

Our ref: OIA 19 – 10

12 September 2019

Victoria Turnbull
Email: _____

Dear Victoria

REQUEST FOR THE ERO 2016 RURU SPECIALIST SCHOOL TO BE WITHDRAWN

Thank you for your email and letter dated 21 August 2019 to Julie Burford, Education Review Office which has been referred to me for reply.

You have asked that the 2016 ERO report for Ruru Specialist School be withdrawn.

I refer you to my letter of 10 October 2016, copy attached, and my comments in that letter apply to your request. I am therefore unable to agree to your request.

Yours sincerely



Jeremy France
Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Services
Education Review Office | Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga
National Office | Tari Matua



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Our Ref: LE – 13-01-02-450

10 October 2016

C J and V A Turnbull

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Dear Callum and Victoria Turnbull,

Please find ERO's response to your questions under the Official Information Act below.

Each answer is preceded by your question

During the 2002, 2006, 2009, and 2016, ERO reviews of Ruru Specialist School had ERO Review Officers reviewing the school, viewed/inspected the seclusion room at Ruru Specialist School? (Plan attached)

ERO's role under the Education Act 1989 is to review the performance of schools in the delivery of the NZ Curriculum. ERO did not view/inspect the "seclusion room" in 2002, 2006 and 2009. I attach a copy of the 2002, 2006, and 2009 ERO reports for your reference. During the April 2016 review, the review team sighted the room you refer to. It is completely refurbished, the door removed and in use as a sensory room for individual students.

During the 2002, 2006, 2009 and 2016, ERO reviews of Ruru Specialist School had ERO Review Officers reviewing the school, reviewed all documentation relating to the seclusion room's usage, systems and procedures? If so, why has ERO never reported specifically to the school community?

ERO did not view/inspect the documentation relating to the "seclusion room" in 2002, 2006 and 2009. There was no reason to do so. ERO had no information that the room was being used for seclusion. As part of the April 2016 review, the review team looked at all documentation in relation to secluding students.

Did ERO question Ruru Specialist School Board of Trustees why they withheld the Investigation Report commissioned by the Ministry of Education 2015 during the 2015 review of the school? If so, what was the Board of Trustees response to this question? If not, why was this question never asked?

This question was addressed by Graham Randell in his email to you of 7 July 2015. At the time of the 2015 ERO review, since set aside, ERO was not aware of the report commissioned by the Ministry of Education. In his letter, Graham invited to you to ask this question of the Board. The Board's response to the 2016 ERO team was that the school had just received the Ministry report and wanted time to consider its contents.

When was ERO first aware that the seclusion room at Ruru Specialist School was in fact a small storeroom?

ERO was not aware of there being a "seclusion room".

How many New Zealand Schools operate a seclusion room? Please provide ratio.

How many Special Needs/Specialist Schools operate a seclusion room? Please provide ratio.

ERO has transferred your questions under bullet points 5 and 6 to the Ministry of Education as the information requested is more closely connected with the functions of the MOE. You will hear further from the MOE concerning your request for this information.

Has ERO ever reported specifically on school's seclusion rooms in ERO Reports?

ERO reviews do not focus specifically on schools' "seclusion rooms" to the best of my knowledge. To be definitive about this would take a substantial amount of time and resources.

You mention in your letter that 'it is extremely concerning' that the 2016 ERO report makes no mention of the Police investigation. The Police have informed ERO that no investigation was underway at the time of the April 2016 review and, while it has since been reactivated, the investigation is into historic issues.

In conclusion, I note that the Ministry of Education is soon to release national guidelines on *Guidance for New Zealand Schools on the Minimisation of Physical Restraint and Transitional Guidance as we work towards the Elimination of Seclusion in New Zealand Schools*.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. France', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Jeremy France
Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Services
Education Review Office | Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga