



03 APR 2017

Jake Beleski  
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Dear Jake

Thank you for your request of 6 March 2017 for the following information:

- *A breakdown of suspensions and expulsions from Wairarapa secondary schools in the last five years.*

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

A suspension is the formal removal of a student from a state or state integrated school until the school Board of Trustees decides the outcome at a meeting. A school Board can choose to lift the suspension (with or without conditions), extend the suspension, or terminate the student's enrolment at the school through an exclusion (where a student is under 16) or an expulsion (for students over 16). This decision should be arrived at only in the most serious cases.

It's important to note that suspensions, expulsions and exclusions are also measures of a school's reaction to the behaviour. 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.

When a student is expelled from school, they are encouraged to move into further education either at a new school, industry training provider, wānanga, or private training establishment. We can provide support to connect youth with education, training and employment through Youth Services and Count Me In.

The table below shows the number of suspension, exclusion and expulsion cases for secondary schools in Masterton District, Carterton District and South Wairarapa District between 2012 – 2016, as at 22 March 2017:

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of students enrolled at <b>all year levels</b> at secondary school in the Wairarapa	2,883	2,854	2,869	2,828	2,832
Number of students in all year levels <b>suspended</b> from school	30	34	27	15	24
Number of suspended students aged 16 or over who were subsequently <b>expelled</b> from school	0	2	3	0	1
Number of suspended students aged under 16 who were subsequently <b>excluded</b> from school	6	10	8	1	3

For our usual reporting on this matter we use age-standardised rates, expressed as the number of cases per 1,000 students enrolled. Most stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions occur at ages 13-15 and age-standardisation allows a fairer comparison between different age cohorts. This is because the distribution of students by age among the student population changes year by year.

You can find further information about suspensions and expulsions, including age standardised data on the Ministry's *Education Counts* website at: <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/indicators/main/student-engagement-participation/Stand-downs-suspensions-exclusions-expulsions>

Every year, we invest millions of dollars to help schools manage behaviour through initiatives such as Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L), special behavioural education support and anti-bullying schemes. As a result, the national rates of suspensions, stand-downs, exclusions and expulsions are at their lowest, having nearly halved since records began in 2000.

PB4L gives students, teachers, families and whānau the tools they need to address problem behaviour, improve children's wellbeing and increase educational achievement. Many schools involved with PB4L have reported a dramatic drop in suspensions and an increase in student achievement. By strengthening relationships and creating more positive home and school environments, we aim to remove barriers to engagement and improve students' chances to achieve at school and beyond.

The New Zealand Council for Educational Research evaluated PB4L School-Wide in 408 schools between 2010 and 2013 and reported overall improvements in behaviour, including decreases in stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions, and decreases in class disruption. The evaluation also showed an increase in positive behaviours such as being on task and engagement with learning. You can find more about PB4L at <http://pb4l.tki.org.nz/>.

We have also produced a two-part guide to assist Boards of Trustees, teachers and principals with their legal options and duties regarding stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions. You can access these guidelines by going to our website at [www.education.govt.nz](http://www.education.govt.nz) and typing "suspension guidelines" in the search box on the top right hand side of the page.

Thank you again for your request. If you have any questions about this response, please contact the Ministry's Media Team in the first instance. You can do this by emailing [media.team@education.govt.nz](mailto:media.team@education.govt.nz).

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you also have the right to refer this response to an Ombudsman. You can do this by writing to [info@ombudsman.govt.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



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