



18 July 2022

Chris McCashin  
[fyi-request-19702-62eb3385@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-19702-62eb3385@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Chris

Thank you for your email of 18 June 2022 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

1. *Please provide total number of teachers who were terminated due to vaccine mandates.*
2. *A recent stuff article noted that there are groups “pressuring” mask mandates to be reintroduced into schools. Please provide any letters, requests, names of groups, public agencies, directives written or verbal of anything that would be classed as pressure / evidence for mask mandates to be reintroduced to schools.*

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

In November 2021, the Ministry introduced a payroll category for recording the number of teachers who left their positions for COVID-19-related reasons. This payroll category includes teachers leaving due to the vaccine mandate, but also any other COVID-19-related reasons, such as health or family obligations. The category also does not isolate whether teachers voluntarily left the workforce or left due to the vaccine mandate. Therefore, reliable conclusions cannot be drawn regarding the number of teachers leaving their positions due to the vaccine mandate.

As a result, I am refusing part 1 of your request under section 18(g) of the Act, because the Ministry does not hold this information, and we have no grounds for believing it is either held by, or more closely connected to the functions of, another department or interdepartmental venture or Minister of the Crown or organisation, or by a local authority.

However, we can provide you with the information we do hold regarding the number of teachers who were recorded as leaving their positions under the ‘covid’ payroll category. Between November 2021 and the payroll period beginning 20 April 2022 (which was the first full payroll period after the vaccine mandates were removed), 447 teachers left their teaching positions with an exit reason coded by the school as ‘covid’.

With regards to part 2 of your request, Stuff is responsible for the statement that pressure from various groups was mounting to reintroduce compulsory masks in schools, and this statement was not attributed to any Government representative. Nevertheless, a search through our systems has been undertaken. For this, we have interpreted your request to be for information related to *groups* pushing for the reintroduction of masks into schools.

*No letters, requests, names of groups, public agencies, directives written or verbal of anything that would be classed as pressure / evidence for mask mandates to be reintroduced to schools from groups* have been identified. As a result, I am refusing part 2 of

your request under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information is not held by the Ministry, and I have no grounds for believing that it is either held by, or more closely related to the functions of, another department or interdepartmental venture or Minister of the Crown or organisation, or by a local authority.

The Ministry and the Minister of Education frequently receive correspondence from concerned individuals about different matters, including mask mandates. The opinions and perspectives within such correspondence range from those in favour of mandates, and those opposed to mandates, with significant numbers of correspondence received from both perspectives depending on the setting at the time.

These pieces of correspondence do not fall within scope of this request because they are not from *groups*; instead, the correspondence tends to be received from individual parents, either calling for mask mandates to be reinstated or opposed to mask mandates for their children, or from individuals involved in the education sector.

Please note, the Ministry now proactively publishes official information 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 [xxxx@xxxxxxxxx.xxxxxxxxxx.xx](mailto:xxxx@xxxxxxxxx.xxxxxxxxxx.xx) or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Jolly'.

Sam Jolly  
**Group Manager**  
**Te Mahau | Te Pae Aronui (Operations and Integration)**