



EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Guidelines for Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklists

Education Review Office

P O Box 2799

WELLINGTON

NEW ZEALAND

January 2026

Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa The Child – The Heart of the Matter	3
Introduction	3
High Quality Evaluation Contributing to High Quality Education.....	3
Compliance Issues.....	3
Section One – Board Administration Compliance Guide	4
Education and Training Act 2020	4
Board objectives	6
Powers and functions of boards	7
Why planning and reporting is important.	20
An overview of the planning and reporting cycle.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Section Two – Curriculum Compliance Guide.....	24
Introduction	24
Key Requirements	25
Useful Resources.....	28
Section Three – Health, Safety & Welfare Compliance Guide.....	29
Introduction	29
Key Requirements	33
Useful Resources.....	42
Section Four – Personnel Compliance Guide	43
Introduction	43
Human Rights Act 1993.....	50
Useful Resources.....	51
Section Five – Financial Compliance Guide	53
Introduction	53
Key Requirements	53
Crown Entities Act 2004.....	57
Section Six - Asset Management Compliance Guide	59
Introduction	59
Key Requirements	60

Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa

The Child – The Heart of the Matter

Introduction

The Education and Training Act 2020¹ states that:

The purpose of this Act is to establish and regulate an education system that—

(a) provides New Zealanders and those studying in New Zealand with the skills, knowledge, and capabilities that they need to fully participate in the labour market, society, and their communities; and

(b) supports their health, safety, and well-being; and

(c) assures the quality of the education provided and the institutions and educators that provide and support it; and

(d) honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi and supports Māori-Crown relationships

This legal framework provides a baseline for all boards in order to promote high quality outcomes for all students.

High Quality Evaluation Contributing to High Quality Education

Compliance Issues

ERO places reliance on the information given by boards and principals as to whether or not they are taking all reasonable steps to meet their legal obligations.

To assist schools, ERO has developed these guidelines for the Board Assurance Statement and the Self-Audit Checklists ².

Note: These Guidelines do not cover every legal requirement with which boards must comply, and include best-practice compliance. Information in the Guidelines does not represent the official version of Acts, Regulations and other legal requirements. In any situation the full legislation should be referred to at - www.legislation.govt.nz

The Self-Audit Checklists³ are part of the board's self-review process. Boards should seek professional advice especially in the application of the health and safety at work legislation. If any significant issues or risks are identified under any sections of the Self-Audit Checklists, these will be discussed during the review and referred to other agencies as appropriate.

¹ Section 4 Education and Training Act 2020

² This is a separate document designed for school boards, Whanau and Te Poumarumaru that can be downloaded from – www.ero.govt.nz

³ Ibid

Section One – Board Administration Compliance Guide

Key Legislation

- Education and Training Act 2020⁴
 - Crown Entities Act 2004
 - Human Rights Act 1993
 - New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990
 - Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (Part VII)
 - Education (School Boards) Regulations 2020
 - Official Information Act 1982
 - Privacy Act 2020
 - Public Records Act 2005
 - Public Services Act 2020
 - Education (School Attendance) Regulations 2024
 - Copyright Act 1994
-

Education and Training Act 2020⁵

Section 4 - Purpose of Act

The purpose of this Act is to establish and regulate an education system that—

(a) provides New Zealanders and those studying in New Zealand with the skills, knowledge, and capabilities that they need to fully participate in the labour market, society, and their communities; and

(b) supports their health, safety, and well-being; and

(c) assures the quality of the education provided and the institutions and educators that provide and support it; and

(d) honours [Te Tiriti o Waitangi](#) and supports Māori-Crown relationships

Primary and secondary schooling

The Act clarifies that the right to a free State education includes the right for enrolled students to attend the school in which they are enrolled for all the hours that the school is open for instruction. This will help those students not currently supported by their school to attend full-time, to realise that aspect of their right to education. It will also improve New Zealand's compliance with related international obligations.

⁴ Refer Education and Training Act 2020 and [More information on all the changes in the Act](#)

⁵ For the purposes of these Guidelines referred to as the E&T Act or the Act

It will be possible on the request of the parent of a student, for the parent, school principal, and the Secretary for Education to agree to vary a student's hours of attendance as part of a non-renewable transition attendance plan of no more than six months duration. This is intended to meet concerns to help meet the student's well-being needs as identified, in writing, by a medical practitioner or a psychologist. The transition plan must be considered by all parties involved to be in the child's best interests.⁶

The Act's structure also locates the different aspects of the right to a free State education, and related board duties and obligations, in one Part of the Act (Part 3) to make it easier for students and their whānau to understand and realise these rights.

School governance

The objectives for school boards of trustees under the Education and Training Act 2020 have been amended to—

- Paramount objective: Boards must ensure every student attains their highest possible standard of educational achievement.
- Attendance: Boards must take all reasonable steps to ensure students attend when the school is open.
- Assessment and monitoring: Boards must ensure use of good-quality assessment and aromatawai information to monitor progress and achievement.
- Safe and inclusive environment: Schools must be physically and emotionally safe, inclusive, and take reasonable steps to eliminate discrimination, bullying, and racism.
- Māori learner equity and cultural responsiveness: Boards must seek equitable outcomes for Māori learners, provide for te reo Māori learning on request, and reflect New Zealand's cultural diversity.
- Compliance and stewardship: Boards must give effect to curriculum obligations, operate financially responsibly, and comply with all other statutory duties.

To assist boards in meeting their objectives and carrying out their functions and duties effectively, the Act enables the Minister to issue a mandatory national code of conduct for boards, backed up with the remedies of censure and removal from the board, where a member repeatedly and or significantly fails to comply with the minimum standards set out in the code of conduct. The code will apply to all board members, but the remedies will not apply to school principals. The code has been made a disallowable instrument to provide for external scrutiny through the Regulations Review Committee. The code's status is also consistent with the approach taken to the Code of Conduct for teachers.⁷

The Act also introduces a requirement for boards to consult their students (as appropriate), staff and school when making bylaws (**rules**). As well as bringing boards into line with other entities

⁶ Refer section [42](#)

⁷ [Gazette notice](#).

empowered to make bylaws, it will also enable greater staff, student, and community engagement with key governance decisions that may significantly impact them.

Refer to [Schedule 23](#) of the Education and Training Act 2020 on electing and co-opting board members to boards of State schools, term of office of board members, and eligibility.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The main provisions of the Act⁸ recognise and respect the Crown's responsibility to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Under recent changes to section 127(2)(e) of the Education and Training Act 2020 for a board to meet the paramount objective, the board must meet the supporting objective to ensure that it

- seeks to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori students; and
- takes all reasonable steps to provide for students to be taught, and to learn, in te reo Māori on request of their or parents or immediate caregivers; and
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that the policies and practices of the school reflect New Zealand's cultural diversity.

At the system level, the Act makes it easier for those in the education sector to understand their rights and obligations under Te Tiriti by locating in one place key provisions in the Act that recognise and respect the Crown's responsibility to give effect to Te Tiriti.

The Act will also enable the Minister of Education and the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, after consultation with Māori, to jointly issue and publish a statement to specify what agencies serving the education system must do to give effect to public service objectives expectations in relation to Te Tiriti, with the objective of providing equitable education outcomes for all students. The intention is a formal and publicly accessible statement that provides greater specificity around what education agencies must do to comply with Te Tiriti.

Board objectives

Section 127 - Paramount objective of boards in governing schools

(1) A board's paramount objective in governing a school is to ensure that every student at the school is able to attain their highest possible standard in educational achievement.

(2) To meet the paramount objective, the board must meet the following supporting objectives:

(a) to give effect to its obligation to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's students attend the school when it is open:

(b) to ensure that the school uses good quality assessment and aromatawai information to monitor and evaluate students' progress and achievement, including any assessment or aromatawai specified in a foundation curriculum policy statement:

(c) to ensure that the school—

(i) is a physically and emotionally safe place for all students and staff; and

(ii) gives effect to relevant student rights set out in this Act, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, and the Human Rights Act 1993; and

(iii) takes all reasonable steps to eliminate racism, stigma, bullying, and any other forms of discrimination within the school:

(d) to ensure that the school is inclusive of, and caters for, students with differing needs:

(e) to ensure that it—

(i) seeks to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori students; and

⁸ Section 9 of the Act

- (ii) takes all reasonable steps to provide for students to be taught, and to learn, in te reo Māori on request of their parents or immediate caregivers; and
- (iii) takes reasonable steps to ensure that the policies and practices for the school reflect New Zealand's cultural diversity:
- (f) to give effect to its obligations in relation to—
- (i) any foundation curriculum statements, national curriculum statements, and national performance measures; and
- (ii) teaching and learning programmes; and
- (iii) monitoring and reporting students' progress:
- (g) to perform its functions and exercise its powers in a way that is financially responsible:
- (h) if the school is a member of a community of learning that has a community of learning agreement under clause 2 of Schedule 5, to comply with its obligations under the agreement:
- (i) to comply with all of its other obligations under this or any other legislation.
- (3) In this section,—
- paramount objective** means the highest-priority objective
- supporting objective** means an objective that is essential and supports the paramount objective.

Powers and functions of boards

Section 124 - Status of board

- (1) A board (and not the school) is a body corporate.
- (2) A board—
- (a) is accordingly a legal entity separate from its members, office holders, employees, and the Crown; and
- (b) continues in existence until it is dissolved in accordance with this Act

Section 125 - Board is governing body

- (1) A board is the governing body of its school.
- (2) A board is responsible for the governance of the school, including setting the policies by which the school is to be controlled and managed.
- (3) Under section 125, the school's principal is the board's chief executive in relation to the school's control and management.

Section 126 - Bylaws

- (1) A board may make bylaws that the board thinks necessary or desirable for the control and management of the school.
- (2) Before making a bylaw, the board must consult its staff, its students (to the extent that the board considers appropriate), and the school community regarding the proposed bylaw.

Section 127 – Paramount objective of boards in governing schools

- (1) A board's paramount objective in governing a school is to ensure that every student at the school is able to attain their highest possible standard in educational achievement.
- (2) To meet the paramount objective, the board must meet the following supporting objectives:
- (a) to give effect to its obligation to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's students attend the school when it is open:
- (b) to ensure that the school uses good quality assessment and aromatawai information to monitor and evaluate students' progress and achievement, including any assessment or aromatawai specified in a foundation curriculum policy statement:
- (c) to ensure that the school—
- (i) is a physically and emotionally safe place for all students and staff; and

(ii) gives effect to relevant student rights set out in this Act, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, and the Human Rights Act 1993; and

(iii) takes all reasonable steps to eliminate racism, stigma, bullying, and any other forms of discrimination within the school:

(d) to ensure that the school is inclusive of, and caters for, students with differing needs:

(e) to ensure that it—

(i) seeks to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori students; and

(ii) takes all reasonable steps to provide for students to be taught, and to learn, in te reo Māori on request of their parents or immediate caregivers; and

(iii) takes reasonable steps to ensure that the policies and practices for the school reflect New Zealand's cultural diversity:

(f) to give effect to its obligations in relation to—

(i) any foundation curriculum statements, national curriculum statements, and national performance measures; and

(ii) teaching and learning programmes; and

(iii) monitoring and reporting students' progress:

(g) to perform its functions and exercise its powers in a way that is financially responsible:

(h) if the school is a member of a community of learning that has a community of learning agreement under clause 2 of Schedule 5, to comply with its obligations under the agreement:

(i) to comply with all of its other obligations under this or any other legislation.

(3) In this section,—

paramount objective means the highest-priority objective

supporting objective means an objective that is essential and supports the paramount objective.

Section 130 - Principal is chief executive of board in relation to school's control and management

(1) A school's principal is the board's chief executive in relation to the school's control and management.

(2) Except to the extent that any enactment, or the general law of New Zealand, provides otherwise, the principal—

(a) must comply with the board's general policy directions; and

(b) subject to paragraph (a), has complete discretion to manage the school's day-to-day administration as they think fit.

Section 131 - Board has complete discretion

(1) A board has complete discretion to perform its functions and exercise its powers as it thinks fit.

(2) Subsection (1) is subject to this Act, any other enactment, and the general law of New Zealand.

Principal's role

Section 130 - Principal is chief executive of board in relation to school's control and management

- (1) A school's principal is the board's chief executive in relation to the school's control and management.
- (2) Except to the extent that any enactment, or the general law of New Zealand, provides otherwise, the principal—
 - (a) must comply with the board's general policy directions; and

(b) subject to paragraph (a), has complete discretion to manage the school's day-to-day administration as they think fit.

Acting appointments

In the event that the principal is absent from duty for any reason, or a vacancy arises for the principal's position, the board has authority under section 607 of the Education and Training Act 2020 to direct another staff member to exercise the powers and duties of the principal during the principal's absence, or while the vacancy continues.

Board constitution

The composition of the board has a bearing on how well it can represent the community and govern the school. School boards are significantly different from other state governing boards because they are largely composed of members elected by the parents of students from the school. This means that there is no guarantee that a school board will always have a range of expertise and experience suitable for administering a school.

Boards may co-opt members for their expertise, or to ensure that the board composition reflects the demographic character of the school community.

Section 119 of the Act 2020 sets out the composition of the board – that is the number of elected parent representatives, the principal, staff representative student representative and co-opted/appointed members.

