

A Report on Stand-downs, Suspensions, Exclusions and Expulsions.

March 2003

This report provides statistics and analysis on stand-downs and suspensions for the 2002 school year to 31 December 2002.

Kia ora koutou katoa.

This is the fifth report on the system of suspensions and stand-downs in New Zealand schools that was put in place in July 1999 and is the third report for a full school year, the first being for 2000.

Suspensions and stand-downs are part of a broad range of ways in which student behaviour is managed. A stand-down or suspension may represent one of a number of interventions for an individual student. These statistics, therefore, tell only part of the story of how schools successfully manage student behaviour for the vast majority of students. The statistics tell us more about how a school chooses to react to behaviour than they do about how young people are behaving.

A key finding of this report is that during the period 2000 to 2002 the number of suspension cases has stabilised while stand-downs continue to rise. It is interesting to note that, for some behaviours, suspensions dropped while stand-downs rose. It is also interesting to note that 55% of schools had no stand-downs while 75% had no suspensions during 2002.

Since reporting under the current rules began, several initiatives to address disparities have been introduced. One of these, described later in this report, is the Suspension Reduction Initiative (SRI) which was launched in 2001 and aims to reduce Māori suspensions. Secondary schools that have chosen to be part of the SRI recorded a rate of 76 per 1,000 for Māori suspensions in 2000. This has dropped substantially to 48 per 1,000 for 2002. Indications are that all students in these schools are benefiting with an overall drop in the suspension rate from 36 per 1,000 in 2000 to 25 per 1,000 in 2002.

In areas of New Zealand where the Ministry of Education is providing support for specific programmes there is a levelling-off or reduction in the number of suspension cases. Schools in the West Coast region recorded lower rates of stand-downs (from 52 per 1,000 students to 37 per 1,000 students) and suspensions (from 17 per 1,000 students to 13 per 1,000 students). Northland schools continue their positive approach to managing student behaviour with stand-down cases remaining steady when compared with 2001 and suspension cases continuing to decline, from 14 per 1,000 students in 2001 to 12 per 1,000 students in 2002.

With some regions of the country making significant progress towards managing student behaviour in positive ways, helped by individual schools making important changes to their methods of dealing with day to day behaviour challenges, the intent of the stand-down and suspension rules to keep young people in school is being achieved.

Kathy Phillips

Senior Manager

National Operations.

Report Coverage

This report is based on the Ministry's Stand-down and Suspension database, which was developed in July 1999 after the introduction of the Education (Suspension) Rules 1999.

Since those regulations introduced stand-downs for the first time, statistics prior to mid-1999 are not comparable. The first report under the current system was released in September 2000, covering the July 1999 to June 2000 period. The second report covered the period 1 January to 31 December 2000, the third report covered the 1 January 2001 to 30 June 2001 period and the fourth report covered the period 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001. **This latest report covers the 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002 period, and is based on data as at 1 February 2003.**

Roll Trends

At 1 July 2002 there were 748,084 students attending New Zealand's 2,699 schools - an increase of 2% (14,160 students) since 1 July 2001. Primary level (Years 1-8) rolls increased by 4,366 from 484,058 to 488,424, while secondary rolls (Years 9-15) increased by 9,794 (4%) from 249,866 to 259,660. There was a 3% increase in the school population aged from 10 to 14 years.

Stand-down and suspension figures must be read in the context of the total school roll.

Definitions

Stand-down is the formal removal of a student from school for a specified period. Stand-downs of a student can total no more than 5 school days in any term, or 10 days in a school year. Following stand-downs, students return automatically to school.

Suspension is the formal removal of a student from school until the board of trustees decides the outcome at a suspension meeting. Following a suspension the board may decide to lift the suspension with or without conditions, to extend the suspension, or in the most serious cases, to either exclude or expel the student.

Exclusion means the formal removal of a student aged under 16 from the school, and the requirement that the student enrol elsewhere.

Expulsion means the formal removal of a student aged 16 or over from school. He or she may enrol in another school.

Understanding stand-downs and suspensions.

Stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions are some ways to deal with student behaviour that disrupts teaching and learning and threatens the wellbeing of other students. These approaches are not used lightly by schools, but are part of a process to help students return to productive learning and relationships with the school community.

