



18 June 2020

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Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Thank you for writing to the Ministry of Education on 24 February 2020, to request information about directed enrolments, as published by the *Otago Daily Times* on 20 February 2020 under the headline "Sea of violence: schools resist some enrolments". Noting the last two paragraphs of the report, you asked for the following information:

A further breakdown by region;

- 1) of the 16 students in 2018 who were redirected back to the school who excluded them, a breakdown please by regions.*
- 2) For the 22 students in 2019 that were directed back to the school that excluded them also a breakdown by region.*

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

The information we provided for the story you noted in your request was not correctly quoted. The figures we supplied for the story are below:

Total number for 2018

The number of students excluded for 2018 was 1016. Of these 20 percent, or 203, were cases where directed enrolment were applied - including 170 to a different school and 33 to the same school.

Total number for 2019

The number of students excluded for 2019 was 1160. Of these 14.6 percent, or 169, were cases where directed enrolment were applied - including 147 directed to other schools, and 22 to the same school.

If a Principal is unsuccessful in placing an excluded student into another school, it then becomes the Ministry's responsibility to find appropriate schooling for that student. In the first instance, we approach other schools and the excluding school to talk about the support that could be provided if the student was to go to the school. This can take several discussions or several schools, but is often successful.

We consider a number of issues when we support an excluded student back into a school. We know schools do not take these decisions lightly – often the exclusion comes following a period of challenging behaviour, and despite the attempts of the suspending school to address this. There may be a lack of options for nearby schooling options, and principals declining to take students with serious behavioural issues.

There is also a proportion of students whose situations are very complex. Re-engagement decisions may be less to do with the school, and more to do with a range of social factors associated with the family – such as housing, employment, transience and family disputes.

As you are aware, directed enrolments are managed regionally through delegated authority, such as through local Education Managers, who are close to the situation and can work with affected parties to determine what's best for the student concerned. This does mean that there are regional differences in the use of formal directions compared with less formal processes to place excluded students in schools (whether led by a school or a regional Ministry team).

Across all regions, there is a proportion of students who are returned to the excluding school, whether through formal direction or other processes. The decision to work with the excluding school to take the student back is not taken lightly.

The overall number of students excluded is a very small proportion of the 770,475 students under 16 engaged in compulsory education.

Your request

I am releasing three tables to you:

- **Table 1**, which shows the overall number of exclusions by Ministry region;
- **Table 2**, which shows the number of exclusion cases in 2018 and 2019 where directed enrolment was applied to return the student to school, whether suspending school or new school, broken down by Ministry region; and
- **Table 3**, which shows Number of cases between 2018 and 2019 where a student has returned to school, whether suspending school or new school, without use of a Directed Enrolment, broken down by Ministry region.

These tables are provided in **Appendix A** to this response letter. Where the number of students referred to is fewer than five, I have withheld this number under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons.

It's important to note that regional comparisons may not paint the full picture of the work undertaken to return excluded students to education. For instance, our Otago-Southland area covers a significant geographic area, with a large number of small and relatively isolated schools, and often this is a leading reason for redirection to the excluding school, as alternative options are not readily accessible or available.

Our Ministry regions cover similar (but not identical) areas as regional councils. You can see a map of our regions "education areas" on our website, at the following address:

<https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Mapof10MinistryofEducationAreas.pdf>

[REDACTED] Working in partnership with school leaders to re-engage at-risk students is priority work for us, and we welcome any discussion that furthers collaborative practice. [REDACTED]

Thank you again for your request. Section 28(3) of the Act gives you the right to refer my response to an Ombudsman for review. You can find more information about this process by emailing info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support

cc Julie Anderson **Otago-Southland Director of Education**

Appendix A

Table 1

The number of exclusion cases by Ministry region in 2018 and 2019

Region	2018	2019
Tai Tokerau	64	68
Auckland	270	319
Waikato	110	139
Bay of Plenty/Waiariki	73	88
Hawkes Bay/Tairāwhiti	64	87
Taranaki/Whanganui/Manawatu	119	119
Wellington	67	81
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	33	45
Canterbury/Chatham Islands	114	129
Otago/Southland	102	85
Total	1016	1160

Table 2

The number of exclusion cases in 2018 and 2019 where directed enrolment was applied to return the student to school, whether suspending school or new school, broken down by Ministry region

Region	Returned to excluding school		Enrolled in a new school	
	2018	2019	2018	2019
Tai Tokerau	0	0	0	0
Auckland	<5	0	70	75
Waikato	<5	0	<5	0
Bay of Plenty/Waiariki	0	<5	12	<5
Hawkes Bay/Tairāwhiti	0	0	<5	<5
Taranaki/Whanganui/Manawatu	0	0	9	6
Wellington	<5	<5	<5	<5
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	5	5	<5	7
Canterbury/Chatham Islands	0	<5	33	27
Otago/Southland	24	13	36	24
Total	33	22	170	147

Table 3

Number of cases in 2018 and 2019 where a student has returned to school, whether suspending school or new school, without use of a Directed Enrolment, broken down by Ministry region.

Region	Returned to excluding school		Enrolled in a new school	
	2018	2019	2018	2019
Tai Tokerau	5	6	51	47
Auckland	<5	<5	169	127
Waikato	18	14	68	88
Bay of Plenty/Waiariki	6	8	42	31
Hawkes Bay/Tairāwhiti			59	71
Taranaki/Whanganui/Manawatu	<5	<5	88	87
Wellington	<5	<5	48	43
Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	<5	<5	18	18
Canterbury/Chatham Islands	12	11	56	62
Otago/Southland	7	<5	30	35
Total	57	49	629	610

*Includes students enrolled with Te Kura, and those who received a home schooling exemption