



29/08/2024

Kathryn Pick  
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Tēnā koe Kathryn

### **OIA: 1333499 – COVID-19 vaccination obligations**

Thank you for your email of 1 August 2024 to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) requesting the following information:

*I would like to request all memos and advice relating to staff obligations concerning Covid vaccination, sent from the MoE and NZSTA between August 1st 2021 and 20th December 2021 to school principals and BOTs. Furthermore, I particularly request the memos and advice relating to staff obligations concerning Covid vaccination between these two organisations (MOE and NZSTA).*

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

We have interpreted your request for *memos and advice* [...] as referring to **formal advice**, noting that the Ministry's mechanism for providing advice to school principals and boards is through the School Leaders Bulletin, which is published on our website at: <https://bulletins.education.govt.nz/>. Previous editions of the Bulletin are available to search via the drop-down menu entitled 'Previous Bulletins' at the top right of the page. The following Bulletins are particularly relevant to your request:

- Information regarding vaccinations and exemptions (11 October 2021):  
<https://bulletins.education.govt.nz/bulletin/he-pitopito-korero/issue/covid-19-update-11-october-2021/date/2021-10-11>
- Information regarding exemption from testing requirements (19 October 2021):  
<https://bulletins.education.govt.nz/bulletin/he-pitopito-korero/issue/covid-19-update-11-october-2021/date/2021-10-11>
- Detail regarding exemptions from testing requirements (27 October 2021):  
<https://bulletins.education.govt.nz/bulletin/he-pitopito-korero/issue/covid-19-update-19-october-2021/date/2021-10-19>
- Information regarding medical exemptions for staff (28 October 2021):  
<https://bulletins.education.govt.nz/bulletin/he-pitopito-korero/issue/covid-19-update-28-october-2021/date/2021-10-28>
- Information addressing concerns regarding “bogus” exemptions (1 November 2021):  
<https://bulletins.education.govt.nz/bulletin/he-pitopito-korero/issue/covid-19-update-1-november-2021/date/2021-11-01>



- Application of vaccination requirements for various roles (3 November 2021): <https://bulletins.education.govt.nz/bulletin/he-pitopito-korero/issue/covid-19-update-3-november-2021/date/2021-11-03>
- FAQs (10 November 2021): <https://bulletins.education.govt.nz/bulletin/he-pitopito-korero/issue/covid-19-update-3-november-2021/date/2021-11-03>
- Information regarding managing staff, including exemptions (11 November 2021): <https://bulletins.education.govt.nz/bulletin/he-pitopito-korero/issue/covid-19-update-11-november-2021/date/2021-11-11>
- Information relating to vaccines that were available (12 November 2021): <https://bulletins.education.govt.nz/bulletin/he-pitopito-korero/issue/covid-19-update-12-november-2021/date/2021-11-12>
- Further information regarding managing staff with exemptions (18 November 2021): <https://bulletins.education.govt.nz/bulletin/he-pitopito-korero/issue/covid-19-update-18-november-2021/date/2021-11-18>
- Changes to the Employment Relations Act 2000 (7 December 2021): <https://bulletins.education.govt.nz/bulletin/he-pitopito-korero/issue/covid-19-update-7-december-2021/date/2021-12-07>.

We note that Te Whakarōputanga Kaitiaki Kura o Aotearoa – New Zealand School Boards Association Incorporated (NZSBA) was formerly known as the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA). NZSBA is an independent, membership-based non-government organisation with charitable trust status as an incorporated society. It exercises its own decisions around operational matters, and is not subject to the Act. The Ministry does not hold a record of advice provided to schools by NZSTA, and this part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and we have no reason to believe it is held by another department or organisation subject to the Act.

Regarding the second part of your request, we have searched our records for correspondence between the Ministry and NZSTA relating to vaccination, and have identified a significant volume of email correspondence during the period, but no formal advice provided from one entity to the other. This is because the two entities were collaborating on interpretation of legislation and wording of guidance and templates to ensure consistency of advice to be provided out to the sector, as opposed to acting in an advisory capacity to each other. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

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](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or to Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Emma Drysdale  
**Manager Official and Parliamentary Information**  
**Te Pou Rangatōpū | Corporate**