Teachers manage their classrooms in ways that promote learning and most problems are solved there. When teachers need assistance they may involve principals, deputy principals, deans, counsellors and family/whanau. In addition, education support services such as those offered by the Ministry of Education Group Special Education and Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour are available, as well as other community support agencies. It is in a minority of cases that principals and boards of trustees use stand-downs or suspensions.

For 2002, 2.4% of the national school roll was involved in stand-down cases and 0.6% in suspension cases.

The reasons for stand-downs and suspensions are summarised below. Different approaches are used for different behaviours. In most cases schools manage similar behaviours internally without requiring a formal intervention such as stand-down or suspension.

Quick Facts

- There were no suspensions in 37% of secondary and area schools and fewer than five suspensions in a further 16% of secondary and area schools. Seventy-five per cent of all schools had no suspensions.
- At 1 July 2002 there were 748,084 students attending New Zealand's 2,699 schools - an increase of 2% (14,160 students) since 1 July 2001.
- Stand-downs and suspensions are two of the many ways in which schools manage student behaviour.
- There were 17,912 stand-down cases during 2002, a rate of 25 per 1,000. As some students were stood-down on more than one occasion the number of students stood-down is less than the number of cases.
- There were 4,937 suspension cases in 2002 compared with 4,802 in 2001, a rate of 7 per 1,000 in both years.
- Students in the 13 to 15 year age group made up 62.5% of stand-downs (69 per 1,000). This age group was represented in 71% of suspension cases (22 per 1,000). The rates remain the same as for 2001. At the same time enrolments in this age group increased by just under 6,000, a 4% increase.
- Stand-down and suspension cases dropped significantly in the West Coast region, while suspension cases in Northland continued to drop for the third year.
- The most common reasons for students to be stood down were continual disobedience (26%) and physical assault on other students (22%).
- The most common reasons for students to be suspended were for drugs, including substance abuse (30%), a decrease of 84 from 1,555 in 2001 to 1,471 in 2002, and continual disobedience (25%), an increase of 103 between 2001 and 2002.
- Male, Māori and 14 year old students continue to be over-represented in stand-down and suspension statistics compared to the population in general. Māori males were stood-down at a rate of 65 per 1,000 and suspended at a rate of 21 per 1,000 in 2002. The peak age for stand-downs remains 14 years (80 per 1,000).
- Indications are that, where specific interventions are in place, both stand-downs and suspensions have reduced or remain steady. Secondary schools participating in the Suspension Reduction Initiative, for example, have succeeded in reducing the suspension rate for Māori students from 76 per 1,000 in 2000 to 48 per 1,000 in 2002.
- While about 0.6% of the total New Zealand school population was suspended from school, just 0.2% was expelled or excluded during the period 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002. The majority of these students returned to a school.

STAND DOWNS

A stand-down is the formal removal of a student from school for a specified period. Stand-downs of a student can total no more than 5 school days in any term, or 10 days in a school year. Following stand-downs, students return automatically to school.

Reasons for stand-downs

Behaviour	Stand-downs		
	2002	2001	2000
Alcohol	799	833	1033
Arson	86	131	163
Continual Disobedience	4633	4341	4200
Drugs (including substance abuse)	1077	944	842
Other harmful or dangerous behaviour	1227	1057	1060
Physical assault on staff	395	344	361
Physical assault on other students	3998	4058	3892

Sexual harassment	114	109	118
Sexual misconduct	96	85	98
Smoking	867	841	690
Theft	815	785	861
Vandalism	386	378	367
Verbal assault on other students	394	396	394
Verbal assault on staff	2877	2699	2720
Weapons	148	140	135
Grand Total	17912	17141	16934

Most students are stood-down for the following behaviours:

- continual disobedience = 4,633 (26%);
- physical assault on other students = 3,998 (22%); and
- verbal assault on staff = 2,877 (16%)

There were fewer stand-down cases for physical assault on other students in 2002 (3998) than there were for 2001 (4060). Continual disobedience cases rose by 291, a 7% increase, while cases related to verbal assault on staff rose by 178, also a 7% increase. Stand-down cases for drugs, including substance abuse, rose by 133 or 14%.