Boards may decide to increase or decrease the number of members on their board. If they choose to alter the composition of their board then they must follow the procedures for altering their constitution in section 121.

Boards may co-opt or appoint members to reflect the community, provide balance or expertise. The limitations on the co-option or appointment of members are set out in clause 2 Schedule 23 of the Act. The criteria for selecting co-opted or appointed members are provided in clause 1, Schedule 23.

Clauses 1 and 2, Schedule 22 of the Act provide information on the eligibility of parent, staff and student representatives on a board. Clause 9, Schedule 23 provides that certain people are ineligible to be board members.

Schedule 23 provide procedures for the election of members, including staggered elections. Clause 12, Schedule 23 provides information on casual vacancies and clause 13, Schedule 23 provides information on the filling of casual vacancies.

Section 119 provides that any state integrated school shall have up to four members appointed by the school's proprietors.

Boards must comply with clause 10, Schedule 22 of the Act which provides for the disqualification of persons from being members on grounds of financial conflicts of interests.

Clause 11, Schedule 23 of the Act requires that before a person is elected, co-opted or appointed as a member, the person must confirm to the board that he or she is, to the best of his or her knowledge, eligible to be a member, having regard to the grounds of ineligibility in clauses 9 and 10.

Persons who have been convicted of a specified offence

Note: amendments to Schedule 23⁹ of the Act

Setting standard expectations for board members

Sections 166-169 of the Act allow the Minister to issue a code of conduct for school board members that sets out the minimum standards of conduct that each member is required to meet. Individual school boards can decide to expand the minimum standards to reflect local expectations.

There are penalties for failing to comply with the code of conduct. The board may censure a board member, and the Minister may remove a member for a significant or persistent breach of the code. These sanctions do not apply to a principal. Principals are required on the board as part of their employment obligations so issues relating to Principals can be addressed through employment mechanisms.

The code of conduct will give board members a common basis to work from, encourage the development of good practice over time, and provide for more transparent accountability.

The code of conduct is available from:

- [Code of Conduct for State School Board Members \(English\)](#) [PDF, 442 KB]
- [Code of Conduct for State School Board Members \(Māori\)](#) [PDF, 440 KB]

[Code of conduct notice - New Zealand Gazette](#)

[Education \(School Boards\) Regulations 2020](#)

Prohibiting students from using or accessing mobile phones.

Regulation 22 imposes a duty on boards of State schools (other than Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu) to prohibit students from using or accessing mobile phones at all times while they are attending school. The prohibition will also apply to students of the school who are undertaking courses of education, gaining work experience, or making visits outside the school premises (by virtue of [section 53\(2\)](#) of the Education and Training Act 2020 (the **Act**)).

⁹ [Education and Training Amendment Act 2023](#)

Regulation 22 provides that the board may do anything within its powers that it thinks is necessary or desirable to implement the prohibition (for example, the board may make bylaws under [section 126](#) of the Act).

However, *regulation 22* also requires the board to ensure that the prohibition does not apply to a student to the extent that the board is satisfied that the student needs to use or access a mobile phone—

- for a purpose connected with the student’s health (for example, to monitor insulin levels); or
- for the purpose of assisting the student in connection with a disability or learning support need (for example, to assist with impaired communication).

Regulation 22 also requires the board to ensure that the prohibition does not apply to a student to the extent that—

- a registered teacher determines that the student needs to use or access a mobile phone for a specific educational task or purpose (for example, for a class assignment); or
- the principal of the school determines that there are special circumstances that make it necessary for the student to use or access a mobile phone (for example, the student is a teenage parent).

Consulting on bylaws (school rules)

School boards are able to make bylaws (school rules) for the school ([see section 126\(1\), of Education and Training Act 2020](#)).

Under section 126(2) of the Education and Training Act 2020, school boards are required to consult with its staff, its students (to the extent that the board considers appropriate) and the school community when making bylaws. **This applies to new school rules, or when making amendments to current school rules.**

Refer to the MOE website:

[Boards to consult on rules/bylaws](#)

Board meetings

- Education (School Boards) Regulations 2020
- Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987

Regulations 10 to 19 of the Education (School Boards) Regulations 2020¹⁰ deal with matters relating to school board meetings and procedures. Every board must appoint a member (not being the principal or a staff or student representative) to preside at meetings of the board.

¹⁰ Education (School Boards) Regulations 2020 - apply from 15/9/2020.

Part 7 (sections 46 - 54) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 [LGOIM Act] contains provisions relating to the conduct of meetings held by boards.

Section 46 provides that boards must take all reasonable steps to ensure that parents of students enrolled at schools can readily find out within a reasonable time before a board meeting, when and where the meeting will take place.

Section 46A establishes requirements relating to the notification of agendas and associated reports circulated to board members regarding meetings.

Section 47 provides that meetings are to be open to the public and under section 51 the public can inspect or receive copies of the minutes of board meetings.

Whether the public is excluded or not, minutes should be taken as a record of what was discussed at the meeting, who by and when (see NZSTA Trustee Handbook for Boards on minutes including “in committee”).

Boards may exclude the public from meetings by resolution (“go into committee”) in the terms specified in the LGOIM Act, where there is good reason, as provided in the Act.

Minutes should provide a clear, accurate, stand-alone record of what happened at the meeting and decisions made by the Board. This is particularly important as decisions made by the Board may be subject to the scrutiny of the Ombudsmen and/or the courts.

Section 135 of the E&T Act requires an audit report to be given for school boards. As part of this process the Auditor-General can request to see the minutes of board meetings in order to inform their opinion in the report.

Also refer to the following under the **Education (School Boards) Regulations 2020**

[8 Delegation](#)

[9 Board may appoint committees](#)

[10 Procedure of board](#)

[11 Presiding member](#)

[12 Board meetings](#)

[13 Quorum](#)

[14 Voting](#)

[15 Attendance at meetings](#)

Why should minutes be kept? To:

- Comply with the requirements of the Public Records Act 2005 (*refer below*);
- Keep debate in the public arena;
- Facilitate future access to board deliberations;
- Enable reconciliation of differences of opinion arising at any future stage;
- Aid in transparency: Everyone can be aware of what is happening;
- Promote good management;
- Enhance accountability to the public.

Delegation of Boards Powers

Regulation 8 of Education (School Boards) Regulations 2020

(1) A board may, by resolution and in writing either generally or specifically, delegate any of the functions or powers of the board or of a board member to any of the following persons:

- (a) a board member or members:
- (b) the principal or any other employee or office holder of the board:
- (c) a committee consisting of at least 2 persons at least 1 of whom is a board member:
- (d) a person approved by the Minister:
- (e) any class of persons that comprises any of the persons listed in paragraphs (a) to (d).

(2) Subclause (1) does not apply to any functions or powers specified in the Act as not being capable of delegation.

(3) The board must not delegate the general power of delegation.

Effect of delegation

(4) A person to whom any function or power is delegated may perform the function or exercise the power in the same manner and with the same effect as if the person were the board or board member (subject to any restrictions or conditions imposed by the board).

(5) A person purporting to act under a delegation—

- (a) is, in the absence of proof to the contrary, presumed to be acting in accordance with the delegation; and
- (b) must produce evidence of the person's authority to do so if reasonably requested to do so.

Subdelegation

(6) A person to whom any function or power is delegated may delegate that function or power only—

- (a) with the prior written consent of the board; and
- (b) subject to the same restrictions, and with the same effect, as if the subdelegate were the delegate.

Other matters relating to delegation

(7) A delegation under subclause (1)—

- (a) is revocable at will by resolution of the board and written notice to the delegate (or by any other method provided for in the delegation):
- (b) does not prevent the board or the board member performing the functions or the exercising the powers:
- (c) does not affect the responsibility of the board for the actions of any delegate acting under the delegation:
- (d) is not affected by any change in the membership of the board or of any committee or class of persons.

Regulation 9 - Board may appoint committees

(1) A board may, by resolution, appoint committees—

- (a) to advise it on any matters relating to the board's functions and powers that are referred to the committee by the board; or

(b) to perform or exercise any of the board's functions or powers that are delegated to the committee.

(2) A person must not be appointed as a member of a committee unless, before appointment, the person discloses to the board the details of any financial interest that would disqualify the person from being a board member under [clause 10](#) of Schedule 23 of the Act.

(3) [Regulation 8](#) applies, with any necessary modifications, to each member of a committee who is not a board member.

Official Information Act 1982

Boards are classified as "organisations" under the First Schedule of the Official Information Act 1982 and must comply with the provisions of the Act. Boards should therefore be familiar with the Act's requirements regarding availability of information, the processing of requests for official information by the public and the release of information. Sections 4 and 5 of the Act set out the purpose and the principle of availability. Boards should refer directly to the provisions of the Act when a request for information is received, and ensure that each request is handled in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Act.

Also refer:

[The OIA and school boards](#)

Privacy Act 2020¹¹

Boards must also comply with the Privacy Act 2020 and ensure that personal information is always dealt with in accordance with the principles of this Act. For example, the board should not disclose personal information about anyone during a meeting of the board open to the public without that person's consent.

The Act has clarified that an agency can only collect identifying information if it is necessary. If you do not need it you should not collect it.

Agencies need to take particular care to only collect information from children and young people in ways that are fair and reasonable in the circumstances. You can access the Privacy Act 2020 module on [e-learning website here](#)

Terms, holidays and closure of schools

[Education \(When State Schools Must Be Open\) Regulations 2022](#)

Enrolment of students

Section 33 of the Education and Training Act 2020 states that every domestic student is entitled to free enrolment and education at a State school beginning on their fifth birthday and ending after the students 19th birthday. The right includes the entitlement to attend the school at which the student is enrolled all the hours that the school is open for instruction.

Students aged between 6 and 16 years must be enrolled at a registered school [section 35]. Note the exception in s35(2).

¹¹ Note the new Privacy Act applies from December 2020.

Students of registered schools are required to attend whenever the schools are open if the student is required to be enrolled and is 5 years and enrolled. A board must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's students attend when the school is open [s 36(2)].

Sections 62 and 67 set out the restrictions on enrolment at primary and secondary schools respectively.

Under section 34 of the Act, students with special education needs have the same rights to education at State schools as others. This section provides the right to free education and enrolment.

The actions of school boards are covered by section 3 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 (NZBORA) as state schools perform a public function, power or duty. This means that section 19(1) of the NZBORA applies to schools.

Section 19(1) of the NZBORA states that everyone has the right to freedom from discrimination on the grounds of discrimination in the Human Rights Act 1993. The grounds of discrimination in the Human Rights Act include disability, race, ethnic/national origin, and religious belief.

Keeping Enrolment records

Section 237 of the Act provides that the principal of a registered school must ensure that an enrolment record in the form and containing the information specified in rules made by the Secretary for Education by notice in the Gazette. Principals are required to keep records relating to matters such as enrolment of students.

Education (School Attendance) Regulations 2024

These regulations, which come into force on 1 January 2025, revoke and replace the [Education \(School Attendance\) Regulations 1951](#) with new regulations made under the [Education and Training Act 2020](#) (the **Act**).

The effect of these regulations is to impose duties on the principal of a State school (other than a distance school) to ensure that—

- the attendance record for each student enrolled at the school records the student's attendance for each half-day that the school is open for instruction; and
- the attendance record is provided to the Secretary for Education at the end of each school day in the form and manner specified in rules made under [section 237A](#) of the Act.

The duties in these regulations apply to a State school governed by a specified kura board on and after 1 July 2025 and to any other State school on and after 1 January 2025.

Attendance rules

Under section 237A (Attendance records) of the Education and Training Act 2020, the Secretary for Education has published rules setting out administrative and procedural requirements relating to attendance records. These rules are published in the New Zealand Gazette.

Amendment–School attendance rules 2025 – New Zealand Gazette

Additional advice and guidance on the rules can be found below.

Attendance rules 2025

DownloadPDF | 474KB

From MOE website:

2026 and 2027 curriculum days approved

The Government has approved four curriculum half-days each year in 2026 and 2027 to support staff with planning and professional learning for curriculum and assessment changes. You will not need to make up these half-days, they are officially approved under the Education Regulations: 8(5) and 9(1).

Boards may close schools for up to four half-days per year, and schools and kura need to give at least six weeks' notice to parents and whānau before any closure. These days are part of the Government's commitment to lift student achievement through a clearer curriculum and smarter assessment.

Read the New Zealand gazette notices:

[Circumstances in Which Boards May Close the Schools They Administer Under the Education \(When State Schools Must be Open and Closed\) Regulations 2024 - 2024-sl6464- New Zealand Gazette](#)

National student numbers

Schedule 24 of the Education and Training Act outlines the legislative requirements that apply to national student numbers to be used by specified users for specific purposes in accordance with restrictions and conditions notified by the MOE. These include sharing information relating to individual students for the purpose of monitoring and ensuring enrolment and attendance.

The Secretary for Education notifies all authorisations, requirements, conditions and restrictions regarding student numbers by *Gazette* notice.

Work experience

Under section 53 of the Act boards may authorise any student to obtain work experience. Section 53(3) provides that no principal, teacher or occupier of a workplace must allow a student to enter or remain in a workplace to get work experience except in accordance with conditions prescribed by the Minister.

