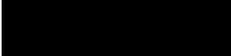




22 September 2021



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your email of 28 July 2021 to the Ministry of Education, requesting the following information:

- 1. How many exemptions have been provided to parents or caregivers and how many have been declined in the past four years (2017-2020) and so far this year (2021). Please arrange these by geographic location and include ages of children if this is known.*
- 2. For every application in the past year, please provide a copy of the decision/the reason the exemptions were approved or declined.*
- 3. I also request any reports prepared by or for the ministry, research done or commissioned or briefings given about unschooling or homeschooling in the same time frame.*

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

All children aged between six and 16 years of age are required to enrol in and attend a registered school. [Section 38](#) of the Education and Training Act 2020 allows parents or legal guardians to take responsibility for the education of their children, instead of enrolling them in school.

If a parent or legal guardian wants to educate their child at home, they must complete an application for home education. If approval to home educate is granted by the local Ministry office, the parent or legal guardian will receive a Certificate of Exemption from Enrolment at a Registered School. This indicates the applicant is legally responsible for providing, supervising, and monitoring the child's learning programme. If an application to home educate is for more than one child, a separate Certificate of Exemption is required for each child.

You can find more information about home education on the Ministry's website at parents.education.govt.nz/secondary-school/secondary-schooling-in-nz/home-education/.

I have addressed each of your questions separately.

Q1. How many exemptions have been provided to parents or caregivers and how many have been declined in the past four years (2017-2020) and so far this year (2021). Please arrange these by geographic location and include ages of children if this is known

I have interpreted this part of your request to mean Home Education exemption applications as opposed to the other exemptions that can be granted under the Education and Training Act 2020. I am providing you with the requested data attached as **Appendix A**.

Where the number of home education exemption applications approved and declined is less than five, I 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 are denoted as '<5' to protect the anonymity of the individuals and families.

Q2. For every application in the past year, please provide a copy of the decision/the reason the exemptions were approved or declined

I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(f) of the Act as the reasons why exemptions are approved or declined are held individually at a regional level rather than being centralized at a national level. Gathering and collating this information from all our ten regions would require substantial collation.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

Q3. I also request any reports prepared by or for the ministry, research done or commissioned or briefings given about unschooling or home-schooling in the same time frame

I have identified three documents in scope of your request. Details of the documents are tabled below. I am releasing one document in full and two in part with information withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of natural persons; and
- 9(2)(f)(iv), maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

Document Number	Date	Title	Decision
1	13 June 2017	Home Education Service Quality Review	Released in part. Information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act.
2	30 January 2018	Briefing Note: Home Education	Released in part. Information has been withheld under sections 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act.
3	30 January 2018	Appendix 3 of Briefing Note: Home Education	Released in full.

Where information has been withheld under section 9(2) I have considered, as required under section 9(1) of the Act, the public interest considerations favouring its release. I have identified no public interest considerations which outweigh the need to withhold information at this time.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Helen Hurst', written in a cursive style.

Helen Hurst
Tumu Te Hāpai ō Rāngai | Te Hāpai ō Rāngai
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support