Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

29 April 2026

Tēnā koe

OIA: GEMS-47050 – Education Review Office reviews and home educators

Thank you for your letter of 27 February 2026 to the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) requesting information relating to applications and reviews of home-educated students. Your full request is set out in **Appendix A** below.

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

Regarding **parts 1 to 12** of your request as they relate to years 2015 and 2016, the Ministry holds limited, high-level information regarding home education reviews prior to 2017. The Ministry does not hold information to the level of detail requested for those years, including breakdowns by appeals, exemption application status, students, families, review outcomes, or subsequent actions. Prior to 2017, this information was not recorded or reported in the analysed or aggregated form you have requested, and to provide this information, it would be necessary to create new analysis of raw data.

The Act only applies to information that is already held by agencies, and there is no obligation on the Ministry to create information in order to respond to a request. I am therefore refusing this part of your request as it relates to years 2015 and 2016 under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by the Ministry, and I have no grounds for believing that it is either held by, or more closely related to the functions of, another department or organisation subject to the Act.

Numbers in the home education review and appeal process are counted by individual students, not home-educating family. I am therefore also refusing the number of families involved, as set out in **parts 1 to 12** of your request, under section 18(g) of the Act, as above.

For **parts 12, 2, 3, 4, and 10** of your request, values below five have been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons. Where this is the case, these values have been replaced with “x”.

In response to **part 1** of your request, between 2017 and 2025, the Ministry made 262 requests to the Education Review Office (ERO) for a review report in the home education review process. I refer you to **Table 1** in **Appendix B** below for a breakdown of these numbers by calendar year.

In response to **part 2** of your request, between 2017 and 2025, the Ministry made 21 requests to ERO for a review report in the home education appeal process. I refer you to **Table 2** of **Appendix B** for a breakdown of the number of requests to ERO by calendar year.

In response to **part 3** of your request, between 2017 and 2025, 147 students were reviewed in the home education review process. I refer you to **Table 3** of **Appendix B** for a breakdown of these numbers by calendar year.

Regarding **part four** of your request, between 2017 and 2025, 17 home education reviews were not completed. The reasons the reviews not being completed were:

- The student was enrolled in school
- The certificate of exemption had expired as the student was aged 16 and over
- At the time of the review, the student had been in home education for only three months, so there was insufficient evidence to determine whether they met the exemption standard.

I refer you to **Table 4** of **Appendix B** for the number of home education reviews not completed between 2017 and 2025.

In response to **part 5** of your request, no home education appeals were not completed between 2017 and 2025.

In response to **part 6** of your request, between 2017 and 2025, there were 113 ERO review reports in the home education review process with the finding “is being taught as regularly and as well as”.

In response to **part 7** of your request, between 2017 and 2025, there were 111 ERO review reports in the home education review process with the finding “is not being taught as regularly and as well as”.

In response to **part 8** of your request, between 2017 and 2025, there were no ERO review reports in the home education review process with the finding “is being taught as well as but is not being taught as regularly as”.

In response to **part 9** of your request, between 2017 and 2025, there were 18 ERO review reports in the home education review process with the finding “is being taught as regularly as but is not being taught as well as”.

In response to **part 10** of your request, I refer you to **Table 5** of **Appendix B** for the number of students and a summary of home education review outcomes between 2017 and 2025 where the ERO review report finding was as described in **parts 7, 8, and 9** of your request.

Between 2017 and 2025, seven students with an ERO review report finding described in **parts 7, 8, and 9** of your request, and whose certificate of exemption continued, had a further home education review.

In response to **part 11** of your request, between 2017 and 2025, there were eight instances in the home education appeal process where the ERO review report finding did not support the Ministry's refusal to grant a certificate of exemption. Most of these applications were subsequently approved by the Ministry and a certificate of exemption granted. Due to the low numbers involved, we are withholding the exact numbers under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, as above.

In response to **part 12** of your request, between 2017 and 2025, there were 12 instances in the home education appeal process where the ERO review report finding did support the Ministry's refusal to grant a certificate of exemption. Fewer than five of these applications were subsequently approved by the Ministry and a certificate of exemption granted. Due to the low numbers involved, we are withholding the exact numbers under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, as above.

As required under section 9(1) of the Act, I have considered the public interest in releasing the information withheld under section 9 of the Act. I do not consider that the public interest considerations favouring the release of this information are sufficient to outweigh the need to withhold it at this time.

In response to **part 13** of your request, funding for the review of home educated students comes out of baseline funding, with no specified amount of funding allocated for the review of home educated students. I am therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist.