Boards should refer to the conditions prescribed by the Minister by notice in the Gazette².

² NZ Gazette Notice No 158, 2 December 2004 page 3919 - [Work Experience Notice](#) and [Students on Work Experience: A health and safety guide ...](#)

Health immunisation records ¹²

On 8 January 2026, the Health (Immunisation) Regulations 1995 are being revoked. These regulations required early childhood services and primary schools to maintain onsite immunisation registers by requesting immunisation certificates from parents/guardians of children born from 1 January 1995. These are no longer required as the Aotearoa Immunisation Register (AIR) has replaced this function.

See [Immunisation certificate](#) for more information.

Enrolment schemes

Sections 71 to 75 and Schedule 20 of the Act establish the purpose, principles, and content of enrolment schemes to be followed if a school wants to have an enrolment scheme. Section 71(2) provides that the enrolment scheme of every state school must, as far as possible, ensure that:

- The scheme does not exclude local students; and
- No more students are excluded from the school than is necessary to avoid overcrowding at the school.

Note: Section 71 and clauses 2 to 15, Schedule 20 of the Act relating to enrolment schemes apply to Kura, designated character schools, State integrated schools and specialist schools with modifications as set out in clause 16, Schedule 20.

Stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions

Sections 78 to 89 of the E&T Act 2020 provide the purpose, procedures and requirements relating to stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions. Section 78 provides the purpose of the provisions of the Act concerning the standing-down, suspension, exclusion, or expulsion of a student from a state school is to:

- a. Provide a range of responses for cases of varying degrees of seriousness;
- b. Minimise the disruption to a student's attendance at school and facilitate the return of the student to school when that is appropriate; and
- c. Ensure that individual cases are dealt with in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

The principal and board as appropriate must ensure that the decision to stand down or suspend a student is made in accordance with all the legal requirements.

The processes dealt with in sections 76 to 85 of the Act are—

- a. “Standing-down”, which is the process, duties and notification requirements described in sections 80, 84(1), 88(1) of the Act:
- b. “Suspension”, which is the process, duties, notification and rules described in sections 80(1) and (3), 81(1) to (5), 83(1)(a) and (b), 83(2) to (5), 84, 85, 86, and 88(2) and (3). of the Act:
- c. “Exclusion”, which is the process, duties, notification and rules described in sections 81(1)(c), (6) and (7), 82, 86, 87(1) and (2), and 88(3)”. of the Act:

¹² [Immunisation Guidelines for Early Childhood Services and ...](#)

- d. “Expulsion”, which is the process, duties, notification and rules described in sections 83(1)(c), 86(2)(b), 87, and 88(3)

Clause 7 of the Education (Stand-down, Suspension, Exclusion, and Expulsion) Rules 1999¹³ provides that every participant in the processes, practices, and procedures dealt with in sections 80 to 88 of the Act and these rules should be guided by the following principles:

- a. The need for every participant to understand the processes, practices, and procedures;
- b. The need for every participant to treat every other participant with respect, which includes recognising and respecting New Zealand's cultural diversity;
- c. The need to recognise the unique position of Māori;
- d. The need for every participant to be guided by the charter of the student's school; and
- e. The need for every participant to recognise that the board has a responsibility to maintain a safe and effective learning environment at the student's school.

Resolving serious disputes

Under Part 3, subpart 9 of the Ed &T Act a dispute resolution scheme is established to facilitate and promote the resolution of serious disputes between students and State school in an effective, flexible and timely manner.¹⁴

Serious dispute means a dispute between a student and the board of the student’s school about—

- (a) the student’s right to enrol at or attend the school:
- (b) the student’s rights to education under this Act generally:
- (c) the learning support the student receives at the school:
- (d) the standing-down, suspension, exclusion, or expulsion of the student by the school:
- (e) any racism or other form of discrimination that is a prohibited ground of discrimination specified in section 21(1) of the Human Rights Act 1993 experienced by the student while at the school:
- (f) the student’s physical or emotional safety while at the school:
- (g) any physical force used on the student by a teacher or an authorised staff member employed or engaged by the school.¹⁵

Guidance and counselling

Section 103 of the Act provides that the principal of a state school or person responsible for teaching and learning at a charter school must take all reasonable steps to ensure that:

- a. students get good guidance and counselling; and
- b. students in year 7 and above are provided with appropriate career education and guidance that is designed to prepare them to join the workforce or undertake further education or training when they leave school; and

¹³ Note the Rules continue to apply until amended, revoked or replaced by the E&T Act. Refer to clause 4, Schedule 1 [Savings provisions] of the E&T Act.

¹⁴ Section 216 of the Act

¹⁵ Section 217 of the Act

- c. a parent of the student is told of matters that, in the opinion of the principal or person responsible for teaching and learning at a charter school -
 - i. are preventing or slowing the student's progress through the school; or
 - ii. are harming the student's relationships with teachers or other students.

Programmes and monitoring

Section 164 – Teaching and learning programmes

The board of a school must ensure that the school's principal and staff develop and implement teaching and learning programmes that—

- (a) give effect to any foundation curriculum policy statements and national curriculum statements made under [section 90](#); and
- (b) give the school's students access to a nationally and internationally recognised qualifications system.

Section 165 – Monitoring of and reporting on student performance

- 1) The board of a school must ensure that the school's principal and staff monitor and evaluate the performance of the school's students.
- (2) Monitoring and evaluating must include, but is not limited to, monitoring and evaluating the performance of the students in relation to—
 - (a) any foundation curriculum policy statements and national curriculum statements made under [section 90](#); and
 - (b) any qualifications system referred to in [section 164\(b\)](#) that is offered at the school.
- (3) The board must ensure that information about a student's performance is given to a parent of the student in a timely manner and in a form that is readily understandable.
- (4) The board must report to the Secretary, to its school community, and to parents on the performance of the school's students in accordance with any regulations made under [section 639](#)

Regulation 21 - Duty to report on progress and achievement of students ¹⁶

- (1) The board of a school, together with the school's principal and teaching staff, must use good quality assessment or aromatawai information to report to each student at the school and their parents on the student's progress and achievement.
- (2) The reports must—
 - (a) be written in plain language; and
 - (b) include the student's progress and achievement—
 - (i) across any relevant foundation curriculum policy statements and national curriculum statements made under section 90 of the Act; and
 - (ii) in literacy and mathematics or te reo matatini and pāngarau; and
 - (c) be provided at least twice per year.
- (3) In this regulation, **good quality**, in relation to assessment or aromatawai information, means that the information draws on a range of evidence to evaluate the progress and achievement of each student and build a comprehensive picture of that student's learning.

¹⁶ [Education \(School Boards\) Amendment Regulations 2022](#)

Schools' planning and reporting

The Education and Training Act 2020 and the Education (School Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2023 set out the school planning and reporting framework.

[Education \(School Planning and Reporting\) Regulations 2023 – New Zealand Legislation](#)

From MOE website:

Te Whakangārahu Ngātahi requires the board to:

- consult its community and develop a 3-year strategic plan outlining how the board will meet its paramount and supporting objectives, as outlined in Section 127 of the Education and Training Act 2020
- create an annual implementation plan that sets annual targets and actions for working towards strategic goals
- create an annual report that details the school's progress and finances.

Due to recent changes to the Education and Training Act 2020 and Education (School Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2023, a board is no longer required to:

- include information describing how your annual targets and intended actions will support your board to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in your annual implementation plans
- include a report on how your board has given effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in your annual report.

In addition, a board's previous objective to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi has been replaced with the following supporting objective.

The board must ensure it:

- seeks to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori students, and
- takes all reasonable steps to provide for students to be taught, and to learn, in te reo Māori on request of their parents or immediate caregivers, and
- takes reasonable steps to ensure that the policies and practices for the school reflect New Zealand's cultural diversity.

[The school planning and reporting framework](#)

Strategic planning and reporting

Section 138 – School strategic plan and annual implementation plan

(1) A board must have the following strategic planning documents for its school:

(a) a **strategic plan**, for each 3-year period or for a shorter period determined by the Secretary, that sets out the board's strategy for achieving (or making progress towards achieving) its objectives during that period; and

(b) an **annual implementation plan** for each year that sets out how the board intends to implement that strategy during the year.

2) A board must prepare its first strategic plan and annual implementation plan when required by regulations made under [section 639](#) to do so.

3) If, at the commencement of this section, a board has a charter in effect for the 2022 year, the charter is to be treated as the board's first strategic plan.

4) If a board's strategic plan is its 2022 school charter, the statement of variance is not required to include a comparison with an annual implementation plan.

(5) However, a board with a 2022 school charter as its strategic plan must continue to update the annually updated sections of its charter until its first annual implementation plan is required under regulations made under [section 639](#).

(6) The annually updated sections of a 2022 school charter must be updated no later than a date fixed by the Secretary

Section 139 – Preparing strategic plan

1) A board must prepare a strategic plan for every 3-year period, or for a shorter period determined by the Secretary, and submit it to the Secretary in accordance with regulations made under [section 639](#).

(2) The strategic plan must comply with any regulations made under [section 639](#) relating to the form and content of strategic plans.

(3) In preparing a strategic plan, the board must—

(a) consult—

(i) the school community; and

(ii) the school's staff; and

(iii) where appropriate, the school's students; and

(iv) any other persons required by the regulations; and

(b) comply with any other regulations relating to the development of strategic plans; and

(c) in the case of a State integrated school, ensure that the plan reflects the school's special character; and

(d) in the case of a designated character school, ensure that the plan reflects the school's different character or, in the case of a Kura Kaupapa Māori, its special characteristics.

(4) In preparing a strategic plan, the board may consult any person, group, or organisation that it thinks fit to consult.

5) This section is subject to [section 138\(3\)](#).

Section 140 – Secretary may review strategic plan

(1) The Secretary may review a strategic plan in accordance with regulations made under [section 639](#).

(2) After reviewing the strategic plan, the Secretary may direct that the board—

(a) consider, or further consider, any matter and revise the plan in the light of that consideration; or

(b) revise the plan as directed by the Secretary.

(3) If the strategic plan is returned to the board, the board must comply with the Secretary's directions and then resubmit a revised plan.

(4) *[Repealed]*

(5) If a board fails to comply with the Secretary's directions, or resubmits a revised strategic plan that still does not meet the requirements of the Act or the regulations, the Secretary may revise the plan and confirm it by giving written notice to the board

Section 141 – Amending strategic plan

(1) A strategic plan expires 3 years after the plan takes effect.

(2) However, a 2022 school charter (which is a document that is to be treated as a board's first strategic plan) expires when replaced by a strategic plan adopted in accordance with regulations made under [section 639](#).

(3) If there is no new plan to replace the expired plan, the expired plan continues to apply for a period approved by the Secretary.

Section 142 - Expiry of strategic plan

(1) A strategic plan expires 3 years after the plan takes effect.

(2) However, a 2022 school charter (which is a document that is to be treated as a board's first strategic plan) expires when replaced by a strategic plan adopted in accordance with regulations made under [section 639](#).

(3) If there is no new plan to replace the expired plan, the expired plan continues to apply for a period approved by the Secretary.

Section 143 – Preparing annual implementation plan

(1) A board must prepare an annual implementation plan.

(2) The plan must—

(a) contain the information required by regulations made under [section 639](#); and

(b) be prepared in accordance with those regulations.

Section 144 – Amending annual implementation plan

A board may amend its annual implementation plan.

Section 145 – Board to monitor performance against strategic planning documents

1) A board must monitor and evaluate its performance—

(a) in achieving (or making progress towards achieving) its objectives in accordance with its strategic plan; and

(b) in implementing its strategy in accordance with its annual implementation plan.

(2) The monitoring and evaluation must be carried out in accordance with regulations made under [section 639](#).

(3) The board must report on its performance in the annual report, in accordance with regulations made under [section 639](#).

Section 146 – Strategic planning documents to be on Internet site

A board must ensure that its strategic plan and annual implementation plan are available to the public on an Internet site maintained by or on behalf of the board.

Copyright Act 1994

School boards must comply with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1994. Boards should have guidelines consistent both with the relevant provisions of the Act that do not permit copying of copyright works, and also with the exceptions which apply for educational purposes in certain circumstances and conditions.

Public Records Act 2005

The Public Records Act allows Archives NZ to actively care for documents that are identified as important for New Zealand's history, and covers school records. Schools cannot destroy or dispose of any school records without Archives New Zealand's authorisation.

A School Records Retention/Disposal Information Pack has been approved by the Chief Archivist as the legal document for dealing with the retention and disposal of school records.⁴

Useful Resources

Trustee Handbook

New Zealand School Boards Association

see www.nzsta.org.nz

Human Rights Commission Fact Sheets

www.hrc.co.nz, and go to resources

[School resources](#) | [Waitangi Tribunal](#)

Guidelines for Principals and Boards on Stand-downs, Suspensions, Exclusions and Expulsions

[Stand downs, or suspensions, exclusions and expulsions](#)

Ministry of Education Circulars -refer to [Circulars](#)

⁴ Refer to MOE Circular 2006/19-School Records Retention and Disposal. [School records retention/disposal information pack - Education.govt.nz](#)

Section Two – Curriculum Compliance Guide

Key Legislation

- **Education and Training Act 2020**
-

Introduction

Each board is required to foster student achievement by providing teaching and learning programmes which incorporate The National Curriculum as expressed in *The New Zealand Curriculum 2007* or *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*.