Number of Stand-downs

There were 17,912 stand-downs in 2002 (17,141 for the same period in 2001). The stand-down rate per 1,000 students was 25 (25 per 1,000 in 2001). Most stand-downs were for 1 (18%), 2 (36%) or 3 (33%) days.

Days Stood Down	Number of cases
1	3305
2	6465
3	5868
4	737
5	1537
Total	17912

Schools that stand-down the most students

Over 55% of all schools had no stand-down cases while a further 22% had fewer than five stand-downs cases. About 1.5% of all schools were responsible for 24% of all stand-down cases (4,306).

Gender

Male students made up 72% of all stand-downs. There were 36 stand-down cases per 1,000 male students and 14 per 1,000 female students. Māori males were stood down at a rate of 65 per 1,000. There has been little change in these figures since 2000.

School types

- Most stand-downs occur in secondary schools, 70% for 2002. This is about the same number of stand-down cases in secondary schools as for 2001.

- Full primary schools stand-down students at a rate of 11 per 1,000, 2 per 1,000 higher than for 2001.
- Intermediate school stand-downs were at a rate of 27 per 1,000 for 2001. This is about the same as for 2001.

Stand-downs by School Decile

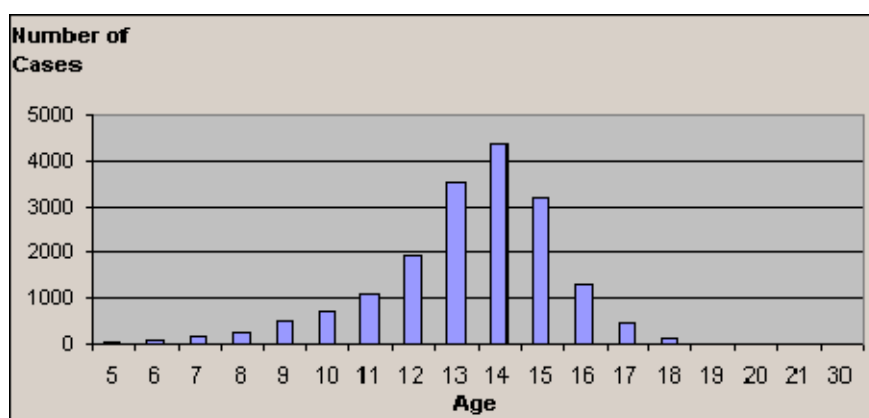
	2001	2001	2002	2002
Decile	Stand-downs	Rate per 1000	Stand-downs	Rate per 1000
Decile 1	1655	27	1834	32
Decile 2	2155	35	2396	39
Decile 3	1938	29	2108	31
Decile 4	2611	33	2652	38
Decile 5	2344	33	2390	32
Decile 6	1953	28	1913	27
Decile 7	1445	21	1687	24
Decile 8	1489	20	1551	22
Decile 9	757	13	711	9
Decile 10	793	9	670	7
Unclassified	1			
Total	17141	25	17912	25

The rate for stand-down cases by school decile varied a little between 2001 and 2002. Increases are apparent in the rate for deciles 1 to 4 schools while rates for deciles 9 and 10 decreased.

Age Groups

The peak age for stand-downs remains 14 years, at a rate of 80 per 1,000. This is slightly lower than the 2001 rate of 81 per 1,000. The number of students in this age group increased by 6% between 2001 and 2002.

Stand-down cases for the 10 to 12 year age group remain static at 21% of all stand-down cases in 2002. At the same time the school roll for this age group increased by 2% representing 25% of the total school roll.



The 13 to 15 year age group increased by 4% and represented 62.5% of all stand-down cases while representing 23% of the school roll.

Ethnicity

Māori were over-represented in stand-downs compared with the Māori proportion of the school population. Asian students had a very low stand-down rate, while Pākehā also had a low stand-down rate, compared with their proportion of the population.

Ethnicity	% of all stand-downs	% of school population
NZ European/Pākehā	44	62
NZ Māori	41	21
Pasifika	11	8
Asian	2	6
Other	2	3

Māori students aged 10 to 14 years make up 21% of the total school population aged 10 to 14 years.

