

Hon Chris Hipkins

MP for Remutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of Police

Minister for the Public Service

Leader of the House



18 July 2022

fyi-request-17314-c9e079f3@requests.fyi.org.nz

CH14854

Tēnā koe

Thank you for your email of 6 June 2022 about the Cambridge International exams that were impacted by COVID-19 in New Zealand. I understand you have also written to, and received a response from, the Ministry of Education on this matter.

As advised by the Ministry, the Official Information Act does not apply to your request.

The last few years have been challenging for many students, particularly those in Auckland. We had to make some tough decisions to protect the health of our people, with the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone in New Zealand being our top priority.

As you know, while the Ministry is responsible for NCEA, it does not hold responsibility for exams administered by international examining boards, such as the Cambridge exams. Any COVID-19-related changes to assessment conditions, such as the timing of examinations in 2021, sat with the owner of the qualification and the Association of Cambridge Schools in New Zealand (Inc).

Due to the COVID-19 disruptions in 2021, and in consultation with Cambridge Assessment International Education, students in Auckland were entitled to 2.5 additional University Entrance tariff points for every 10 points they achieved from the assessment, up to a maximum of 30 points.

A range of resources were made available for all schools, learners and whānau to support them through the impacts of COVID-19, and you can find these at temahau.govt.nz/covid-19/covid-19-and-wellbeing. The Ministry also encourages students and whānau to work closely with their school or kura, as they can make sure the right supports are in place for students who may be struggling with their wellbeing.

Throughout 2021, all teachers and schools were supported by local Ministry offices to help them through any challenges they faced during COVID-19 restrictions, regardless of which examinations students were participating in.

As you will appreciate, it was necessary to balance education outcomes with the need to protect the health of young people and school staff. Students, parents and whānau can be assured that our approach strictly aligned with public health advice and was designed to keep students, their teachers and their communities as safe as possible.

Thank you again for writing, and I wish you all the best.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CH' followed by a stylized flourish.

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education