The key function of the school is to effectively manage the delivery of the curriculum.

The teaching staff and principal monitor, manage, and deliver the curriculum, but the Board has the ultimate responsibility for curriculum delivery.

The New Zealand Curriculum 2007 comprises a set of National Curriculum Statements that define the learning principles and achievement aims and objectives that all New Zealand state schools are required to follow. *The New Zealand Curriculum 2007* was published by *Gazette* notice on 29 October 2009.

State schools are required to provide learning and teaching programmes based on **either** the National Curriculum statements in *The New Zealand Curriculum*, **or** the National Curriculum statements in *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*.

State schools that choose to provide learning and teaching programmes based on *The New Zealand Curriculum*, and those schools that choose to provide learning and teaching programmes based on *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*.

The board of a school with a bilingual class or classes where Māori is one of the languages of instruction may develop and implement teaching and learning programmes based on *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* for those classes and on teaching and learning programmes in *The New Zealand Curriculum* for the rest of the school.

Also refer to MOE website on

[Supports for implementing curriculum and assessment changes](#)

[Supports for implementing curriculum and ...](#)

The New Zealand Curriculum

[English learning area \(Years 0-6\)](#)

[Maths learning area \(Years 0-8\)](#)

Te Marautanga o Aotearoa

[Te Reo Rangatira wāhanga ako \(Years 0-6\)](#)

[Pāngarau wāhanga ako \(Years 0-8\)](#)

Key Requirements

Section 90 – Curriculum statements and national performance measures

1) The Minister may make the following:

(a) foundation curriculum policy statements, which are statements of policy concerning teaching, learning, and assessment that are made for the purposes of underpinning and giving direction to—

(i) the way in which curriculum and assessment responsibilities are to be managed in schools:

(ii) national curriculum statements and locally developed curricula:

(b) national curriculum statements, which are statements of—

(i) the areas of knowledge and understanding to be covered by students during the years of schooling; and

(ii) the skills to be developed by students during the years of schooling; and

(iii) desirable levels of knowledge, understanding, and skill to be achieved by students during the years of schooling:

(c) national performance measures, which are targets against which the performance of boards can be measured.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1), a national curriculum statement may—

(a) specify different commencement dates for different provisions or different purposes, which dates may differ according to the classification or designation of a school, the group or year level of students attending a school, or any combination of those classifications, designations, groups, and levels:

(b) specify a transitional period during which a board may elect to comply with an existing curriculum statement or the new curriculum statement, and specify a date on which a board must begin complying with the new curriculum statement.

(3) The following instruments under this section are secondary legislation (see [Part 3](#) of the Legislation Act 2019 for publication requirements):

(a) foundation curriculum policy statements:

(b) national curriculum statements:

(c) national performance measures.

NZ Gazette Notice

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>
Publication Date	

Date	Title
27OCT2022	Ngā tauākī Marautanga ā-Motu / National Curriculum Statements

Structuring teaching time for reading, writing, and maths

Hour a day requirements all formally issued here: [Foundation Curriculum Policy Statements and National Curriculum Statements / Ngā Kaupapa Here Tauākī Tūāpapa Marautanga me ngā Tauākī Marautanga ā-Motu - 2023-go5904 - New Zealand Gazette](#)

newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/new-zealand-curriculum-online/new-zealand-curriculum/new-zealand-curriculum-2007/5637144666.c

<https://kauwhatareo.govt.nz/en/resource/te-marautanga-o-aotearoa/te-anga/>

<https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2024-sl5500>

<https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2023-go5904>

The Gazette notice formally making Years 0-10 English, Mathematics & Statistics, Te Reo Rangatira and Pāngarau for use from the start of 2026 is now published: [Foundation Curriculum Policy Statements and National Curriculum Statements / Ngā Tauākī Tūāpapa mō ngā Kaupapa Here Marautanga me ngā Tauākī Marautanga ā-Motu - 2025-sl7165 | New Zealand Gazette](#)

The foundation curriculum policy statements and national curriculum statements come into force on 1 January 2026 for all state and state-integrated schools, except for those run by a specified kura board.

A specified kura board means the board of any of the following:

- a kura kaupapa Māori
- a designated character school with a character that is hapū- or iwi-based or that affiliates with Ngā Kura ā-Iwi o Aotearoa
- a state integrated school with a special character that is hapū- or iwi-based.

For schools run by a specified kura board, the national curriculum statements set out in this notice come into force on 1 January 2027 and the foundation curriculum policy statements set out in this notice apply to the national curriculum statements from that date. The transition time for specified kura boards is to allow time for the Crown to engage with Kaupapa Māori education providers through their representative bodies in advance of these decisions affecting their kura.

Health curriculum

Boards of all state schools must, at least once in every 2 years, after consultation with the school community, adopt a statement on the delivery of the health curriculum. Section 91 of the E & T Act sets out details of the consultation requirements.¹⁷

¹⁷ Also refer to MOE website: for further resources [Sexuality education: a guide for principals, boards of trustees, and teachers \(2015\)](#).

Note: A parent of a student may ask the principal in writing that the student is released from tuition in specified parts of the health curriculum related to sexuality education [refer to section 51 for details].

Note also that the [Education and Training \(System Reform\) Amendment Bill](#) currently before Parliament will replace section 91 if passed into law.

Special education (Learning Support) needs at school

Inclusive education is founded in the Education and Training Act 2020, which states: “people who have special education needs (whether because of disability or otherwise) have the same rights to enrol and receive education at state schools as people who do not”.¹⁸

New Zealand schools also have binding obligations to include and provide a quality education for all learners under the:

- New Zealand Disability Strategy
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

[New Zealand Disability Strategy – Office for Disability Issues website](#)

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

This obligation is backed up by the:

- New Zealand Curriculum
- Te Whāriki (early childhood education curriculum)
- Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (curriculum for Māori-medium settings).

Boards must ensure all the policies, procedures and practices relating to students with special education needs are in place in the school and are applied without discrimination, that is that they are:

- a. Objective, value diversity and are integrated with the school curriculum;
- b. School’s leadership work towards building an inclusive school culture;¹⁹
- c. Regularly re-evaluated and developed to enhance effectiveness;
- d. Well communicated to all staff and the families, whānau of students and consistently applied;
- e. In compliance with the Education and Training Act 2020 (sections 34 and 127), the NZ Bill of Rights Act 1990 (section 19), the Human Rights Act 1993 (sections 21)), the National Education Guidelines, and
- f. NZ Schools binding obligations to include and provide a quality education for all learners under the New Zealand Disability Strategy²⁰ and [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (external link)

It is important that boards and principals are fully up-to-date with available special education resourcing/support, and how it is allocated and reviewed within the school.

¹⁸ Section 34

¹⁹ [Go to the Inclusive Education website](#)

²⁰ [New Zealand Disability Strategy – Office for Disability Issues website](#) (external link)

These national and international obligations are backed up by the:

<http://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/special-education/education-disability-legislation/>

Useful Resources

Keeping children engaged and achieving through rich curriculum inquiries

The New Zealand Curriculum (revised curriculum effective 2010)

www.education.govt.nz

Te Marautanga o Aotearoa

Te Marautanga o Aotearoa is the Māori medium partner to the New Zealand Curriculum.

[Te Marautanga o Aotearoa](#) (external link)

Effective Governance – Building Inclusive Schools

<https://www.nzsta.org.nz/assets/Governance/Effective-governance-publications-and-resources/Building-inclusive-schools.pdf>

Educationally powerful connections with parents and whānau 2015

<http://www.ero.govt.nz/publications/educationally-powerful-connections-with-parents-and-whanau/>

Inclusive practices for students with special education needs 2015

<http://www.ero.govt.nz/publications/inclusive-practices-for-students-with-special-education-needs-in-schools/>

For information on some of the resources we provide to schools to support learners with diverse needs, please see [here](#).

Including Students with High Needs Primary Schools 2014

<http://www.ero.govt.nz/publications/including-students-with-high-needs-primary-schools/>

Section Three – Health, Safety & Welfare Compliance Guide

Key Legislation

- Education and Training Act 2020
 - Employment Relations Act 2000
 - Food Act 2014 and Food Regulations 2015
 - Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996
 - Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
 - Human Rights Act 1993
 - Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015
 - New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990
 - Privacy Act 2020
 - Building Act 2004
 - Resource Management Act 1991
 - Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Act 1990
 - Children’s Act 2014
 - Education (Hostels) Regulations 2005
 - Regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
 - Education (Surrender, Retention, and Search) Rules 2013
 - Children’s (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children’s Workers) Regulations 2015
 - Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2023
 - Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017
 - Fire Safety, Evacuation Procedures, and Evacuation Schemes Regulations 2018
-

Introduction

The educational and social development of students at school is closely linked to their physical and emotional safety. Students cannot learn effectively if they are physically or verbally abused, victims of violence, racial or sexual harassment, discrimination or bullying, or if their school surroundings are unsafe.

Students learn best in safe and effective learning environments. Research has demonstrated that the quality of school leadership has an impact on student achievement. Between them, the Board and the school principal are responsible for school leadership and for the creation of a school climate that supports learning.

Providing a safe physical and emotional environment (including safety on the Internet) for students at school is one of the basic responsibilities of each board. However, it is also one of the requirements that is most difficult for boards to address, both because there are so many factors that impact on student safety, and because safety issues do not always have clear solutions.

There are various legislative requirements relating to student safety and it is important that all schools familiarise themselves with these requirements and ensure they are appropriately addressed.

Section 127 of the Education and Training Act 2020 provides, among other things that:

(1) A board's paramount objective in governing a school is to ensure that every student at the school is able to attain their highest possible standard in educational achievement.

(2) To meet the paramount objective, the board must meet the following supporting objectives:

(a) to give effect to its obligation to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's students attend the school when it is open:

(b) to ensure that the school uses good quality assessment and aromatawai information to monitor and evaluate students' progress and achievement, including any assessment or aromatawai specified in a foundation curriculum policy statement:

(c) to ensure that the school—

(i) is a physically and emotionally safe place for all students and staff; and

(ii) gives effect to relevant student rights set out in this Act, the [New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990](#), and the [Human Rights Act 1993](#); and

(iii) takes all reasonable steps to eliminate racism, stigma, bullying, and any other forms of discrimination within the school:

(d) to ensure that the school is inclusive of, and caters for, students with differing needs:

In this section, -

paramount objective means the highest-priority objective

supporting objective means an objective that is essential and supports the paramount objective

ERO published a national report – *Safe Schools: Strategies to Prevent Bullying* – drawn from reviews of schools over three terms. This report found that most schools acknowledge that bullying is a risk to be managed, and take their responsibilities seriously in seeking to prevent bullying.

Bullying is intimidating behaviour that:

- a. tends to be repeated over time
- b. can be directed at particular students because of characteristics that set them apart such as:
 - i. racist bullying that is usually aimed at minority ethnic groups;
 - ii. bullying of students with special needs;
 - iii. homophobic bullying that is directed at students because of their perceived or actual sexual orientation;
 - iv. sexual harassment that is unwelcome sexual attention that makes the recipient uncomfortable;
- c. can be physical
- d. can be verbal, including text bullying
- e. can be non-verbal, including rude physical gestures and manipulation to exclude or isolate a person.

ERO expects each school will have:

- a. acknowledged that bullying behaviour is a risk to be managed;

- b. documented policy/procedures outlining their approaches to preventing bullying and managing bullying behaviour;
- c. carried out anonymous student surveys about student safety at school;
- d. provided training for staff in recognising and responding to bullying;
- e. provided appropriate guidance and counselling for students;
- f. implemented strategies/programmes/interventions to prevent/manage bullying;
- g. ascertained the success of these strategies/programmes/interventions.²¹

ERO published a report ²² about the bullying prevention and response guide. More recently, ERO updated its school board booklet, which includes a section on student wellbeing. It outlines boards role in ensuring student wellbeing, and questions to guide internal evaluation of the effectiveness of wellbeing policies, procedures and practices in place.

Boards are required to meet minimum safety standards set out in legislation and conduct regular safety checks to identify and eliminate physical hazards.

The board should implement a maintenance programme to ensure that the school's buildings and facilities provide a safe and healthy learning environment for students.

Note: Compliance with legislative requirements on its own is not enough. Schools need to take a proactive approach to safety and develop high safety standards and expectations in consultation with parents and the school community. They need to consider the safety implications of all their decisions and continually review the steps they are taking to ensure safety. Principals and teachers play an important role in promoting a safe culture.

Education and Training Act 2020

Section 32 - Purpose of Part 3

The purpose of this Part is to establish a schooling system that supports all learners/ākonga to gain the skills and knowledge they need to be lifelong learners/ākonga and fully participate in the labour market, society, and their communities by—

(a) ensuring that all children and young people are present in the schooling system to be able to exercise their right to an education, including setting up fair and consistent processes when students are excluded from the system that aim to return them to education as soon as possible; and

*(b) supporting the **health, safety, and well-being of students***

Section - 597 General principles

(1) Every employer in the education service must—

(3) In addition to the requirements specified in subsections (1) and (2), each employer must ensure that all employees maintain proper standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for—

²¹ For further information refer to *Safe Schools: Strategies to Prevent Bullying* www.ero.govt.nz.

