



8/10/2024

D Towell

[fyi-request-28410-37065df6@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-28410-37065df6@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe D Towell

**OIA: 1336140 – Education and data about smoking and vaping**

Thank you for your email of 16 September 2024 to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) requesting the following information:

*1. What education does the Ministry of Education provide to children about vaping? Please provide links to the training material and details about the ages that this education is provided.*

*2. If there is no education provided, why not? And are there plans to introduce an education program?*

*3. Please can you provide statistics of the number of instances of children (18yrs and under) who have been reported as vaping or smoking at school between 2014-2024.*

*Please can you provide this with details about the number relating to the age of the pupils and whether the attendance was at Primary Schools, Intermediate schools, or Secondary / High / intermediate schools, and whether this is smoking or vaping.*

*4. Please can you outline the number of pupils given detention, suspension or expelled as a result of vaping / smoking between 2014-2024.*

*5. How many schools, parents, organisations, or other individuals have contacted the Ministry of Education to raise concerns about vaping in schools between 2014-2024? Please provide copies of this contact.*

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

For **parts one** and **two** of your request, please see the education resources provided by various agencies such as Te Whatu Ora and Manatū Hauora, as vaping is a health matter. You can access the resources at the following links:

- [https://www.rph.org.nz/public-health-topics/smoking-and-vaping/vaping/#:~:text=Vaping%20Facts%20\(information%20for%20schools,lets%2Dclear%2Dthe%2Dair](https://www.rph.org.nz/public-health-topics/smoking-and-vaping/vaping/#:~:text=Vaping%20Facts%20(information%20for%20schools,lets%2Dclear%2Dthe%2Dair)



- <https://vapingfacts.health.nz/>

Classroom education is further supported by [Tūturu initiative](#) who have a wide range of resources available to help raise the awareness and understanding of young people and their community about the risks of vaping. The [‘Don’t Get Sucked In’](#) website includes information and resources on vaping to encourage teens not to try vaping (or smoking) in the first place.

Educating our young people about the benefits of a smoke free and vape free lifestyle is important. The [health and physical education](#) learning area of the New Zealand Curriculum contributes to the wellbeing of students beyond the classroom, particularly when it is supported by a whole of school approach and the school community. The health and physical education curriculum learning area includes opportunities for drug education, including the importance of being smokefree.

Schools are not required to report to the Ministry on the number of instances of children smoking or vaping, nor on detentions given in relation to this. I am therefore refusing **parts three** and **four** of your request as it relates to detentions, under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds for believing that the information is either held by or more closely with the functions of another department or organisation subject to the Act.

In response to the remainder of **part four** of your request, regarding stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions, and expulsions (SSEEs), schools are required to report on these to the Ministry. In making these reports, there are 15 subcategories of behaviour reasons for schools to select from as follows:

<b>15 Subcategories of ‘behaviour reason’ for SSEE</b>
Alcohol
Arson
Continual Disobedience
Drugs (including substance abuse)
Physical Assault on other students
Physical Assault on staff
Sexual Harassment
Sexual Misconduct
Smoking/Vaping
Theft
Vandalism
Verbal Assault on other students
Verbal Assault on staff
Weapons
Other harmful or other dangerous behaviour

The Ministry currently has a category called ‘Smoking/Vaping’ as a recorded behaviour reason for SSEE’s, however prior to 23 February 2022, this category was called ‘Smoking’. Vaping related suspensions may have been recorded by schools against other categories prior to this time, such as the “other harmful or dangerous behaviour” and “continual disobedience” categories.

We have two recently published responses that capture SSEE data broken down by behaviour reason, including 'Smoking/Vaping', from 2014 to 5 August 2024. I am therefore refusing this aspect of your request under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information can be found at the following links:

- <https://assets.education.govt.nz/public/Documents/our-work/information-releases/responses-to-Official-Information-Act-requests/1326764-Appendix-A.pdf>
- <https://assets.education.govt.nz/public/Documents/our-work/information-releases/responses-to-Official-Information-Act-requests/1334152-Response.pdf>

Concerns received about vaping are not stored centrally, and it would require a manual search of all of communication over a period of ten years to respond to your request. I am therefore refusing **part five** of your request under section 18(f) of the Act, because the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research. I invite you to make a refined request if there is specific information you are seeking in relation to this.

Please note, 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. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review my decision on your request, in accordance with section 28 of the Act. You can do this by writing to [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or to Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Cindy McDonald  
**Principal Advisor Official and Parliamentary Information**  
**Te Pou Rangatōpū | Corporate**