will only be represented once.
- People who were solely working as short-term relievers when they died have been represented in this data. Short-term relievers have been placed into the sector where most of their work was completed.

For the same reasons as outlined above, we are unable to provide that date of death as the Ministry only holds information related to the last day of enrolment therefore, we are refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Act. We are also withholding the names of schools under sections 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(ba)(ii) of the Act to protect the privacy of the students, their families and to protect the continued supply of information provided under an obligation of confidence.

Data prior to 22 August 2012 is not recorded in a manner that can be reported on. The Ministry did not have a centralized system for recording this information at that time, so we are refusing your request insofar as it relates to the 2011 and 2012 years under section 18(f) of the Act, as the requested information cannot be made without substantial collation or research.

Regarding part five of your request, the Ministry does not hold this information, so we are refusing this part of your request under section 18(g) of the Act. In relation to students, we only collect, where schools provide it, the status of the student leaving the school roll, which does not identify if any deaths specifically occurred *during school-related activities (in and out of normal school hours) and/or on the school grounds*. Similarly, our payroll systems do not record this information in relation to school staff.

You may be interested to know, the Ministry provides support through its Traumatic Incident Team when an event causes sudden or significant disruption to the education setting. This service is triggered by a request to the local Ministry office from the school or early learning service. Typical events are sudden death of a student or staff member. We do not collect data on individuals affected by the incident.

Often, responding to a traumatic incident involves a cross-agency effort, and schools can get support from a range of agencies, including social and health services, police, independent counselling services and groups like the New Zealand School Trustees Association. In some

instances, we may need to investigate an incident further to determine whether the service is continuing to meet licensing requirements. In other cases, it may be more appropriate for us to contribute to an investigation being led by another organisation.

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](mailto:media.team@education.govt.nz). If you are unsatisfied with this response, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review it. 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



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