Student wellbeing; www.wellbeingatschool.org.nz; <https://ero.govt.nz/publications/bullying-prevention-and-response-in-new-zealand-schools-may-2019/>

²² Download the complete report www.wellbeingatschool.org.nz; <https://ero.govt.nz/publications/bullying-prevention-and-response-in-new-zealand-schools-may-2019/>

(a) the public interest; and

*(b) the **well-being of students attending the place of education.***

Section - 53 Courses, work experience, and visits outside school premises

(1) A board may authorise any students to undertake courses of education, gain work experience, or make visits outside the school premises.

(2) If authorisation is given, the student must be treated as attending the school while undertaking the course, gaining the experience, or making the visit.

(3) A principal, a teacher, or an occupier of a workplace may not allow a student to go into, or remain in, a workplace to gain work experience except in accordance with any conditions prescribed by the Minister by notice in the Gazette.

*(4) A student who is in any workplace to gain work experience is to be treated as being employed by the workplace, and every enactment and collective agreement (to **the extent that it relates to the health, safety, and welfare of workers**) applies to the student and the occupier of the workplace accordingly.*

The following provisions of the Education and Training Act 2020²³ also refer to health, safety and welfare of students

98 Prohibition on corporal punishment and seclusion in registered schools

99 Limits on use of physical restraint at registered schools

100 Rules on use of physical restraint at registered schools

101 Guidelines on use of physical restraint and behaviour management at registered schools

102 Students at State schools may be released from tuition or for outside tuition

103 Students at State schools must receive guidance and counselling and their parents must be told about certain things

104 Required Police vetting

Subpart 4—Searches and surrender of property

105 Interpretation

106 Surrender and retention of property

107 Searches of clothing and bags or other containers

108 Restrictions on searches under section 107

109 Limits on sections 106 and 107

²³ Education and Training Act 2020

110 Prohibitions on searches by contractors

111 Refusal to produce, reveal, or surrender item

112 Power to search storage containers not affected

113 Rules about surrender and retention of property and searches

114 Guidelines about surrender and retention of property and searches

Schedule 4 - Police vetting

Regulation 20 – Duty to promote healthy food and nutrition²⁴

The board of a school must promote healthy food and nutrition for all of the school's students.

Key Requirements

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 ²⁵

Under this Act, the school Board as the person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) holds the primary duty of care for, and manages risks to, the health and safety of workers and others arising from the work of the school. The Board will exercise its primary duty of care by ensuring the health and safety of:

- its workers (e.g. teachers, principals, administrators, property managers, volunteer workers etc.) while at school and on excursions and outside the classroom
- other workers who are influenced or directed by the Board
- others (e.g. students/children, parents, members of the public, and visitors to the premises), by ensuring they are not put at risk from work carried out by the school.

Officers are individual members of the board occupying a position that allows them to *exercise significant influence* over the management of the school, for example the school principal. Their role is to exercise *due diligence*, which means that they must take reasonable steps to ensure that the Board (as the PCBU) meets its health and safety obligations.

What the school board should do to comply with the HSWA

There are a number of things your school should be aware of under the legislation:

- familiarise yourself with the key requirements of the legislation
- review your health and safety policies and practices
- identify health and safety risks in your workplace (a workplace includes any place where a

²⁴ [Education \(School Boards\) Amendment Regulations 2022](#)

²⁵ For further information [Health and safety responsibilities for schools](#)

worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work) and take all practicable steps to prevent these from causing harm

- make health and safety part of your workplace culture
- visit the MOE's dedicated health and safety webspace:
[Health and safety responsibilities for schools](#)

Health and Safety Code of Practice

Under section 161 of the Act, the Secretary for Education is able to prescribe terms and conditions, including minimum safety and health requirements under which school boards occupy land and buildings, regardless of whether the Crown owns or leases the land or not. The Ministry of Education has issued the *Health and Safety At Work Act 2015, A practical guide for boards of trustees and school leaders*.²⁶

Internet safety

Boards must provide a safe physical and emotional learning environment. This includes a safe Internet environment.

A safe Internet environment is established in a school through:

- Proper infrastructure of policies, procedures and signed student and staff Use Agreements and Protocols;
- Effective systems maintenance (security, auditing, and possible filtering);
- Effective monitoring; and
- Education programmes for the school community.

All schools that have access to the Internet must have a Code of Conduct or Acceptable Internet Use Policy that sets out clearly what is considered appropriate use of the Internet. Lack of appropriate policies and procedures and effective monitoring can threaten the safety of a school.²⁷

If a school is developing or updating its policy about the use of mobile phones or other digital devices, you can use OSAG's guidelines: [netsafe.org.nz](#) and [Safe and responsible use of digital technology in schools ...](#)

Children's Act 2014²⁸

Under the Children's Act 2014, schools boards and kura, are required to put child protection policies in place. The policies will guide staff to identify and report child abuse and neglect.

²⁶ [Health and Safety Practical Guide for Boards of Trustees and School Leaders](#)

²⁷ The NetSafe Kit for schools (which builds on the Internet Safety Kit) is considered a 'model of best practice' by the Ministry of Education and is designed as a guide for schools to establish a cyberspace learning environment. See [www.netsafe.org.nz](#) for updates to the NetSafe kit.

²⁸ For more information including [frequently asked questions](#) and <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Working-with-children/Information-sharing/Information-Sharing-Factsheet-OT-Act-1989.pdf> see the Children's Action Plan website [www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz](#); and [Children's Act 2014 - a practical guide](#)

There are legal requirements for vetting and screening²⁹ of all paid staff in the government-funded children's workforce (workers who have regular contact with children as part of their job). Children's workers are 'core workers' if they work alone with children or have primary responsibility for, or authority over children.³⁰

Seclusion and physical force

New section 98 of the Act bans the use of corporal punishment and seclusion in schools. Seclusion can be physically and psychologically harmful, and is no longer considered an acceptable behaviour management strategy.

Sections 99 to 101 create a legal framework for the use of physical force in schools. This makes it clear to teachers and authorised staff members how and when they can use physical force, and puts safeguards in place to prevent physical force being used unreasonably or disproportionately.³¹

Education outside the classroom (EOTC)

Boards are legally responsible for the safety of students, staff and volunteers involved in education outside the classroom. They have legal obligations under general law and under legislation such as the Education and Training Act 2020, the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and the Crimes Act 1961.

Where an incident concerning safety occurs during an EOTC activity, a board's legal liability will depend on how well it complied with its legal obligations when the school was planning and implementing the EOTC activity. If the school has planned well and followed accepted best practice guidelines, the board is much less likely to be considered legally liable for any safety incident that arises.³²

Food Act 2014/Food Regulations 2015

Under the Act, all schools must ensure the food they sell or serve is safe and suitable to eat. Depending on the type of food service provided, some schools will have additional obligations.³³

Building Act 2004

The Building Act establishes a series of minimum safety standards (building regulations) which must be complied with. The purpose of these regulations is to ensure all buildings and alterations are constructed to a standard that ensures the safety of occupants.

²⁹ Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015

³⁰ Example: teachers, teacher aides, support staff who have regular contact with children at work.

³¹ [Minimising the use of physical restraint in New Zealand schools and kura](#)

³² Refer to [EOTC Guidelines – Bringing the Curriculum Alive](#)

³³ Learn more about the new food safety law at Ministry for Primary Industries website (mpi.govt.nz/food-safety/food-act-2014):

[Introduction to the Food Act 2014 | NZ Government](#)

Civil defence

The Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management (MCDEM) has developed a National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan 2015 and Guide to the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan 2015, which supports the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. These documents will have useful information in developing a policy to respond to emergencies and can be downloaded in PDF format from the MCDEM website (www.civildefence.govt.nz).

The Ministry of Education has developed an Emergency Management Plan template which schools can use to develop their own Emergency Plan. Check end of page using hyperlink [here](#) – [Prepare for an emergency or traumatic incident](#) and [Checking your property after a major incident](#)

Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Act 1990

The purpose of this Act is to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, the detrimental effects of smoking and vaping on the health of any person who does not smoke or vape, or who does not wish to smoke, inside any workplace or in certain public enclosed areas. Schools are required to have smoke-free and vaping buildings and grounds at all times.

The total smoke-free and vaping ban includes school grounds during weekend sports games, fund-raising activities, community days or evening classes, as well as when the grounds or buildings are rented out by other groups.

The changes also require that boards display smoke-free and vaping notices at every entry gate or building entrance, and that they take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure there is no smoking on their premises. For further details refer to - [Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products ...](#)

You can use these resources to support, create or review your smoke-free and vaping policy. This will ensure your policy will align with requirements under the Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Act 1990, Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

[Vaping and schools – Health Promotion agency | Te Hiringa Hauora](#) (external link)

[Smokefree Schools resources](#)

Human Rights Act 1993

The Human Rights Act is to help ensure that people are treated fairly. It prohibits certain discriminatory practices in relation to the employment and treatment of employees and students.

The grounds of discrimination in section 21 of the Act include religious belief, ethical belief, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, disability, age, political opinion, sex, employment status, family status, sexual orientation and marital status.

Boards have obligations to ensure a safe learning environment where students are not subjected to racial or sexual harassment, or discrimination. Under the Human Rights Act, boards can be liable for harassment and discrimination committed by their employees. Boards can work towards providing a safe physical and emotional learning environment for all by developing prevention of racial or sexual harassment, or discrimination policies and procedures for students and employees.

Section 102 of the Employment Relations Act 2000 provides for personal grievances under that Act. Under section 103 a personal grievance can be for racial or sexual harassment, or discrimination by the employer or a representative of the employer.

Under the Human Rights Act (section 69) and the Employment Relations Act 2000 a board may be liable for the occurrence of racial or sexual harassment, or discrimination of an employee by a student.

Privacy Act 2020

Key reforms in the Act include:

- Mandatory notification of harmful privacy breaches
- Introduction of compliance orders
- Binding access determinations
- Controls on the disclosure of information overseas
- New criminal offences
- Explicit application to overseas companies carrying on business in New Zealand.

[Read more here.](#)

Section 22 of the Act sets out the information privacy principles:

Information privacy principles

The Privacy Act is designed to ensure that there are adequate safeguards in the way organisations (including boards) collect, use, store and disclose information about individual students, employees and job applicants. Section 22 of the Privacy Act sets out 13 information privacy principles that must be followed in relation to matters including:

- Information boards collect, hold and use about employees and job applicants;
- Information boards collect, hold and use about student enrolment, student achievement and other personal matters relating to students such as student behaviour and discipline.

Boards must ensure that they are familiar with the principles of the Privacy Act and that there are policies and procedures in place to ensure personal information is collected, stored, used and disclosed in accordance with those principles.

Section 201 of this Act requires every agency (includes schools) to appoint as privacy officer one or more individuals responsible for ensuring the school complies with the provisions of this Act.

Boards and principals should understand the relationship between the need to protect personal information in terms of the Privacy Act and the requirement placed upon principals in section 103 of the Education and Training Act to take all reasonable steps to ensure that:

“Students get good guidance and counselling; and....

A parent of the student is told of matters that, in the principal's opinion - are preventing or slowing the student's progress through the school; or are harming the student's relationships with teachers or other students.”

[Board of Trustees and privacy](#) -Office of Privacy Commissioner website.

New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990

The New Zealand Bill of Rights Act (NZBORA) provides for the safeguarding of rights in respect of such matters as:

- The right to the observance of the principles of natural justice.
- The right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure, whether of the person, property, correspondence or otherwise.
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief, including the right to adopt and to hold opinions without interference.
- The right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and opinions of any kind in any form.
- The right not to be subjected to torture or to cruel, degrading, or disproportionately severe treatment or punishment.
- The right to be free from discrimination.

Searching Students and Confiscation of Property

Provisions³⁴ in the Education and Training Act 2020 create a power for teachers and authorised non-teaching staff to require students to surrender items in their possession or control that are likely to endanger safety or detrimentally affect the learning environment. Items can include information stored in electronic devices. Surrendered items may be retained for a reasonable period or disposed of if appropriate. Teachers and authorised staff may also search clothing and bags or other containers subject to certain restrictions, and must comply with rules and guidelines regarding the surrender and retention of property and searches by schools issued by the Secretary for Education.

Teachers and authorised staff will not be permitted to search a student or to use physical force against a student or require a student to provide a bodily sample or to have a dog for the purpose of exercising a power.

Education (Surrender, Retention and Search) Rules 2013³⁵

These rules are made by the Secretary for Education and set out the practice to be followed by schools in respect of things that are dealt with by schools because they are items that endanger

³⁴ Section 105 to 114. Also refer [Guidelines for the surrender and retention of property and searches](#)

³⁵ [Education \(Surrender, Retention and Search\) Rules 2013](#)

Also refer to [Digital technology: Safe and responsible use in schools](#) [PDF, 2.5 MB]

Guidelines for Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist
Education Review Office January 2026

the safety of persons or detrimentally affect the learning environment (items) or because they are computers or electronic devices (devices) on which items are stored. The rules also require records to be made and kept of searches undertaken to locate items that are believed to pose an immediate threat to the physical or emotional safety of persons.

