



10/12/2024

Nic Lane

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Tēnā koe Nic

**OIA: 1339929 – Ministry complaints process**

Thank you for your email of 13 November 2024 via the FYI website to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) requesting the following information:

*Can you please supply information regarding your complaints process detailing how you have focussed on designing for Aotearoa's diverse population. Specifically, I would like to understand how the ministry ensures the complaints process is rights-based, approachable and accessible across different languages and alternative formats.*

- 1. Documentation of the Complaints Process – An outline of the complaints process, including step-by-step details on how individuals can lodge a complaint and any flowcharts to understand this process.*
- 2. Accessibility Design for Languages – Information on the languages supported within the complaints process, including te Reo Māori, New Zealand Sign Language, and any other languages available; Details of any written, spoken, or digital resources available in these languages to assist complainants through the process; Any specific strategies or initiatives to support complainants whose first language is not English.*
- 3. Alternative Format Availability – Information on the availability of alternative formats (e.g., Easy Read, BRF, Oral) for complaints documentation and resources; Timelines around when these Alternative Formats if not provided will be.*
- 4. Approachability and Inclusivity Design – Any documents, guidelines, or assessments outlining how the ministry has incorporated inclusivity and approachability into the complaints process, particularly to support individuals with disabilities or language barriers.*
- 5. Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms – Information on how the ministry evaluates the effectiveness of these accessibility measures, including any feedback mechanisms from the public to improve the process.*



Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). We have interpreted your request as relating to complaints about the Ministry and state schools.

Currently, complaints that are received through the multiple channels into the Ministry are processed, investigated, and resolved by the business group best related to the nature of the complaint. We know there are times that we don't get things right, and people want to let us know. The Ministry has worked to improve and centralise our complaints system in 2024, and this is expected to go live in 2025.

The new system is intended for use by all Ministry employees, and will allow for the logging, tracking and resolution of complaints received via email, phone, post, web-form, or face-to-face from external parties, about the Ministry, its systems, processes, or staff. Consideration of accessibility and language needs and associated resources is part of this development work to meet required standards.

There is one internal document regarding the current process that has been identified in scope of **part one** of your request. I am providing this to you as **Appendix A**. The remaining information in scope of this part of your request is publicly available as follows:

- The process of making a complaint to the Ministry is available on the Ministry's website at the following link: <https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/our-role-and-our-people/contact-us/complaints>
- A large volume of complaints the Ministry receives relate to decisions by school boards. As schools are self-governing through their boards, complainants in these cases are advised to approach the board to resolve the complaint. The Ministry does not investigate complaints about schools, but we do support complainants with where to direct their concerns, and that school boards are responsible for managing the complaints. This also applies to early childhood services, which are privately owned and manage complaints themselves. Additional information on this can be found on the Ministry's website here: <https://www.education.govt.nz/education-professionals/schools-year-0-13/managing-students/stand-downs-suspensions-exclusions-and-expulsions-guidelines-part-2/section-3-actions-of-last-resort/managing-complaints>.

No information regarding the current complaints system has been identified in scope of **parts two, three and four** of your request, so I am refusing these parts of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

In response to **part five** of your request, the Ministry's website has recently been redesigned, and a feature has been introduced whereby feedback can be provided at the bottom of webpages indicating whether the information was helpful. This tool could be used to provide feedback on the relevant webpages to improve the complaints system.

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



Rob Campbell  
**Hautū (Taupua) | Deputy Secretary (Acting)**  
**Te Pou Rangatōpū | Corporate**