Regarding **part 14** of your request, home education reviews and appeals are dealt with by the Ministry and ERO out of their respective baseline funding.

Please note, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review my decision on your request, in accordance with section 28 of the Act. You can do this by writing to **info@ombudsman.parliament.nz** or to Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Andrea Williams
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Te Mahau | Education Services

Appendix A: Full request

1. *For 2015-2025 inclusive, how many requests for reviews of home educated students was made by the Ministry of Education to the Education Review Office for each calendar year, not including reviews of applications that the Ministry had declined? Please provide the number of families involved each year, as well as the number of students. Please also provide the totals for the entire period.*
2. *For each year, 2015-2025 inclusive, how many exemption applications that the Ministry had declined were reviewed by the ERO because the families had appealed? Please give the number of families represented as well as the number of applications. Please also provide the totals for the entire period.*
3. *For each year, 2015-2025 inclusive, please provide the number of homeschooling students (not applications) who were reviewed, and the number of families they represent. Please also provide the totals for the entire period.*
4. *For each year, 2015-2025 inclusive, how many requests for reviews of home educating students (not applications) did not lead to the conducting of the actual reviews? What were the reasons for this, broken down by the number of requests the reason applies to, and the number of both students and families represented. Eg "request withdrawn – 5 students, 2 families". Please also provide the totals for the entire period.*
5. *For each year, 2015-2025 inclusive, how many requests for reviews of exemption applications did not lead to the conducting of the actual reviews of those applications? What were the reasons for this, broken down by the number of requests the reason applies to, and the number of both students and families represented. Eg "request withdrawn – 2 students, 1 family". Please also provide the totals for the entire period.*
6. *For reviews of students (not applications) conducted in the period of 2015-2025 inclusive, please give the number of confirmed reports, and the number of families they represent, where the conclusion was that the student "is being taught as regularly and as well as…" (or words to that effect)*
7. *For review of home educated students (not applications) conducted in the period of 2015-2025 inclusive, please give the number of confirmed reports, and the number of families they represent, where the conclusion was that the student "is not being taught as regularly or as well as…" (or words to that effect)*
8. *For reviews of home educated students (not applications) conducted in the period of 2015-2025 inclusive, please give the number of confirmed reports, and the number of families they represent, where the conclusion was that the*
9. *student "is being taught as well as… but is not being taught as regularly as." (or words to that effect) 9. For reviews of home educated students (not applications) conducted in the period of 2015-2025 inclusive, please give the number of confirmed reports, and the number of families they represent, where the conclusion was that the student "is being taught as regularly as… but is not being taught as well as." (or words to that effect).*

10. *For reviews from 2015-2025 inclusive which had the conclusions outlined in points 7-9 above, please provide a summary of subsequent outcomes, and the numbers of students and families to whom they apply. For example, were the exemptions revoked or continued. If they were continued, were further ERO reviews conducted of these students?*
11. *For the period of 2015-2025 inclusive, in respect of the review of exemption applications, in how many instances did the ERO conclude that the application demonstrated that the child "would be taught as regularly and well as" (or words to that effect)? How many of these exemptions were subsequently granted? In both instances please state the number of applications and the number of families represented.*
12. *For the same period, in how many instances did the ERO conclude that the application did not demonstrate "as regularly and well as"? How many of these exemptions were subsequently granted based on this appeal? Please state the number of applications and number of families represented in both instances.*
13. *For each year, 2015-2025 inclusive, what amount of funding was provided to ERO, and on what basis, for the review of home educated students?*
14. *Are all reviews covered by this funding, or does the Ministry make additional payment when review of declined applications are requested?*

Appendix B: Tables of figures

Table 1 Number of Ministry requests to ERO for a review report in the home education review process between 2017 and 2025

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
12	7	X	11	X	12	6	101	111

Table 2 Number of Ministry requests to ERO for a review report in the home education appeal process between 2017 and 2025

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
X	X	X	X	X	7	X	X	X

Table 3 Number of home-educated students reviewed in the home education review process between 2017 and 2025

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
11	7	X	7	X	9	6	99	6

Table 4 Number of home education reviews not completed between 2017 and 2025

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7

Table 5 Number of students and summary of home review outcomes between 2017 and 2025, where the ERO review report finding was:

- Q7 - “is not being taught as regularly and as well as”
- Q8 - “is being taught as well as…but is not being taught as regularly as”
- Q9 - “is being taught as regularly as…but is not being taught as well as”.

Certificate of exemption revoked	Certificate of exemption continued
19	12