[Note: refer to www.legislation.govt.nz for sections 105 to 114 Part 3, [Subpart 4] of the Education and Training Act 2020 and the *Education (Surrender, Retention, and Search) Rules 2013; www.education.govt.nz for guidelines issued by the Secretary for Education]. This Rules continue to apply under Schedule 1, clause 4 of the E&T Act 2020.

[Education \(Surrender, Retention, and Search\) Rules 2013](#)

[Guidelines for the surrender and retention of property and searches](#)

[Subpart 4—Searches and surrender of property](#)

Hazardous Substances in school laboratories

The New Zealand Association of Science Educators (NZASE) has developed the Code of Practice for School Exempt Laboratories (the Code). This Code provides guidance on how schools comply with the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act and Regulations. The Code includes advice for schools about:

- managing school laboratories
- appointing laboratory managers
- laboratory manager’s responsibilities
- skills and knowledge required for laboratory managers and people in charge
- duties of people who are handling hazardous substances
- using hazardous substances in teaching

For further information, refer to the Code.³⁶

Animal Welfare Act 1999

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 has some implications for schools. Any individual or organisation involved in the manipulation of animals for the purposes of research, testing or teaching must have a code of ethical conduct. The Director-General of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry will approve such codes.

The Ministry of Education advises that schools that manipulate animals as part of their programmes need to enter into an arrangement and seek approval from an Animal Ethics Committee (AEC).

³⁶ For more information about the code, go to the [Code of Practice for School Exempt Laboratories \(WorkSafe website\) \(external link\)](#) . [HSNOCOP 15-1: School exempt laboratories \(PDF 556 KB\)](#)

[Caring for Animals](#) covers legal and ethical obligations when using or observing animals in science programmes. It also provides advice on care of various common animals.

[The New Zealand Science Teachers' Association \(NZASE\)](#) provides a code of conduct and guidance for teachers on both animal and human ethics.

Under the Animal Welfare Act 1999, research and teaching involving manipulating live animals may require ethics approval. This requirement also applies to animals used in schools and school activities.

NZASE has an [ethics committee that schools can use](#) when they require ethics approval.

The Science Learning Hub has an [ethics thinking toolkit](#), which provides a structured framework for scaffolding student thinking about an ethical issue.

Firearms in Schools Guidelines

Current legislation allows firearms in schools under strict conditions. These guidelines are designed to support schools to have the correct policy and processes in place:

[Firearms in Schools Guidelines and Tool Kit](#)
[Quick guide to the Firearms in Schools Guidelines](#)

Resource Management Act 1991

The purpose of this Act is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. The provisions of the Act, among other things, promote the health and safety of communities. For example, there are provisions to ensure that activities that may have adverse effects on the environment, are avoided.

School boards that discharge contaminants or use incinerators to dispose of rubbish, should ensure that they comply with local council bylaws.

Hostels and off-site care – responsibilities of boards in state schools

The responsibility of boards to provide a safe physical and emotional environment for the children and young persons in their care includes situations where children and young persons are:

- Attending on-site or off-site courses or trips that are part of a school's educational programme; or
- In residential facilities associated with schools. These may include boarding schools, hostels, homestays, school camps or off-site courses or trips.

Boards are therefore also required to ensure that in the situations outlined above:

- All children and young persons are treated with respect and dignity and that they have their rights and needs met in a safe environment;
- Staff are aware of the relevant laws and regulations enacted to protect children and young persons from abuse;
- Staff are familiar with ways to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse; and
- Procedures are in place to protect students and staff from unwarranted allegations of abuse.

Education (Hostels) Regulations 2005³⁷

The purpose of these regulations is to help ensure the safety of students who board at hostels, prescribe minimum standards for premises and facilities, a code of practice relating to management of hostels, and a complaints procedure.

International students

The Education Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners Code of Practice 2021³⁸ replaced the existing mandatory Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students on 1 July 2016.

The new Code of Practice means:

- Education providers will be required to achieve 10 outcomes outlined in this new Code of Practice, following prescribed key processes.
- The Code Administrator, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), has new powers to sanction education providers who do not follow the code.

Schools cannot enrol international students without being a signatory to the Code of Practice. Schools with MFAT scholarship recipients or those running their own exchange programmes will need to become signatories to the code.

Boards that are signatories to the Code must ensure they are familiar with, and meet, the requirements of the Code, including the provisions relating to:

Student welfare

- Support services for students
- Information on international students
- Communicating with parents for students under 18 years
- Students with additional needs
- Monitoring attendance to ensure student welfare

Accommodation

- Accommodation Provisions
- Homestays
- Boarding Establishments
- Designated caregivers

³⁷ These regulations continue to apply under clause 4, Schedule 1 [Legislative instruments continued](#). Also refer to [Consequential amendments and revocations](#) [Schedule 26]

³⁸ [Education \(Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International ...](#)

- Temporary accommodation
- Residential caregivers
- Police vetting of accommodation for students under 18 years

Boards must also ensure students know about and have access to adequate and fair procedures for dealing with grievances. Complaints procedures must be documented and implemented, and information about complaints procedures must be publicly available to international students.

Section 654 - Power of Secretary to direct education entities³⁹

(1)The Secretary may direct the governing body of an education entity (or the governing bodies of a class of education entities) to comply with any specified requirements—

(a)to close or open the education entity or any part of it (including in relation to any specified category, class, or year group of students):

(b)to close or open the education entity for physical attendance or instruction, or both:

(c)to set restrictions on the attendance of students and those working at an education entity, having regard to any relevant employment or health and safety legislation:

(d)to operate, control, or manage the education entity:

(e)to provide education or instruction through the education entity in any specified ways.

(2)The Secretary may renew, amend, or revoke a direction while the relevant state of emergency, transition period, or epidemic notice is in force.

(4)A direction, or a renewal, an amendment, or a revocation of a direction, under this section—

(a)is secondary legislation (see [Part 3](#) of the Legislation Act 2019 for publication requirements); and

(b)comes into force when it is made or at a later date specified in it, even if it is not yet published.

[Directions](#)

[653](#) [Application and purpose of sections 654 to 658](#)

[654](#) [Power of Secretary to direct education entities](#)

[655](#) [Effect of directions](#)

[657](#) [Expiry of directions](#)

[658](#) [Academic freedom unaffected](#)

[659](#) [Power of boards to close schools](#)

Useful Resources

[Health and safety practical guide for boards of trustees and school leaders](#)

NZSTA – Guidelines for Boards, Health and Safety (www.nzsta.org.nz).

[Bullying prevention and response: A guide for schools](#)

[Safety and Technology Education: A Guidance Manual for New Zealand Schools](#)

[Specialised School Transport Assistance \(SESTA\)](#)

[Keeping students safe on school buses](#)

³⁹ [Education and Training Act 2020](#)

Section Four – Personnel Compliance Guide

Key Legislation

- Education and Training Act 2020
 - Employment Relations Act 2000 - Collective Employment Agreements (teaching and non-teaching staff)
 - Human Rights Act 1993
 - Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004
 - Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022.
 - Teaching Council Rules 2016
 - Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015
 - Privacy Act 2020
-

Introduction

One of the key activities for a board is related to the employment of staff. The level of student achievement is often dependent on the quality of staff employed.

The board should take all reasonable steps to provide a safe and positive working environment. It should be satisfied that all members of staff are performing in accordance with their employment agreements.

Under section 128 of the Ed & Training Act, a board may in accordance with the Act appoint, suspend, or dismiss school staff.

Under section 129 the powers conferred on a board by [section 128](#) include the powers to appoint, suspend, and dismiss a principal. Two or more boards may appoint 1 person to be the principal of 2 or more schools administered by the boards. A combined board may appoint 1 person to be the principal of 2 or more schools administered by the board.

Note :

[617 Minister may issue eligibility criteria relating to appointment of principals](#)

[618 Board may develop additional criteria relating to appointment of principals](#)

Key Requirements

Children's worker – Safety Checks

Children's worker safety checks became law in the Children's Act 2014 (the CA)⁴⁰, and applies to workers who are in core children's workforce roles and non-core children's workers.

⁴⁰ Download [Children's Act 2014 guide](#)

Briefly, the following checks must have been completed where the board is seeking to employ or engage as a children's worker⁴¹ (including as a contractor) for core children's workforce roles, and for non-core children's workforce roles:

- a. Identity verification - proof people are who they say they are, including previous identities
- b. Information requirement – reliable information about history and behaviour, which may include reference checks, interviews, and Police vetting
- c. Risk assessment – considered judgement based on the information collected
- d. Periodic re-checking – information to be updated and reassessed every three years.

The CA prohibits people with certain child abuse, sexual offending, or violence convictions from working in core worker roles. These are specified in the Act. Anyone convicted of the offences listed in the Act will not be able to work in core worker roles unless they are granted an exemption. The Ministry of Social Development manages applications for exemptions.

Education and Training Act 2020

The following personnel provisions previously under the State Sector Act 1988 have been incorporated in the Education and Training Act:

Personnel provisions in relation to education service

597	General principles
598	Code of conduct
599	Performance of teachers
600	Equal employment opportunities
601	Employees in education service
602	Duty to act independently
603	Appointments on merit
604	Obligation to notify vacancies
605	Restriction of compensation for technical redundancy arising from closure or merger of schools
606	Appointment of employees following closure or merger of schools
607	Acting appointments

⁴¹ Example: teachers, teacher aides, support staff who have regular contact with children

Note: Section 597 (1) of the Education and Training Act 2020 requires school boards, among other things, to operate a personnel policy that complies with the principle of being a good employer, and report in its annual report on the extent of its compliance.⁴²

Restrictions on appointment and continued employment of teaching staff

Section 92 - Restrictions on appointment of teachers

(1) An employer may not appoint the following persons to a teaching position:

(a) a person—

(i) whose registration has been cancelled; and

(ii) who has not since been registered again:

(b) a person whose practising certificate is suspended under [section 498](#) or [500\(1\)\(d\)](#) or cancelled under section 500(1)(g):

(c) a person whose authorisation has been cancelled and who has not since—

(i) been authorised again; or

(ii) been registered as a teacher:

(d) a person whose limited authority to teach is suspended under [section 498](#) or [500\(1\)\(d\)](#).

(2) An employer may not permanently appoint a person to any teaching position if the person does not hold a practising certificate.

Section 93 - Restrictions on continued employment of teachers

(1) An employer may not continue to employ the following persons in a teaching position:

(a) a person—

(i) whose registration has been cancelled; and

(ii) who has not since been registered again:

(b) a person whose practising certificate is suspended under [section 500\(1\)\(d\)](#):

(c) a person whose authorisation has been cancelled and who has not since—

(i) been authorised again; or

(ii) been registered as a teacher:

(d) a person whose limited authority to teach is suspended under [section 500\(1\)\(d\)](#).

⁴² The annual report must be available to the public on the website maintained by or on behalf of the board under section 136 of the Education and Training Act 2020 - [Annual report to be made available](#).

(2) An employer may not continue to employ in a teaching position a person who holds neither a practising certificate nor an authorisation if the person is not under the general supervision of a person who holds a practising certificate.

(3) An employer may not, in any calendar year, continue to employ in a teaching position a person who holds neither a practising certificate nor an authorisation if the sum of the following periods is not less than the period specified in subsection (4):

(a) the period or periods for which that person has already during that year been employed by the employer in a teaching position or positions:

(b) any period or periods (of which the employer is aware) for which that person has already during that year been employed by any other employer in a teaching position or positions:

(c) any period or periods (of which the employer is aware) for which that person has during that year been employed as a teacher by the employer at an early childhood education and care service.

(4) The period is 20 half-days or any greater number of half-days the Teaching Council has allowed in any particular case, each being a half-day on which the school or early childhood education and care service at which the person was then employed was open for instruction.

Section 95 - Restrictions on teachers subject to interim suspension

(1) This section applies to a person employed in a teaching position if the person—

(a) holds a practising certificate that is suspended under [section 498](#); or

(b) has a limited authority to teach that is suspended under [section 498](#).

(2) The employer of the person—

(a) must ensure that the person does not carry out any of the duties of the teaching position concerned; and

(b) if the person is employed at a registered school or an early childhood education and care service, must take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure that the person does not undertake any activities that might bring them into contact with students enrolled at the school or children who attend the service.

(3) The person may not carry out any of the duties of the teaching position concerned.

Section 96 - Further provisions relating to registration of teachers, practising certificates, and authorities to teach

The registration of teachers, the issue of practising certificates, and the grant of authorities to teach must be done in accordance with [Schedule 3](#)

617 Minister may issue eligibility criteria relating to appointment of principals

(1) The Minister may issue eligibility criteria that must be met by applicants for appointment to the position of principal for the purposes of—

(a) ensuring consistency in the skills, competencies, knowledge, and expertise that applicants for appointment to the position must demonstrate; and

(b) supporting better understanding of the background and experience needed for school leadership among persons aspiring to the role of a principal as part of their future career; and

(c) providing confidence to boards in making appointments; and

(d) signalling the importance of the role of a principal across the wider school system.

