



1 March 2021



Tēnā koe 

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

- 1. Any data available that shows all primary and secondary school attendances in the Wairoa district over the last three years. Breakdown of individual schools*

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

Attached to this response as **Appendix A** is a table detailing student attendance from 2018-2020 for the Wairoa District, the Hawke's Bay region, and all of New Zealand at varying levels of attendance. I am releasing this to you in full.

Attendance data is provided to the Ministry voluntarily by schools and it is important for the Ministry to continue to receive this valuable information. We believe that by releasing this information at the school level would be risk the future supply of this data, as schools will be less willing to opt into the voluntary provision if their information is made publicly available.

As it is in the public interest for the Ministry to continue to receive this information, I am withholding attendance data for specific schools in the Wairoa District under section 9(2)(ba)(i) of the Act, to protect information provided under an obligation of confidence, and as we believe that the provision of this information may stop the future supply of similar information.

Attendance is an issue in Wairoa. Improving National attendance is a particular focus for the Ministry, and we are in discussions with community, iwi, schools and kura about the issue. We have developed a National Attendance and Engagement plan to bring a greater focus to attendance management and engagement in light of the impact of COVID-19. Through it, we committed to working in partnership with schools through regional offices to co-design plans and provide tailored supports. We are making a number of improvements to our attendance data collection and reporting, and more broadly there is a project underway in the Ministry to co-design and develop a wellbeing outcomes and measurement framework that will be valued, trusted and useful across the sector.

The Urgent Response Fund (URF) has also been established to support children and young people who need extra help, especially in terms of attendance and their re-engagement with learning after the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Attending school is critically important for students' achievement and success. Parents are legally obliged under the Education Act 1989 to enrol their children in school from the age of six to 16, and to ensure their children attend school every day the school is open. If children

under 6 are enrolled they are required to regularly attend school unless a transition plan is in place.

School boards of trustees are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure enrolled children attend school every day, unless there is a justifiable reason for their absence such as an illness or family bereavement. All schools should have policies, processes, and personnel in place to monitor attendance, follow up on absences and take action quickly if a student has patterns of poor attendance.

Schools take action to try and get these students to attend school regularly again and manage the vast majority of occasional unexplained absences well, without the involvement of an assistance from the Attendance Services.

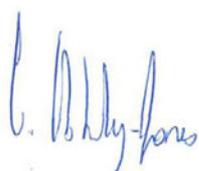
Further information on attendance services and other support the Ministry offers is available at the following link:

<https://www.education.govt.nz/school/managing-and-supporting-students/managing-student-attendance/attendance-services/#sh-attendance>

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



Cathryn Ashley-Jones
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Evidence, Data and Knowledge