



29 MAR 2017

Chelsea Boyle
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Dear Chelsea

Thank you for your request of 24 February 2017 to the Ministry, requesting information about regional truancy services. Your request was for:

- *How many absences did each primary school in Wairarapa record last year?*
- *How many truancy cases did the District Truancy Service investigate in Wairarapa last year?*
- *How many of these cases were primary school aged children?*

Following a discussion with the Media Team on 1 March 2017, you agreed to clarify your request as follows:

- *How many absences were recorded at primary school level in each of Masterton District, Carterton District and South Wairarapa District?*
- *How many truancy cases did the District Truancy Service investigate in Wairarapa last year?*
- *How many of these cases were primary school aged children?*

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

Absences in Wairarapa schools

Student attendance and effective teaching are the two greatest influences in student engagement and achievement. Students who attend school regularly are better equipped to participate in society, and are more likely to gain qualifications and employment.

While schools, parents and guardians are legally responsible for ensuring children are attending school, we all have a part to play when it comes to the education of students. The Ministry set up an integrated attendance service in 2013 to get more children engaged in schooling. Schools can refer regularly unjustifiably absent students to their local attendance service for additional support, when contact with the student's family or whānau doesn't improve attendance.

We collect data through an annual voluntary attendance survey of state and state-integrated schools in term two of each year, which is used to provide a week-long snapshot of national attendance and an analysis of national attendance over all of term two. A report based on the 2015 data was published in August 2016, and we anticipate the 2016 report will be available in the second half of this year. Accordingly, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information does not yet exist. The 2015 report is available from our *Education Counts* website at the following address:

<http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/2503/attendance-in-new-zealand-schools-2015>.

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This webpage contains two spreadsheets with data tables showing a breakdown of attendance data, including for students attending schools in Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa Districts.

- The spreadsheet "Attendance Survey Data.xls" contains the analysis of attendance over all of term 2 for 2011-2015.
- The spreadsheet "Survey Week Data.xls" contains the one-week national snapshot for 2002-2015.

This snapshot is based on attendance in all of school term two 2015. The percentage of students attending regularly is defined in this report as more than 90 percent of the time. The 2015 data shows that the number of primary students who meet this definition of attending school regularly in the three Wairarapa districts has been steady since the 2012 survey.

I have attached a table with student attendance figures for years 1 to 8 in the three Wairarapa districts to this letter as Appendix A.

Attendance Survey referrals

We contract Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga, the health and social service delivery arm of Ngāti Kahungunu to provide attendance services in Wairarapa. Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga is one of eleven regional attendance services working with communities and families to return students to school, and tailors their approach based on local knowledge.

Attendance services look at all factors contributing to unjustified absences and non-enrolment and identify the level of school, whānau, community or social service support required to keep students at school.

Attendance services follow up two main types of cases. The first type is Non-enrolment Notifications (NEN). When a student has left school and not enrolled at another school within 20 school days, a school is required to notify the Ministry. A local attendance provider will then work to locate the student and assist their return to education.

The second type of case is an Unjustified Absence (UA), which is an absence that is either unexplained, or where the reason given is not in line with school policies. The numbers of each case opened and closed by Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2016 is as follows:

	Primary school cases (age 6 to 12 years)		All cases (age 6 to 15 years)	
	opened	closed	opened	closed
Non Enrolment Notification	8	7	39	43
Unjustified Absence	48	48	180	180

It's important to note the following:

- Open NEN number can refer to students who become non-enrolled at a school in the Wairarapa and then moved out of the area.
- UA numbers are not a complete data set, as not all schools in the Wairarapa use the UA system, and each school has different criteria for reporting unjustified absences.
- These numbers only capture students aged 6 to 15, as students aged 16 and over are not legally required to be in school.

Our website provides information for parents about non attendance, and what they can do to encourage their children to attend school regularly. You can find this information at <http://parents.education.govt.nz/when-your-child-is-ditching-school/>

I hope this response has been of use to you. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the Ministry's Media Team in the first instance. You can contact them by email, at Media.Team@education.govt.nz.

You have the right to refer this response to an Ombudsman. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely



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Sector Enablement and Support