(2) Before issuing any criteria under subsection (1), the Minister must make reasonable efforts to consult—

(a) children and young people and their parents, whānau, and communities:

(b) national bodies representing the interests of—

(i) teachers:

(ii) principals:

(iii) boards:

(iv) the disability community:

(v) support staff in schools:

(vi) Māori education organisations:

(vii) proprietors of State integrated schools:

(c) national bodies with a particular role in respect of the character of designated character schools.

(3) The Minister may delegate the Minister's function under subsection (1) to any person or persons that the Minister thinks fit.

(4) In making an appointment to the position of principal, a board must apply any criteria issued under subsection (1) and may also apply any specific additional criteria developed by it under [section 618](#).

Board may develop additional criteria

618 Board may develop additional criteria relating to appointment of principals

(1) A board may develop additional criteria relating to the appointment of a principal at the relevant board's school.

(2) Any additional criteria developed by the board must not be inconsistent with any eligibility criteria issued by the Minister under [section 617](#).

(3) In developing any additional criteria, the board must consult its school community.

[Police vetting of non-teaching, unregistered employees and contractors](#)⁴³

⁴³ Required Police vetting. [Schedule 4 Police vetting](#).

Schedule 4 (Education and Training Act 2020)

Police vetting

- [August 2023 changes to Police vetting requirements](#)
- [Guidelines for risk assessments of school staff and contractors](#)

Police vetting for schools and kura Māori (MOE)

...approved agency and request Police vets through the NZ Police...

unsupervised access⁴⁴, in relation to children at a licensed early childhood service or students at a school, means access to any child that is not access by, or supervised by, or otherwise observed by, or able to be directed (if necessary) by, any 1 or more of the following:

- (a) a registered teacher or holder of a limited authority to teach:
- (b) an employee of the school or service on whom a satisfactory Police vet has been conducted within the last 3 years:
- (c) a parent of the student

The Protected Disclosures (Protection of Whistleblowers) Act 2022.

The purpose of this Act is to promote the public interest—

- (a) by facilitating the disclosure and timely investigation of serious wrongdoing in or by an organisation; and
- (b) by protecting the people who disclose in accordance with this Act.

All public sector organisations (including all state schools) must have in operation appropriate internal procedures for receiving and dealing with information about serious wrongdoing.

Internal procedures and adequate information as to how to use the procedures must be published widely in the organisation and must be republished at regular intervals.

⁴⁴ Interpretation: section 10, Education and Training Act 2020.

Rule 4 – Overview

1. These rules—
 - a. provide preliminary provisions (see this Part); and
 - b. set out how to make a mandatory report or a complaint to the Teaching Council about a teacher (see [Part 2](#)); and
 - c. set out the criteria for reporting serious misconduct (see [Part 3](#)); and
 - d. provide a procedure for the chief executive to deal with reports and complaints about teachers in the first instance (see [Part 4](#)); and
 - e. provide for the practices and procedures of the disciplinary bodies when dealing with reports, complaints, and other matters (see [Parts 5 and 6](#)); and
 - f. provide for the practices and procedures of professional practice evaluators and the Competence Authority when dealing with matters relating to competence (see [Part 7](#)); and
 - (fa) provide for certain applications for teacher registration to be referred to a Registration Panel for determination (see [Part 7A](#)); and
 - g. establish the disciplinary bodies and the Competence Authority and include provisions about their membership and operation, and the membership and operation of the Registration Panel (see [Part 8](#)); and
 - h. provide for procedural requirements for Police vetting of applicants for registration as a teacher or for an authority to teach (see [Part 9](#)); and
 - i. revoke various rules (see [Part 10](#)).
2. This rule is by way of explanation only, and, if any other provision in the Act or rules conflicts with it, the other provision prevails.

Mandatory Reporting

Boards must immediately report to the Teaching Council when the board dismisses a teacher for any reason, or has reason to believe that a teacher has engaged in serious misconduct or has not reached the required level of competence. Boards should refer to sections 489 to 493 of the Education and Training Act 2020, and relevant Rules for details.

Mandatory reporting

489	Mandatory reporting of dismissals and resignations
490	Mandatory reporting of complaints received about former employees
491	Mandatory reporting of possible serious misconduct
492	Mandatory reporting of failure to reach required level of competence
493	Mandatory reporting of convictions

⁴⁵ These rules continue to apply under clause 4, Schedule 1 [Transitional, savings and related provisions] Education and Training Act 2020. Refer - [Legislative instruments continued](#)

Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004

The Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004 applies to employment and any other situations where an individual is asked about his/her criminal record. The Act is designed to allow individuals with less serious convictions to put their past behind them. To be eligible under the Act an individual must meet all of the criteria in section 7 of the Act before all of their convictions can be concealed.

Note: These provisions do not affect the requirement by boards to police vet non-teaching, and unregistered employees, contractors and their employees under the Education and Training Act 2020.

Employment Relations Act 2000

The object of the Employment Relations Act 2000 is to build employment relationships through the promotion of mutual trust and confidence in all aspects of the employment environment and employment relationship. The Act requires that employers and employees deal with each other in good faith.

Human Rights Act 1993

The Human Rights Act 1993 protects people from unlawful discrimination. The intention of the Act is to ensure that everybody is treated fairly in key areas of life, including employment.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfairly or less favourably than another person in the same or similar circumstances. Indirect discrimination occurs when an action or policy that appears to treat everyone in the same way, actually has a discriminatory effect on a person or group. (Grounds of discrimination are defined in section 21 of the Act.)

The Act uses an expanded definition of 'employment'. It applies to employees, voluntary workers, people seeking work, and contract workers. This means the Act applies to a number of people who are not covered by other employment legislation, such as the Employment Relations Act 2000, which only applies to employees.

The Act covers advertisements, job applicants, employment opportunities and conditions for employees, and how employees leave their employment.

Individual and collective employment agreements

Boards should ensure they are familiar with the terms and conditions of the relevant employment agreement that governs their relationship with employees.

Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand

Section 96 - Further provisions relating to registration of teachers, practising certificates, and authorities to teach

The registration of teachers, the issue of practising certificates, and the grant of authorities to teach must be done in accordance with [Schedule 3](#).

The *Code of Professional Responsibility*⁴⁶ issued by the Teaching Council applies to all certified teachers and those who have been granted a Limited Authority to Teach, in every role and teaching context. It is a set of aspirations for professional behaviour, and is binding on all teachers who hold a practising certificate and all authorised persons.

Professional Growth Cycle for Principals, Tumuaki and ECE Professional Leaders

The Professional Growth Cycle:

- reflects the profession's commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Our Code, Our Standards, Ngā Tikanga Matatika, Ngā Paerewa,
- is intended to create more equitable, contextually responsive access to opportunities for learning and growth than currently occurs through highly varied appraisal systems,
- promotes the use of research and frameworks while fostering new knowledge developed with colleagues about practices that make a positive difference for learners,
- encourages a collective responsibility for learning and quality teaching practice for all learners across the diverse contexts of Aotearoa.

Refer to NZTC website:

[Principals | Tumuaki and ECE Professional Leaders PGC](#)

Additional remuneration for principals

Section 578 of the Education and Training Act 2020 requires the Secretary for Education to provide a payroll service which Boards must use to pay staff unless the Secretary for Education otherwise authorises. The section also requires boards to keep all records and give the Secretary for Education all information necessary for the purposes of the payroll service.

Boards are required to obtain the written consent of the Secretary for Education (or the authorised delegate) before agreeing to pay additional remuneration to the principal. The need for consent arises because of requirements in the respective principals' collective and individual employment agreements (under section 586 of the Education and Training Act 2020) and section 580 of the Education and Training Act 2020 which prohibits boards paying all or any part of a teacher's salary (which includes the principal) without the Minister of Education's consent.

Useful Resources

Refer to details of appointment processes and templates – NZSTA website – www.nzsta.org.nz and also www.educationalleaders.govt.nz

⁴⁶ Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession.

Ngā Tikanga Matatika, Ngā Paerewa.

Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession.

Current Collective Employment Agreements

www.education.govt.nz

Section Five – Financial Compliance Guide

Key Legislation

- Crown Entities Act 2004
 - Education and Training Act 2020
 - Financial Reporting Act 2013
 - Public Finance Act 1989
 - Crown Entities (Financial Powers) Regulations 2005
-

Introduction

Sound financial management and controls are essential to schools because they provide an effective framework for financial planning and safeguard the use of tax payers' money. They also provide transparency and mechanisms for accountability.

Key Requirements

Section 550 of the Education and Training Act 2020 provides that every financial year Parliament will grant public money to boards for the purpose of running schools.

Boards are responsible for the management of this money and are also publicly accountable for how the money is spent.

Under section 127(g) of the Act, to meet the paramount objective, the board must meet the supporting objective to perform its functions and exercise its powers in a way that is financially responsible

paramount objective means the highest-priority objective

supporting objective means an objective that is essential and supports the paramount objective.

Boards are Crown Entities

Section 153 - Application of Crown Entities Act 2004

- (1) A board is a Crown entity for the purposes of [section 7](#) of the Crown Entities Act 2004
- (2) However, that Act applies to boards only to the extent that subsection (3) provides.
- (3) The provisions set out in [Schedule 3](#) of the Crown Entities Act 2004 apply to boards and their Crown entity subsidiaries (within the meaning of that Act).
- (4) A board must comply with any direction given under [section 107](#) of the Crown Entities Act 2004.
- (5) If the board does not comply with a direction, it may be dismissed under [section 171\(1\)\(i\)](#).

Annual financial statements

(Education (School Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2023.

[10 Content of annual reports](#)

[11 Content of annual financial statements](#)

As Crown entities schools are subject to the requirements of the Education and Training Act 2020, Crown Entities Act 2004 and the Financial Reporting Act 2013, and these Acts define the form and content of the financial statements that schools must present each year.

Public Sector Public Benefit Entity (PBE) financial reporting standards are mandatory for all state and state-integrated schools or kura.

The annual financial statements and related guidance, can be found on the

[Day-to-day financial management](#)

Statements of variance and annual reports ⁴⁷

Boards are also required to report to the school community on their operations for the year. The annual report provides an opportunity for the school to report to the community – parents, students, and Parliament, and to publicly account for the ways it has used resources provided for the education of its students. The annual report is sent to the Ministry of Education as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year, and in any event no later than a day fixed by the Secretary of Education.

⁴⁷ Note Ministry of Education: Annual Reporting Circular, and any updated version.

Section 134 – Statements of variance and annual reports

(1) A board must give the Secretary—

(a) a statement of variance by a date fixed by the Secretary each year; and
(b) an annual report as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year, and no later than a date fixed by the Secretary.

(2) The annual report must contain the following:

- (a) the information required by regulations made under [section 639](#); and
(b) the board's annual financial statements; and
(c) the auditor's report provided under [section 135](#); and
(d) in respect of the board or, in the case of a Crown entity group, each Crown entity in the group,—
(i) the total value of the remuneration (other than compensation and other benefits referred to in subparagraph (v)) paid or payable to the board members in their capacity as board members by the board (or entities in the group) during the financial year; and
(ii) the total value of the remuneration (other than compensation and other benefits referred to in subparagraph (v)) paid or payable to the committee members in their capacity as committee members by the board (or entities in the group) during the financial year (except that this subparagraph does not apply to board members whose remuneration is disclosed under subparagraph (i)); and
(iii) the number of employees (other than principals of the school) to whom, during the financial year, remuneration (other than compensation and other benefits referred to in subparagraph (v)) was paid or payable in their capacity as employees, the total value of which is or exceeds \$100,000 per annum, and the number of those employees in brackets of \$10,000; and
(iv) a report, presented in the manner required by the Minister by notice in the *Gazette*, on the total remuneration (including benefits, any compensation, ex gratia payments, any other payments, and any other consideration paid or payable in the school principal's capacity as an employee) paid to a principal of the school; and
(v) the total value of any compensation or other benefits paid or payable to persons who ceased to be board members, committee members, or employees during the financial year in relation to that cessation and the number of persons to whom all or part of that total was payable; and
(e) the statement of variance.

(3) In addition, a board that is a parent in a Crown entity group must, to the extent required to do so by generally accepted accounting practice, prepare consolidated financial statements in relation to the group for that financial year.

(4) The annual financial statements must be in the form (if any) determined by the Secretary after consultation with the Auditor-General.

(5) The annual financial statements must be accompanied by a statement of responsibility that complies with section 155 of the Crown Entities Act 2004 but that is signed by the chair of the board and the principal instead of 2 members.

(6)The requirements of this section and [section 135](#) as to annual financial statements also apply to a Crown entity subsidiary of a board as if the subsidiary were a board and with all necessary modifications.

(7)The rest of the amendments made to this section by [Schedule 6](#) of the Crown Entities Act 2004 apply as provided in [section 198](#) of that Act.

(8)In this section,—

board member and **employee** include a person who was a board member or an employee at any time during the applicable financial year but who is no longer a board member or an employee

statement of variance means a statement that details—

(a)any variance between the school’s performance and the achievement of the school’s objectives set out in its strategic plan and annual implementation plan; and

(b)any matters required by regulations made under [section 639](#).

(9)However, in relation to a 2023 school charter, **statement of variance** means the statement referred to in subsection (2)(e) as it read, or would have read, immediately before the commencement of subsection (8).

Section 135 - Audit

(1)A board must submit its annual financial statements to the Auditor-General within 90 days after the end of each financial year.

