



15 OCT 2018



Dear 

Thank you for your email of 5 October 2018 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

- 1. Please provide a breakdown of the number of complaints the Ministry of Education or its local Ministry offices have received about a school or board of trustees' handling of bullying complaints since October 1 2017, with the respective schools and dates of complaints.*
- 2. Please provide the reasons for each complaint, the bullying behaviour in question, whether it was by a teacher or a student, how many times the Ministry of Education or its local offices subsequently became involved, and the outcome of its involvement.*

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

I am refusing your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the Ministry does not capture the specific information you request.

New Zealand's schools are self-governing. We recommend a complainant follows their school's official complaints process to resolve the situation, by making a formal complaint to the Principal, and then to the Board of Trustees if they are unable to reach a satisfactory outcome. They can ask to attend the Board meeting at which their complaint will be addressed. The Ministry can assist in providing guidance and advice during this process.

Complaints we receive about a school are managed at a local level. When we receive a complaint, our staff work with the school to address the concerns that have been raised to determine the appropriate level of support required. We take all complaints seriously, and we make contact with complainants within two working days to discuss how we will handle it.

When receiving or investigating complaints, staff are required to act in accordance with the Ministry and the State Service Commission's codes of conduct. We endeavour to protect the identity of the complainant wherever possible; however, we cannot guarantee this as it may affect our ability to adequately address the complaint.

Our complaints process is built on the following principles:

- *Fair* – the complaint will be managed and resolved in a way that is impartial, objective and consistent.
- *Simple* – we will use a straight forward, practical approach to managing and resolving low level complaints.

- *Timely* – the complaint will be managed and resolved within a specified timeframe that will be discussed with the complainant.
- *Responsive* – any relevant information raised through the investigation of a complaint will be used to improve the way we do things.
- *Non-discriminatory* – we will make sure no one is discriminated against as a result of a complaint.

I am providing you with copies of the following documents which inform our Regional Offices' handling of complaints (both internal and external):

- an overview of the Ministry's Complaints Process
- information sheets regarding recording external complaints and roles and responsibilities, and
- a complaints management process map.

This information is attached to this response as **Appendix A**. Some names and contact details have been withheld to protect the privacy of the individuals concerned.

Information specifically relating to complaints is available at:

<http://education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/regional-ministry-contacts/complaints/>

We also provide guidance for schools to help them effectively deal with complaints. You can find this advice by searching for "dealing with complaints" on our Education Leaders website:

<http://www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/>

Information specifically relating to bullying (including the Ministry's definition of bullying) is available at:

<https://www.bullyingfree.nz/>

Please note, the Ministry now proactively publishes OIA responses on our website. As such, 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 this decision. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely



Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support