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Principal - Erin Cairns

www.rurued.school.nz

Ruru Vocational Programme - Waikiri Vocational Programme - Salford Satellite - Donovan Satellite - Verdon Satellite - SIT Tertiary Education Centre

3rd November 2016

Dear Families/Whanau and Team,

We were pleased to see that the Ministry of Education has today released updated guidelines to schools on behaviour management.

What's heartening for us is that Ruru's policies and procedures to ensure the safety of our students and staff were entirely in accordance with the old and new guidelines.

Ruru never operated a 'seclusion' room like the ones described in recent media coverage and we note that the Minister of Education is now planning to change the law to prohibit their use in the future.

The recent news coverage about Ruru related to an area within a classroom that was used to provide a separate space for a student exhibiting extreme behaviours when the safety of the student, other students or staff was at risk.

The safe area was never used for punishment and children were not locked in there. It had good natural light from a large window and was monitored by a staff member who could always see and hear the student using the safe area. It has not been used since December 2014.

What has been overlooked in the media coverage was that the Police investigated the complaint last year and Ruru Specialist School co-operated fully with that investigation.

They have previously spoken to staff and been sent all documentation they have requested. The Police have now re-opened the investigation many months later. Staff who the Police wanted to interview received independent legal advice and, having received that advice, declined to be interviewed. The Police were given access to the safe room to inspect it.

In addition, the School co-operated fully with an investigation by the MOE and had input into the review published today.

The Chief Ombudsman also announced an investigation some weeks ago. We've requested more information about the investigation and have been told that this is unable to be provided at this time so we have no idea what form the investigation will take. The Chief Ombudsman's office has advised us that the complaint it is going to investigate was made in late July 2015. It has refused to provide a copy of the complaint to the School.

We will respond to the Ombudsman once we have more details, until then we will continue working to help our students reach their full potential in a safe and supportive environment where learning is both challenging and enjoyable.

Kind Regards

Erin

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Erin', is written over the printed name.