(2)The Auditor-General must audit the financial statements and provide an audit report on them to the board.

Section 136 - Annual report to be made available

A board must ensure that its annual report is available to the public on an Internet site maintained by or on behalf of the board.

Section 137 - Annual financial statements of boards

(1)A board must provide its audited annual financial statements to the Secretary no later than 31 May in the year after the previous financial year.

(2)The Minister must make available (including, without limitation, by electronic means) to a member of Parliament on request from that member of Parliament any statement provided to the Secretary under subsection (1).

(3)The statement must be made available not later than 1 month after the request was received by the Minister.

Further information

School’s planning and reporting from MOE website:

[The school planning and reporting framework](#)

Crown Entities Act 2004

Bank Accounts

All money received by a school must be paid into the school's bank account. The account must comply with the requirements of section 158 of the Crown Entities Act 2004, for example it must be held at a registered bank or building society that meets a relevant credit-rating test set out in Regulation 7⁴⁸ or approved by *Gazette* notice issued by the Minister of Finance. An up-to-date register of banks and building societies that meet the minimum requirements set out in the Act and Regulations is maintained on the MOE website.⁴⁹ School boards must properly authorize withdrawal or payment of money from their bank accounts.

In practice this means that school bank accounts must be in the name of the school only, and no income for the school can be paid directly to a service-provider trust, proprietor's account or the account of any other third party.

Accounting Records

Section 168 of the Crown Entities Act 2004 requires school boards to ensure that accounting records are kept that:

- Correctly record and explain the transactions of the school; and
- Will at any time enable the financial position of the school to be determined with reasonable accuracy; and
- Will enable the trustees to ensure that the financial statements comply with generally accepted accounting practice; and
- Will enable the financial statements of the school to be readily and properly audited.

Gifts to Boards

Section 159 of the Education and Training Act provides that any money or property gifted to a school may be accepted or disclaimed by the board in accordance with section 167 of the Crown Entities Act 2004. This applies to any gift that is received by the board, which may include funding scholarships or bursaries, or for other educational purposes. The board must hold the gift for the specific purpose declared by the giver. It is good practice for a school to have a gift policy.⁵⁰

Investment in securities, borrowing, giving of guarantees and use of derivatives

There are also restrictions on investment in securities, borrowing, giving guarantees and indemnities or use of derivatives. If the board wishes to borrow money or give guarantees and indemnities or

⁴⁸ Crown Entities (Financial Powers) Regulations 2005.

⁴⁹ www.education.govt.nz/goto/schoolbanks.

⁵⁰ see MOE 'Financial Information for Schools Handbook' and any updates.

enter into derivative transactions, it should check compliance with sections 154/155/157 and 158 of the Education and Training Act 2020 and sections 160 to 164 of the Crown Entities Act 2004, and the Crown Entities (Financial Powers) Regulations 2005.

Conflicts of Interest

Under clause 10, Schedule 23 of the Education and Training Act a trustee may be disqualified from continuing as a board member if they have a financial interest in contracts with the board that total more than \$25,000 in a financial year unless the trustee has declared a conflict of interest, excluded themselves while the board discusses the matter, and the board obtains prior approval from the Secretary for Education.

No compensation for loss of office

Under section 182 of the Ed & T Act, a trustee is not entitled to any compensation, benefit or other payment when they cease to hold office as a trustee. However, if there is currently a contract or arrangement to receive compensation or other benefit, this continues to apply, but is to be cancelled on the date of reappointment.

Whole of government directions

Boards must comply with any whole of government directions (from the Ministers of State Services and Finance) given under section 107 of the Crown Entities Act (for example a direction that all boards comply with e-government requirements to improve public services). If a board does not comply with a direction, it may be dismissed under s 171(1)(i) of the Act.⁵¹

⁵¹ Refer section 153 of Education and Training Act 2020 - [Application of Crown Entities Act 2004](#)

Section Six - Asset Management Compliance Guide

Key Legislation

- Building Act 2004
 - Education and Training Act 2020
 - Building (Pools) Amendment Act 2016
 - Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017
 - Resource Management Act 1991
 - Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017
 - Fire Safety, Evacuation Procedures, and Evacuation Schemes Regulations 2018
 - Gangs Act 2024
-

Introduction

Note: The [Education and Training \(System Reform\) Amendment Bill](#) currently before Parliament proposes the establishment of the New Zealand School Property Agency as a Crown entity when passed into law.

The objective of the NZSPA is to support and contribute to the achievement of the purpose of this Act by ensuring that the administration of education property—

(a) is effective and efficient; and

(b) consistent with good practice for investment and asset management, including standards and directions issued by the Government.

Purpose of NZSPA

NZSPA is a new Crown agent responsible for administering, managing, and monitoring the entire State school property portfolio. Its objective is to ensure education property is administered effectively, efficiently, and in line with good asset-management practice. [\[legislation.govt.nz\]](https://legislation.govt.nz)

Core Functions (summary)

Administer Crown Education Property

NZSPA acts as the Crown's agent to administer:

- Education property and associated rights
- Improvements to that property
- Agreements relating to education property [\[legislation.govt.nz\]](https://legislation.govt.nz)

Full Asset Lifecycle Management

NZSPA manages planning, design, construction, acquisition, maintenance, repair, and disposal of education property, ensuring alignment with:

- The Education and Training Act

- The Public Works Act 1981
- Government standards and priorities for asset investment [\[legislation.govt.nz\]](https://legislation.govt.nz)

Support for Regulated Entities

The agency supports school boards and other regulated entities to plan and manage capital projects and maintenance funded by the Ministry of Education. [\[legislation.govt.nz\]](https://legislation.govt.nz)

Monitoring and Compliance

NZSPA monitors property performance to ensure compliance with:

- Terms and conditions under ss 161 and 560
- Legislative requirements
- Standards and policies set by the Secretary or NZSPA
NZSPA must report significant or recurring non-compliance to the Secretary.
[\[legislation.govt.nz\]](https://legislation.govt.nz)

Property Advice and Decision-Support

NZSPA provides advice to the Minister and Secretary on property planning, delivery, and investment, and offers advisory support to boards and regulated entities. [\[legislation.govt.nz\]](https://legislation.govt.nz)

Key Requirements

Education and Training Act 2020

Section 161 of the Education and Training Act provides that the Secretary for Education may specify terms and conditions subject to which boards occupy land and buildings owned by the Crown.

Such documents include the property occupancy document issued by the Secretary for Education to boards of state (non-integrated) schools.

The Ministry of Education's Property Management Handbook comprehensively explains the responsibilities of boards and the Ministry in caring for school property, and contains useful information, guidelines, and best practice ideas to help boards manage school property.

Ministry of Education: Property Occupancy Document

The terms and conditions for boards of all state schools occupying land and buildings, are specified in the form of a Property Occupancy Document, issued under the Education and Training Act by the

Secretary for Education⁵² to all state schools, as an appendix to the Property Management Handbook available on the Ministry's website.

Clause 5a of the Property Occupancy Document [POD] states that:

The Board is responsible for all maintenance of the property at the school no matter who owns it. The board must maintain the school property in good order and repair at all times and to a standard that meets current trade standards of workmanship, complies with all relevant New Zealand legislation and codes, and all current Ministry design requirements.

Clause 7a of the POD requires boards to engage a project manager to carry out, or review and certify, a condition assessment of the school buildings and facilities before preparing, or reviewing and certifying, a 10-year Property Plan [10YPP]. Boards are responsible for the care of playgrounds and playground equipment. The design and maintenance of play areas and playground surfacing is covered by the joint Australian/New Zealand standards, and also New Zealand standards issued by Standards New Zealand. As these standards are always being refined, boards should check with Standards New Zealand for current guidelines.

The Ministry requires that the design and proposed construction of any playground be approved by a territorial authority building inspector. On completion of the work, the playground must be inspected before a code of compliance is issued.

Use of off-site locations by schools

Section 117 of the Ed & Training Act requires schools to seek the approval of the Minister of Education to use an off-site location or host an off-site location for another school.⁵³ This is to formalise arrangements for off-site locations and make it clearer who is responsible for the education, safety and welfare of the students receiving education at the off-site location.

An off-site location is when a school is using premises outside of the school to provide education to one or more students on a long-term or full-time basis.

Integrated schools

The relationship between integrated schools and the Ministry of Education regarding asset management is governed by the individual school's integration agreement between the MOE (on behalf of the Minister) and the school's Proprietor.

Capital works projects are governed by the Ministry policy "Capital Work Projects at Integrated Schools", which specifies the protocol between the Ministry and the proprietor and sets minimum standards for asset management.

The minimum standards include property being safe, in a fit state of repair, and compliant with all statutory, regulatory, and Ministry design standards. The policy is issued pursuant to clause 39,

⁵² Note: the relevant provision is now s 161 of the Education and Training Act.

[Property Occupancy Document for \(non-integrated\) state ...](#)

[The Property Occupancy Document for state schools](#)

⁵³ Schools must get approval through the MOE.

Schedule 6 of the Education and Training Act 2020. Clause 39, Schedule 6 of that Act allows the Minister of Education to require a proprietor to undertake work to ensure minimum standards are maintained.⁵⁴

Building Act 2004

The Building Act establishes a series of minimum safety standards (building regulations) that must be complied with. The purpose of these regulations is to ensure all new buildings and alterations are constructed to a standard that ensures the safety of occupants. Section 3 states:

“This Act has the following purposes:

- a. to provide for the regulation of building work, the establishment of a licensing regime for building practitioners, and the setting of performance standards for buildings, to ensure that—
 - i. people who use buildings can do so safely and without endangering their health; and
 - ii. buildings have attributes that contribute appropriately to the health, physical independence, and well-being of the people who use them; and
 - iii. people who use a building can escape from the building if it is on fire; and
 - iv. buildings are designed, constructed, and able to be used in ways that promote sustainable development.
- b. to promote the accountability of owners, designers, builders, and building consent authorities who have responsibilities for ensuring that building work complies with the building code.”

Sections 117 to 120 of the Building Act require building owners to ensure access, facilities and signage are in place to cater for the needs of disabled staff, children and visitors when constructing a new building or altering any building.

Capital Works/Maintenance [State non-integrated schools]

Refer to MOE website :

[Property maintenance grant funding - Ministry of Education](#)

Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017/Fire Safety, Evacuation Procedures and Evacuation Schemes Regulations 2018⁵⁵

All schools need to have an evacuation procedure or scheme in place to ensure the safe and efficient evacuation of occupants in a fire emergency. The safe evacuation of persons with disabilities to an external place of safety is a critical requirement. Schools must place signs and notices at appropriate points across the school so that the evacuation procedure is clear.

⁵⁴ Note: the Private Schools Integration Act 1975 has been repealed, and relevant provisions incorporated into the Education Act 1989 from 19 May 2017.

⁵⁵ Note: The *Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017* applies from 1 July 2017 and there will be a transitional period for the current Act/Regulations to continue to apply.

The requirements are set out in the Fire Safety and Evacuation of Buildings Regulations 2006 and new regulations that came into effect from 1 July 2018.

Schools which have less than 100 students and staff should have a fire safety and evacuation procedure in place. The procedure must include:

- a. a site plan for the whole school showing assembly points outside the building
- b. the escape routes to follow to get to the assembly points
- c. maintenance of the escape routes
- d. the fire alarms signals to be used at the school
- e. details of the firefighting equipment occupants can use.

Schools which have more than 100 students and staff must have a FENZ approved evacuation scheme in place. A school should take time to carefully consider how it will effectively manage an evacuation in a fire emergency, including setting out the specific details for the evacuation of persons with disabilities to an external place of safety. An evacuation scheme must include:

- a. what to do if you discover a fire
- b. what to do if you are alerted to a fire
- c. where the assembly points are and how to get to them
- d. provision for evacuating: members of the public who may be at your school; young children; the elderly, and the sick; students and others with disabilities and residential units.

The regulations require all school staff to be trained to assist others to evacuate in accordance with the evacuation procedure for the school.

Boards, as occupiers of buildings, are required to prepare an evacuation scheme for the approval of the National Commander. Evacuation drills are required at intervals of not more than six months (Regulation 17(g)(i) and notices are required to be posted in buildings showing how to get out of the building and the evacuation procedure.

Evacuation scheme application forms are available from the local Area Fire Safety Department of the New Zealand Fire Service.

Civil defence

[refer to earlier comments in SECTION THREE under same heading]

Building (Pools) Amendment Act 2016

The above Act came into effect on 1 January 2017 and repealed the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987 and included new pool safety provisions in the Building Act 2004.

The following information is from MOE website:

You must have fences and signage that meet the legal requirements and design standards set out in:

- [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#) (Legislation website)
- [Building Act 2004](#) (Legislation website)
- [Building Code \(including the new Clause F9 for pool fencing\)](#) (Building Performance website)
- Fencing at schools - Ministry of Education
- [Safety and design standards for school pools](#)

Gangs Act 2024

Since November 2024, Police have had new powers to disrupt and directly target gang activity through the Gangs Act 2024. Police can now arrest anyone wearing gang insignia in any public place, which includes schools.

More information about the new Act can be found here:

[What you need to know: Gangs Act 2024 \[PDF, 684 KB\]](#)