Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

Secondary Schools' Annual Holiday Closedown Requirements

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

The Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement expressly provides for a closedown, during which teachers will take their annual holidays. This is in keeping with the requirements of the Holidays Act 2003.

What is a closedown?

A closedown is the time when the school requires all teachers to take their annual holiday. All teachers other than short-term relievers have 4 weeks annual holiday entitlement. Short-term relievers are paid their holiday pay at the same time as their pay.

Most schools can have only one closedown in a 12-month period. This will be 4 weeks long. Public holidays will not be counted as a part of the annual holiday.

Schools operating an alternative calendar, such as Maramataka Māori, may have 2 or more closedowns during term breaks. Employees must be notified of these closedown dates at the start of the school year.

The conditions set out below, except for the timing of the closedown and giving notice, still apply to the schools operating Maramataki Māori.

What it means?

- Schools should set the dates of their closedown, giving teachers at least 14 days' notice of the closedown dates.
- The closedown period is for 4 weeks (not counting public holidays). We recommend the closedown commences on 16 December 2026 and finishes on 18 January 2027 (inclusive). If your closedown starts on a different date, please contact employment.relations@education.govt.nz to inform them of your choice of closedown dates by Tuesday 1 December 2026.
- Teachers will take their annual holiday during the closedown.
- Schools cannot require any teacher to attend school or to work during the closedown. This includes call-back days and school events. This means, in 2027, if your closedown finishes on the 18 January, the earliest call-back day that could be scheduled is Tuesday 19 January.

Other leave

- Teachers are entitled to take bereavement and/or family violence leave during the closedown period.
- Family violence leave taken during the closedown period will be deducted from their entitlement.
- Teachers who fall sick before the closedown and the period of sick leave extends into the closedown period are entitled to take sick leave instead of annual holiday,

but any such sick leave taken during the closedown period will be deducted from their sick-leave balance.

- If the teacher has taken sick, bereavement or family violence leave during the closedown they will take the balance of their annual holidays at another time. This will usually be during term breaks and by prior arrangement with their school and the school cannot unreasonably withhold its consent. Where agreement cannot be reached the school may direct the teacher when to take the annual holidays. If they do this, the school must give the teacher at least 14 days' notice.

Term breaks

- The school may require teachers to attend school or participate in professional development outside of the closedown period (see clauses 5.6.2 and 5.6.3 of the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement).
- Teachers retain the current flexibility over when and how they work during the remainder of their term breaks.

More information

Refer to the Secondary Teachers' Collective Agreement (2025-2027),
Part 6: Leave clause 6.1.3 and **Part 4: Remuneration** 4.8 Holiday pay

Holidays Act Holidays Act 2003 No 129 (as at 15 June 2023), Public Act Contents – New Zealand Legislation (external link)

Contact the Ministry

Contact the Ohumahi Support Team if you have any questions:

Email: ohumahi.support@education.govt.nz

Contact Te Whakarōputanga Kaitiaki Kura o Aotearoa | New Zealand School Boards Association (NZSBA)

School boards can contact NZSBA:

Email: eradvice@tewhakaroputanga.org.nz

Freephone (NZ only): 0800 782 435 (option 2).

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