



16 December 2022

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 29 September 2022 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

- *I am requesting data on the 10 schools with the highest number of bullying or assault reports?*
- *Could I please get the total number of bullying or assaults have the Ministry of Education received over the past 5 years?*
- *Also could I be provided with a breakdown by school, on how many of those reports have resulted in a suspension, expulsion, or a permanent exclusion.*

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

As you may be aware, the Ministry does not require schools to collect or share data related to incidents of bullying or assault. As such, complaints made to the Ministry are unlikely to accurately reflect the number of bullying incidents occurring in New Zealand schools.

As noted in our previous response on 18 November 2022, we have been able to identify data for total instances of assault that the Ministry is aware of through stand-down, suspension, expulsion and exclusion data (SSEE). I can provide the finalised data below, with a breakdown by the resulting SSEE action, additional to the data provided on 18 November regarding bullying.

A stand-down is when a student is removed from school or kura for a short period by the principal – no more than 5 school days in a school term or a total of 10 school days in a school year. Stand-downs provide an opportunity for schools, kura, students and their families to have time to look at the problem and to work together to try and stop this happening again.

Suspension means the formal removal of a student from school until the board decides the outcome at a suspension meeting. A suspension can lead to an exclusion or expulsion. Exclusion means the formal removal of a student aged under 16 from the school and the requirement that the student enrol elsewhere. Expulsion means the formal removal of a student aged over 16 from the school. School is only compulsory to age 16, but if the student wishes to continue schooling, they may enrol elsewhere. Exclusions and expulsions are for the most serious cases only.

It is important to note that suspensions, exclusions, and expulsions 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.



Total standdowns and suspensions (where recorded behaviour is either physical assaults or verbal assaults against other students or staff from 2017 to 2021).

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Physical assaults	7295	8526	9239	7600	7528
Verbal assaults	2241	2570	2578	2011	2186

Standdown

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Physical assaults	6316	7430	8168	6763	6704
Verbal assaults	2047	2368	2378	1870	2034

Suspensions

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Physical assaults	890	989	980	722	735
Verbal assaults	170	176	176	106	126

Exclusions

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Physical assaults	291	336	357	225	245
Verbal assaults	52	60	61	39	37

Expulsions

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Physical assaults	32	46	42	33	29
Verbal assaults	9	6	5	x	x

Please note the following caveats:

- Privacy rules for incident counts less than 5 have been applied to ensure an individual cannot be identified. An "x" denotes a masked cell.
- Students may have multiple incidents throughout each year. Incidents may be for different regions, schools, and behaviour reasons.
- Physical assault is a recorded behaviour of "Physical assault on other students" or "Physical assault on staff"
- Verbal assault is a recorded behaviour of "Verbal assault on other students" or "Verbal assault on staff"

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 or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Dr David Wales
Poutohu Matua | National Director Learning Support Delivery
Te Mahau | Te Pae Aronui (Operations and Integration)