



Phillip Fry  
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Dear Phillip

Thank you for writing to the Ministry of Education on 19 July 2019 to request the number of complaints received about the Principal or teachers at Hawera Intermediate between 2012 and 2019.

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

All students should feel safe at school and we take allegations of bullying and criminal behaviour very seriously. We are available to work with and provide support to schools managing challenging issues.

Parents who have any concerns about the wellbeing of their children at school should talk with the Principal in the first instance and if they are still concerned they should follow the school's formal complaint process by writing to the board of trustees. We can support parents to understand this process and their options should they remain dissatisfied.

We have received three complaints this year about Hawera Intermediate School which we have followed up on with the school Board. Summaries of these complaints are attached to this letter as **Appendix A**.

We remain in regular contact with the school's Board and have a sound understanding of the challenges they are experiencing and continue to provide support, to the school's Board, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students.

Thank you again for your request. Under section 28(3), you have the right to refer this response to an Ombudsman. You can do this by emailing [info@ombudsman.parliament.govt.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



Katrina Casey  
**Deputy Secretary**  
**Sector Enablement and Support**

cc Marlene Clarkson, Director of Education for Taranaki–Whanganui–Manawatu

## Appendix A

### Complaints received about Hawera Intermediate School

Date	Complaint	Response
May 2019	<p>A parent contacted the Ministry to discuss concerns within the community around student safety and conduct, curriculum delivery and a number of minor administrative matters.</p> <p>The parent advised of their intention to organise a meeting of community members to discuss these matters.</p> <p>The parent asked for advice around next steps.</p>	<p>The Ministry staff member responding to the call acknowledged the parent's concerns.</p> <p>The Ministry staff member also advised that she did not consider it appropriate for the Ministry to attend the community meeting.</p> <p>The parent was advised to raise her concerns with school staff in the first instance, and progress their complaint through the Board complaints process if necessary.</p> <p>The parent advised of their intention to clarify the correct process with the school.</p>
June 2019	<p>A parent raised concerns around the quality of teaching their child was receiving.</p> <p>The parent advised their concerns around the time taken to advise them that their child was not completing their work.</p> <p>The parent noted the HIS Principal had agreed to review the child's work, following the complaint.</p>	<p>The Ministry staff member responding to the complaint thanks the parent for raising their concerns, and assured them we are working with the school to address current concerns.</p>
June 2019	<p>The Principal of another local school ("Principal B") advised of discussions with the Principal of HIS. In these discussions, HIS's Principal had also noted her personal concerns around student safety and conduct.</p> <p>Principal B noted comments from parents around the quality of teaching at the school and a perceived reduction in the number of enrolments at the school.</p> <p>Principal B sought reassurances that the Ministry is aware of the issues at HIS.</p>	<p>Principal B they would remain in contact with HIS's Principal and will continue to provide her with support.</p> <p>The Ministry staff member confirmed the Ministry's awareness of issues at HIS, and discussed our wider role in helping schools taking a systemic approach to addressing their challenges.</p> <p>Principal B noted their shared agreement in having HIS perform well as a school.</p>