



27/01/2023

Matt Brown

[fyi-request-20646-d06xxxxx@xxxxxxxxx.xxx.xxx.nz](mailto:fyi-request-20646-d06xxxxx@xxxxxxxxx.xxx.xxx.nz)

Tēnā koe Matt

**OIA: 1296853 – “Help Slow Covid-19 – Heat, Open, Reboot” poster**

Thank you for your request dated 23 September 2022 requesting the following, relating to the “Help Slow Covid-19 – Heat, Open, Reboot” poster:

1. *The scientific and/or public health advice received and/or considered by MoE that supports the advice provided on the poster regarding the level and acceptable duration of different CO<sub>2</sub> levels in a classroom.*
2. *Any other documentation (including, but not limited to email, meeting notes, reviews, earlier proposed versions) relating to the creation, review and publication of this poster.*
3. *Any documentation that involves discussion of the relationship between the acceptable levels of CO<sub>2</sub> described in the "How to Slow Covid-19" poster and the "Indoor Air Quality and Thermal Comfort" requirements provided at <https://assets.education.govt.nz/public/Documents/Primary-Secondary/Property/Design/Indoor-Air-Quality-and-Thermal-Comfort-V2-v2.0-2022.pdf>*
4. *In the case that the "How To Slow Covid-19" poster and the "Indoor Air Quality and Thermal Comfort" document are owned by different teams / departments / people / groups within MoE - all communication between these groups that discusses classroom CO<sub>2</sub> levels and ventilation between February and September 2022 inclusive.*

As indicated earlier, your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). I am now able to provide the following information in relation to your request:

Appendices	Document title or relates to
Appendix One	Help Slow Covid-19 – Heat, Open, Reboot poster
Appendix Two	Copies of the content that became the published website CO <sub>2</sub> guidance, with the following revision dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 February 2022</li> <li>- 29 April 2022</li> <li>- 9 September 2022</li> <li>- 14 October 2022</li> </ul>



### Appendix Three

Scientific advice received/and or considered that later led to the production of the “Help Slow Covid-19 – Heat, Open, Reboot” poster

Some information has been withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- 9(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of individuals – applicable to contact and personal information
- 9(2)(g)(i) – to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions between members of an organisation in the course of their duty in advising the Ministry.

### Context

The “*Help Slow Covid-19 – Heat, Open, Reboot*” poster [refer **Appendix One**] was a deliverable of the Ministry’s COVID-19 ventilation in schools response programme. The poster was created on 21 July 2022 as part of the Ministry’s support for schools in response to the COVID-19 Omicron variant nationwide resurgence at that time. It advises schools to heat rooms, open windows while staying warm and regularly refresh the air to help slow the transmission of COVID-19 and other illnesses.

The programme first published Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) guidance on 1 February 2022. This and other ventilation guidance was subsequently refined with revisions published 29 April, 9 September and 14 October 2022. This published guidance is attached in full as **Appendix Two**.

The guidance presented on the poster is intended to be consistent with this published CO<sub>2</sub> guidance. It provides tips to refresh the air further if CO<sub>2</sub> levels are elevated for a sustained period at or above thresholds of 800, 1250 and 2000ppm to demonstrate increasing risk, and therefore the increasing importance of mitigations when sustained CO<sub>2</sub> levels are over 800ppm. A three-point colour scale is used to communicate this, aligning to the capability of the portable CO<sub>2</sub> monitors being distributed, which allow three CO<sub>2</sub> alert thresholds to be set.

The Ministry will continue to refine its ventilation and CO<sub>2</sub> guidance in support of good indoor air quality in New Zealand schools.

### **Part 1: Scientific and public health advice received and/or considered regarding the level and acceptable duration of different CO<sub>2</sub> levels in a classroom.**

The programme has received its COVID-19 ventilation advice, including that relating to the published CO<sub>2</sub> guidance, from a panel of experts that includes representatives from the Ministry of Health, NIWA, BRANZ, GNS Science and the Universities of Canterbury, Massey and Victoria.

The programme team included expert resources from the Ministry’s School Design team, which is also responsible for the Designing Quality Learning Spaces (DQLS) series of documents and requirements.

All COVID-19 ventilation guidance produced by the programme was formed collaboratively, and often under urgency, with VTAG members providing frequent advice and review comments, and supporting the final published version(s). I am providing the key information we have been able to

identify, in part, as **Appendix Three**. Some information has been withheld from this documentation under the following sections of the Act:

- 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons
- 9(2)(g)(i) to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

## **Part 2: Documentation relating to the creation, review and publication of the poster**

Please also refer to **Appendix Three** for this part of your request. Please note that we have interpreted the intent of this request to relate to the ventilation, CO<sub>2</sub> levels and acceptable duration guidance presented on the poster, and have excluded documentation relating to other matters not directly pertaining to this – for example quoting, production and logistical distribution, and translation of the poster into te reo Māori.

## **Part 3: Documentation discussing the relationship between the poster and the Indoor Air Quality and Thermal Comfort requirements**

Discussion on the relationship to the DQLS requirements and the CO<sub>2</sub> guidance produced by the programme occurred as part of the initial formation of the CO<sub>2</sub> guidance published on 1 February 2022, which is included in **Appendix Two**.

There was no subsequent discussion on the relationship between the poster and these requirements.

## **Part 4: All communications between Ministry groups that discuss classroom CO<sub>2</sub> levels and ventilation, between February and September 2022 inclusive**

We confirm that the Ministry's Te Puna Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure and Digital group includes the temporary COVID-19 ventilation in schools response programme team. The programme team included resources from the School Design team (who are responsible for the *Indoor Air Quality and Thermal Comfort* and other DQLS documents), but the team performed functionally as one unit, rather than different groups.

Your request could be attributable to all communications within the programme team that included the School Design resources. As noted in our decision letter, this part of your request has been refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as the information requested, beyond that provided in **Appendices One to Three**, cannot physically be made available without substantial collation or research.

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 the decision on your request, in accordance with section 28 of the Act. You can do this by writing to [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or to Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10-152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Sam Fowler  
Head of Property  
Te Puna Hanganga, Matihiko | Infrastructure and Digital