



26 AUG 2016

Tanya Jacob  
[fyi-request-4321-912f6148@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-4321-912f6148@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Ms Jacob

Thank you for your request dated 29 July 2016 via FYI, to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

- *any guidelines prepared in the last 18 months regarding religious instruction and/or religious observances in state schools. Please include all versions. There is no need to include names.*

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

Last year the Ministry was in the early stages of developing draft guidelines for religious instruction and observance. However this work was put on hold until the outcome of the court case is known.

Your request is therefore declined under section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act, which applies to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions. It is important that the Ministry retains the ability to test our initial thoughts on a new policy or piece of advice, in the form of free and frank opinions that have not been modified due to any concern that they might be provided to a wider audience.

In reaching the decision to decline your request, I have considered whether there are sufficient countervailing public interest considerations which outweigh the need to protect the information in scope of your request. On balance I consider there is a greater public interest in the development of advice and policy in an orderly and managed fashion.

You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely



Lisa Rodgers  
**Deputy Secretary**  
**Early Learning and Student Achievement**