



27 MAY 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 27 March 2019 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

Data on the number of secondary school students who were stood-down, suspended, expelled or excluded and who had received prior support from one of the Ministry of Education's specialist learning and behaviour services. I am requesting the data for the period from 2015 to 2018.

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

A state or state-integrated school may consider the formal removal of a student through a **stand-down** for a period of up to five school days. A stand-down can total no more than five school days in a term, or ten days in a school year.

A **suspension** is the formal removal of a student from a school until the school board of trustees (the board) decide the outcome at a suspension meeting. Following a suspension meeting, the board can either lift the suspension (with or without conditions), extend the suspension (with conditions), or terminate the student's enrolment at the school.

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 is re-enrolled elsewhere. This decision should be arrived at in only the most serious cases. If the student is aged 16 or over, the board may decide to expel the student from the school, and the student may or may not enrol at another school. Again, this decision should be arrived at only in the most serious cases. Excluded or expelled students may face difficulties in enrolling in other schools.

Stand-downs and suspensions are measures of schools' reactions to behaviours, as much as they are a measure of the behaviours themselves. What one school may suspend for, another may not, and our data does not capture the circumstances or severity of an individual action.

A comprehensive view of age-standardised data per 1,000 students is available by going to our website Education Counts at www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/indicators, and choosing "stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions" from the drop down list.

Schools are required to develop comprehensive local approaches to promoting pro-social behaviour and wellbeing within their setting. We support these efforts, and the development of whole school capability, with programmes such as Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L).

Our Teaching for Positive Behaviour resource supports teachers to understand and use effective practices that enhances students' behaviour, engagement, participation, and learning. You can read about both of these resources in more detail at: <http://pb4l.tki.org.nz/PB4L-School-Wide>.

Our Learning Support professionals work specifically to support children and young people with higher levels of challenging behaviour. '*Understanding Behaviour – Responding Safely*', is a training workshop for behaviour management that focuses on preventative and de-escalation techniques and has been developed for New Zealand schools. It is delivered by Learning Support professionals who can provide ongoing support to schools.

The school-based Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLb) service supports the achievement and wellbeing of students in years 1-10 who have learning and/or behaviour difficulties. The RTLb are organised into 40 clusters across the country. This service has over 900 specialist teachers who work in collaboration with teaching and leadership teams in schools to identify and respond to the support needs of children and young people. Part of their work is to look at school-wide systems and practices that will support teachers and leaders to develop and maintain a positive teaching and learning culture where all learners can belong and achieve. The RTLb service is an integral part of the wider learning support workforce and their work with teachers and leaders aims to strengthen confidence and inclusive practice capability so that all children and young people can learn with and alongside their peers.

We also provide bullying prevention guidance for school Boards of Trustees, which you can find by searching the resources section at www.bullyingfree.nz.

The below table shows the total number of secondary school students stood-down, suspended, excluded or expelled who had received learning support service, compared against the total number of secondary school students stood-down, suspended, excluded or expelled across New Zealand between 2015 and 2018.

Secondary school students - comparison of learning support and stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions or exclusions			
Year	Received learning support service	Total students stood-down, suspended, expelled or excluded	% received learning support
2015	663	8469	7.83%
2016	728	8391	8.68%
2017	773	9096	8.50%
2018	876	9157	9.57%

Learning support services, in the data above, includes Behaviour Service, Communication Service, Ongoing Resourcing Scheme, High Health, Physical Disability Service, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Moderate Needs.

Composite schools were excluded and only secondary schools were included in this data. Therefore some secondary school age students at composite schools are excluded from these numbers.

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. 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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katrina Casey', written over the printed name.

Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support