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10 June 2014

David Nicholas
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Dear David

Thank you for your email of 16 May 2014 requesting *the number of stand-downs, exclusions or expulsions that have happened at Waitaki Boys' High School, presented per term from 2007 till term 1 2014.*

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

A stand-down is the removal of a student for a period of up to five days, where the decision is made by the Principal. A suspension is the formal removal of a student from a school until the school Board of Trustees (the Board) decides the outcome at a meeting. The Board can lift the suspension (with or without conditions), extend the suspension, or terminate the student's enrolment at the school (this is known as an exclusion for students under 16 and an expulsion for students aged 16 years and over).

It is important to note that stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions are not measures of student behaviour but measures of a school's reaction to such behaviours. What one school may choose to suspend for, another may not. The number of these events should not be used as a proxy measure for total student behaviour.

The Ministry collates and records the information centrally so that it can identify schools that may need extra support. Some schools in some areas may face particular issues at certain times, but nationally the number of incidences of challenging behaviour leading to stand-downs and suspensions in schools has decreased over many years.

The information contained in this request is incidents of stand-down and suspensions and not numbers of students. A student may be stood-down or suspended on more than one occasion.

Challenging behaviour can hinder learning and disrupt school life. The Ministry recognises that schools need support to manage challenging behaviour and it is investing \$75 million in the Positive Behaviour for Learning programme (PB4L).

The Ministry believes that student attendance, along with effective teaching, has the greatest influence on student engagement and achievement. All students must be present at school so they can participate and engage in learning. For this reason returning excluded students to school is a priority for the Ministry.

The size of the school student population changes each year, and therefore numbers cannot be compared between years and age groups. Rates are used by the Ministry to compare and analyse stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions as these take into account the change in size of the population.

High numbers of stand-downs and suspensions should not be considered extreme until they are converted to rates to account for population size. For example a large number of suspensions in a large school may lead to a below average suspension rate.

The annually released stand-down and suspension indicator can be found at:

<http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/indicators/main/student-engagement-participation/80346>

The 'Find a school' tool is a useful source for stand-down and suspension information at the school level for the previous year. This information is available under the student engagement button, and is found at:

<http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/find-school>

The appendix contains the information requested.

Exclusions and expulsions are subsets of suspensions and should not be added to suspensions.

All 2014 data is live data and it is therefore subject to change. It cannot be compared to previous years' data. Data for 2014 was extracted on the 20th of May 2014 and only includes incidences recorded up to this date. It is incomplete and cannot be used to predict the full 2014 year's data.

Values less than five have been concealed under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of students involved. For the same reason, no names of students will be released.

There do not appear to be overriding public interest reasons that support the release of the information withheld.

Under sections 19 and 28(3) of the Official Information Act 1982 you have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision.

Yours sincerely



Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support

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Appendix 1

The number of stand-downs, exclusions and expulsions that have happened at Waitaki Boys' High School, presented per term from 2007 till term 1 2014.

All 2014 data is live data and it is therefore subject to change. It cannot be compared to previous years' data. Data for 2014 was extracted on the 20th of May 2014 and only includes incidences recorded up to this date. It is incomplete and cannot be used to predict the full 2014 year's data.

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Board of Trustees shall ensure that each school it administers is open every year on the number of half-days set by the Minister of Education. Schools must be open for instruction accordingly. Boards of Trustees do not need to advise the Ministry of their school term dates.

Term dates ranges for 2000 to 2013 can be found at

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/EducationInNewZealand/SchoolTermsAndHolidays/SchoolTermsArchive.aspx#2012To2000>

With 2014 dates available from:

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/EducationInNewZealand/SchoolTermsAndHolidays/2014SchoolTermsAndHols.aspx>

Released Under the Official Information Act

Table 1: The number of stand-down, suspension, exclusion and expulsion cases at Waitaki Boys' High School between 2007 and 2014 by term as at 20 May 2014

	Term	Stand-down	Suspension	Exclusion	Expulsion
2007	1	6	<5	<5	0
	2	12	<5	0	0
	3	6	11	<5	0
	4	8	<5	0	0
2008	1	11	<5	<5	0
	2	18	7	<5	0
	3	16	<5	0	0
	4	6	<5	<5	0
2009	1	13	14	<5	0
	2	7	0	0	0
	3	11	<5	0	0
	4	8	<5	0	0
2010	1	13	<5	<5	0
	2	8	0	0	0
	3	<5	7	<5	0
	4	5	<5	<5	0
2011	1	15	<5	0	0
	2	21	<5	0	0
	3	17	<5	0	0
	4	<5	0	0	0
2012	1	5	0	0	0
	2	6	0	0	0
	3	11	0	0	0
	4	<5	<5	<5	0
2013	1	13	<5	0	0
	2	6	<5	<5	0
	3	7	<5	0	<5
	4	<5	<5	<5	<5
2014*	1	20	10	0	0

* All data for 2014 is live data and is therefore subject to change. It cannot be compared to previous years' data.

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