



07 NOV 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 9 October 2018 to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) requesting the following information:

- I would like information about how many primary and secondary students were formally disciplined for bringing weapons into schools in Southland.*
- What the disciplinary action was and what weapon was brought in.*

On 11 October 2018, you clarified your request to information from 2013 to the most current data.

The table below details how many Southland students were stood-down, suspended, excluded or expelled for bringing weapons into schools from 2013 to 2017.

Southland – Weapons in Schools	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
Number of Stand-downs	X	X	X	7	5	
Number of Suspensions	0	X	X	X	X	
Number of Exclusions	0	0	X	0	0	
Number of Expulsions	0	0	0	0	0	

Values less than 5 in the cohort of data be withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons and to avoid identifying individual students. These values are shown as 'x'.

These behaviours are not broken down further to weapon type. As such, I am refusing this part of the request under section 18(e) of the Act as the information requested does not exist.

Definitions of measures used

A **stand-down** is the removal of a student for a period of up to five days in a school term, where the decision is made by the Principal. A student may only be stood-down for a total of 10 school days in a year.

A **suspension** is the formal removal of a student from a state or state-integrated school on a temporary basis until the school board of trustees (the board) decides the final outcome at a meeting. The board can then either:

- lift the suspension (with or without conditions),
- extend the suspension, or
- exclude the student (if under 16) or expel the student (if aged 16 years or over).

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 enrolls elsewhere.

Considerations when interpreting the data

It's important to note that stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions are also measures of a school's reaction to the behaviour. While one school may opt to suspend a student over a particular incident, another school may not. The number of these incidents should not be used as a proxy measure for total student behaviour.

You can find further information about suspensions and expulsions, including age standardised data on the Ministry's Education Counts website at the following link www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/indicators/main/student-engagement-participation/stand-downs-suspensions-exclusions-expulsions

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.

Yours sincerely



Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support

cc Julie Anderson, Director of Education for Otago Southland