



Ombudsman
Tuia kia ōrite • Fairness for all

Large Print version



The Ombudsman works to protect people’s rights, their dignity, and mana. The Ombudsman is committed to Te Ao Māori and ensuring obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi are met.

The Ombudsman's role with schools

Anyone can complain to the Ombudsman about acts and decisions by a school. The Ombudsman can deal with concerns such as:

- The way complaints are handled
- Enrolment
- Learning support
- How students are being treated
- A student's right to an education generally
- Where a student has been expelled or "excluded".

The Ombudsman can ensure a fair process and reasonable decisions have been made.

OIA (Official Information Act)

The Ombudsman also deals with complaints about schools refusing to release official information. Under the OIA, anyone can request information, for example, minutes of a meeting.

The school should make the information available, unless there is a reason for withholding it, for example, to protect people's privacy or to maintain confidentiality.

Disability Convention

Alongside Te Tiriti, the Ombudsman has a focus on the rights of people with disabilities. Under law, all students have the right to education.

How the Ombudsman can help

If you are unhappy with an act or decision by a school has made, you should first try to sort it out with the school board.

If you are not satisfied with their response, then you can complain to the Ombudsman.

What happens when you make a complaint?

When the Ombudsman receives a complaint an investigator may contact the school informally and try to resolve it. If the Ombudsman can't help, the investigator will tell you why and of any other options.

If the Ombudsman decides to investigate, they will write to the chair of the school board, providing details of the complaint and asking for any information they need.

If the Ombudsman finds the school's actions have been unfair, they might make recommendations to the board.

The Ombudsman could ask the school board to reconsider a decision, amend records, and take steps to prevent it from happening again.

Information for schools

The Ombudsman works with schools to help them understand what good complaints processes look like. The Ombudsman's website explains what school board members 'need to know', and gives some useful case studies.

The website information covers:

- Why have a complaints handling process?
- What should a complaints handling process look like?
- What is the Ombudsman's role?

- Support for Official Information requests.

Find information here [https://www.](https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/good-complaints-handling-school-boards)

[ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/good-complaints-handling-school-boards](https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/good-complaints-handling-school-boards)

Find guidance on OIA requests here: [https://](https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/oia-and-school-boards)

www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/oia-and-school-boards

Further information about managing complaints is available on the Ministry of Education website. [Managing complaints – Education in New Zealand.](#)

How to make a complaint

If you think a school hasn't treated you or your child fairly or reasonably, or if you are unhappy with its response to your information request, you can complain to the Ombudsman.

You can make a complaint by:

- Using the online complaint form:

www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/get-help-public. Select 'I want to' and then choose 'make a complaint'. Select 'an education provider' from the drop down menu.

Follow the link and select either 'I have a complaint about a request for official information' or 'I have a complaint about an act or decision by a public sector agency', and complete the form.

Or:

Email: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Freephone: 0800 802 602

Post to: The Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143

You can make a complaint on behalf of someone else, with their permission.

Further information about managing complaints is available on the Ministry of Education website and our website.

Contact the Ombudsman Whakapā Kaitiaki

Mana Tangata

Office of the Ombudsman

Tari o te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata

Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm

Freephone 0800 802 602

Email info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

Website www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143

Facebook: @ombudsmannz



www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/schools-and-ombudsman

Use this QR code for more information and pamphlets in accessible formats and other languages. Additional languages and formats are available on request.

Use NZ Relay www.nzrelay.co.nz to contact the Ombudsman if you are Deaf or hard of hearing or have a speech impairment.

Schools and the Ombudsman

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