




20/02/2024



Tēnā koe 

**OIA: 1322502 – Reports or plans regarding student allowance system**

Thank you for your email of 30 January 2024 to the Ministry of Social Development requesting information. The following part of your request was transferred to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) on 2 February 2024:

*Any reports or plans requesting policy change of the student allowance system or about cases regarding students' parents who can keep money in trust funds and businesses.*

We also thank you for the following clarification of your request, which you provided on 9 February 2024:

*I would like a time range from 2014 - 2024 for "reports or plans requesting policy change of the student allowance system."*

*To clarify, I would also like any reports from 2014-2024 that discuss how parents of students are able to keep parts of their income in trust funds or businesses, to gain the student allowance.*

*I am after reports that discuss persecution for fraud of the student allowance system and if there has been discussion of policy change to prevent fraud from occurring.*

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

From 1 January 2012, the Government expanded the definition of income for the purposes of student allowances, Working for Families and the Community Services Card. These changes were made to improve the fairness of these schemes by including income from sources such as trusts, and a wider range of business income.

We have identified a 2017 Tertiary Education Report concerning advice regarding means-testing student allowances that includes advice on the performance of income testing. I am providing this to you as Appendix A with the names and phone numbers of former staff withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons.



As required under section 9(1) of the Act, I have considered the public interest in releasing the information withheld. I do not consider the public interest considerations favouring the release of this information are sufficient to outweigh the need to withhold it at this time.

Please note, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review decision on your request, in accordance with section 28 of the Act. You can do this by writing to [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or to Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

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).

Nāku noa, nā



Katrina Sutich  
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