Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

Information sheet on the Education (Hostels) Amendment Regulations 2026

Info sheet on the Hostel Amendment Regulations

The Education (Hostels) Amendment Regulations 2026 (the Amendment Regulations) introduces changes to address gaps identified by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care and improve boarder safety.

The changes fall into four high-level categories:

- Stronger, clearer requirements for hostels to make sure boarders are safe.
- Stronger complaints processes to empower boarders and parents.
- New regulatory powers and requirements to monitor compliance.
- Support the transfer of functions from the Ministry of Education to the Education Review Office.

Further information on these changes is set out below:

Strengthening overnight supervision and sleeping space arrangement

The changes will:

- require hostel owners to ensure every boarder is the responsibility of a named staff member overnight.
- require staff to know where students are sleeping each night.
- ensure boarders can easily contact a staff member from within hostel buildings at night.
- require supervising staff to be onsite and readily accessible overnight.
- require arrangements for monitoring hostel buildings overnight.
- require hostels to submit an overnight supervision risk management plan as part of licensing and renewal processes.
- hostels will be required to explain in their risk management plan how they have addressed any safety risks where younger boarders sleep in close proximity to significantly older boarders.
- existing hostels, who have a licence before 1 January 2027, will have one year to comply with these requirements, except for the risk management plan which will be required at the first licence renewal after 1 January 2027. We encourage all hostel operators to develop their risk management plans regardless of when their renewal falls.

Prohibiting corporal punishment and seclusion

The changes will:

- explicitly prohibit the use of corporal punishment and seclusion in hostels.

- align hostels physical restraint requirements with those of registered schools, as set out in the Education and Training (System Reform) Amendment Act 2026, which will commence on 1 July 2027.

Strengthening complaints processes

The changes will:

- establish a formal role for the Hostels Licensing Authority (ERO) to receive and respond to complaints about regulatory non-compliance. Concerns will generally be expected to be raised with the hostel owner first, unless there are reasonable grounds to believe the owner has a conflict of interest.
- require hostel owners to inform complainants about agencies that may be able to assist if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint.

Increasing transparency and reporting

The changes will:

- require hostels to report high-level complaints data to ERO at least annually.
- require ERO to publish a report after each hostel inspection that summarises any non-compliance issues identified. Published information will not contain personal information about boarders or staff.

Introducing mandatory inspections

- ERO will be required to inspect each hostel at least once during its licence period.

Strengthening record-keeping requirements

Hostels will be required to keep records relating to:

- staff safety checks, training, and work patterns
- child protection allegations, incidents, and concerns
- major sanctions applied to boarders
- complaints received.

Smoothing licence renewals

- The changes will allow ERO to extend licences by up to three years for hostels whose licences expire before or during July 2028, helping to spread licence renewals more evenly over time.

Support and Implementation

ERO is developing the operational guidance, forms, processes and internal training required to administer the amended Regulations consistently and will engage with hostel operators and relevant sector bodies as this material is developed. Further implementation information will be published progressively.

Until the new requirements commence, hostels must continue to comply with all existing regulatory and licence requirements. ERO will continue its licensing, compliance-monitoring and inspection functions during the transition period.

What happens next?

A second-phase review will be undertaken in 2027 to consider whether further changes are needed to clarify hostels' roles and responsibilities for pastoral care and ensure risk management

plans are put in place within an appropriate timeframe.

It will also be conducted alongside a review of hostel licensing fees, which will assess whether the current fee settings remain fit for purpose and consider any resulting changes, including shorter licence periods and pro-rated fees.

A further review of the new regime will be carried out in 2028-29. The review will determine whether the changes made in 2026 to the regulations are delivering the expected outcomes, particularly the new requirements for overnight supervision and sleeping spaces.

Further questions

For questions about the Government's policy decisions or the Hostels Regulatory Review, please contact the Ministry of Education. For questions about operational guidance, licensing applications and renewals, or matters relating to regulatory compliance, inspections, or complaints, please contact the Education Review Office.

For more information on licensing, visit ERO's website at:

Running a hostel - Education Review Office

ERO's incoming Regulatory Responsibilities - Education Review Office