



18/01/2024

Ben

fyi-request-24980-75c737c3@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Ben

OIA: 1319751 - Ben - Evidence on the impact of cell phones in the classroom

Thank you for your email of 1 December 2023 to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) requesting the following information:

1. *Any research or other evidence as to the effect of cell phones in the classroom.*
2. *If known:*
 - (a) *the number of secondary schools that have rules banning cell phones in the classroom*
 - (b) *the number of secondary schools that have rules restricting cell phones in the classroom*
 - (c) *the total number of secondary schools*
3. *If any previous consideration has been given to a ban on cell phones in the classroom, the papers relating to that consideration (i.e., ministry papers, cabinet papers, but excluding any emails or other correspondence).*

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

In response to **part 1** of your request, the Ministry has completed a draft literature review on cell phone bans in schools. This is attached as **Appendix A**.

In response to **parts 2(a) and (b)** of your request, please find below a table about existing bans or restrictions on cell phones, from public information available on school websites and initial enquiries by the Ministry. Please note, schools are not required to report this information to the Ministry, so the data provided is not a full or accurate representation of restrictions or bans across the sector.

Examples of 'hard bans' in schools include:

- Parents asked not to allow their children to take phones to school
- Students to hand phones in at reception in the morning
- Phones banned all day.

Examples of 'soft bans' include:

- Phones banned during class time
- Phones banned from class but allowed during break times
- Students asked to put phones away.

Region and school type	Existing ban or restrictions	Hard ban	Soft ban
Te Tai Runga (South)			
Secondary	30		
Area/Composite	6		
Total	36		
Te Tai Whenua (Central)			
Secondary	18	2	16
Area/Composite	5	3	2
Total	23	5	18
Te Tai Raro (North)			
Secondary	11	1	5
Area/Composite	2		
Total	13	1	5

In response to **part 2(c)** of your request, the total number of secondary schools in New Zealand is 374. The number of schools is published on the Education Counts website and can be found here: <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/number-of-schools>

Regarding **part 3** of your request, I can confirm that, prior to the new Government's announcement, the Ministry had not given consideration to the banning of cell phones in classrooms.

As at the date of your request, one Education Report entitled *1319218 Banning cell phones in schools* was provided to the Minister of Education on 28 November 2023, providing advice on the work needed to establish the ban, and seeking policy direction decisions. I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the Act, as the Education Report is part of the Ministry's proactive release cycle, so will soon be publicly available. Please note, some of the information has been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons.

Please also note, 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 my decision on your request, in accordance with section 28 of the Act. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or to Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Fraser', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jennifer Fraser

General Manager, School Policy

Te Pou Kaupapahere | Policy