Regions

Local Body	2001 Total	2001 rate per 1,000	2002 Total	2002 rate per 1,000
Auckland	4360	20	4918	22
Bay of Plenty	1126	23	1169	24
Canterbury	2149	27	1696	21
Gisborne	235	24	324	33
Hawke's Bay	824	27	901	30
Manawatu-Wanganui	1397	33	1538	36
Marlborough	152	22	174	26
Nelson	148	18	127	15
Northland	1310	44	1396	48
Otago	598	19	598	19
Southland	441	25	562	32
Taranaki	499	24	601	29
Tasman	159	22	160	22
Waikato	1855	27	2081	30
Wellington	1608	22	1469	20
West Coast	280	52	198	37
Total	17141	25	17912	25

The rate of stand-down cases in the West Coast region dropped substantially from 52 per 1,000 in 2001 to 37 per 1,000 in 2002. The rate for Canterbury also dropped markedly, from 27 per 1,000 to 21 per 1,000. Other regions remained about the same as last year with rates for Northland rising while that for Nelson continued to fall, with Nelson remaining lowest at 15 per 1,000.

SUSPENSIONS

Suspension is the formal removal of a student from school until the board of trustees decides the outcome at a suspension meeting. Following a suspension the board may decide to lift the suspension with or without conditions, to extend the suspension, or in the most serious cases, to either exclude or expel the student. Suspension, and the possible related actions of expulsion or exclusion, are the last steps in the disciplinary process for a school.

Number of suspensions

There were 4,937 suspension cases during 2002 compared with 4,802 for the same period during 2001. The suspension rate was 7 per 1,000 students for 2002, the same as that for 2001.

Reasons for suspensions

Behaviour	Suspensions		
	2002	2001	2000
Alcohol	165	208	181
Arson	34	56	84
Continual Disobedience	1230	1126	1216
Drugs (including substance abuse)	1471	1555	1553
Other harmful or dangerous behaviour	265	226	253
Physical assault on staff	142	149	128
Physical assault on other students	761	685	803
Sexual harassment	30	36	33
Sexual misconduct	43	27	24
Smoking	47	37	57
Theft	233	216	251
Vandalism	100	122	89
Verbal assault on other students	56	57	67
Verbal assault on staff	282	247	294
Weapons	78	55	75
Grand Total	4937	4802	5108

Most suspensions (70%) are for the following three behaviours:

- drugs, including substance abuse = 1,471 (30%, down from 32% in 2001);
- continual disobedience = 1,230 (25%, up from 23% in 2001); and
- physical assault on other students = 761 (15%, up from 14% in 2001).

Gender

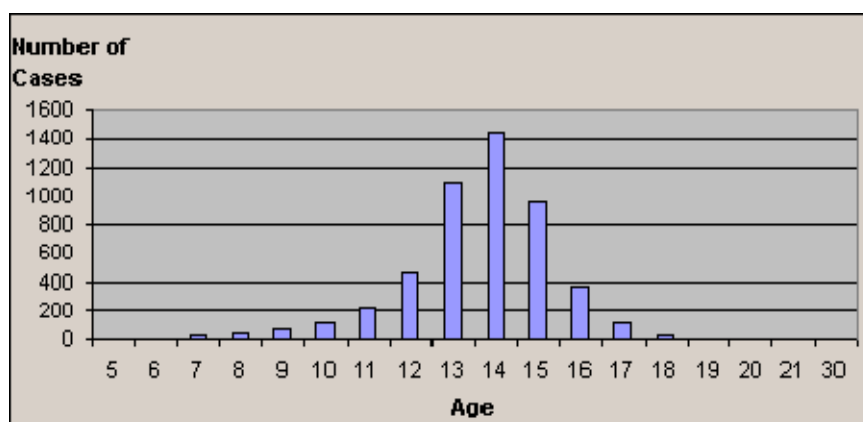
Male students made up 74% of all suspension cases. Male students were suspended at a rate of 10 per 1,000 students and female students at a rate of 4 per 1,000. Māori male students were suspended at a rate of 21 per 1,000. These rates are about the same as those for 2000 and 2001.

Schools that suspend the most students

Seventy-five per cent of all schools suspended no students in 2002. Of schools that suspended students, about 2% were responsible for 35% of all suspensions (1762).

Age groups

As for stand-down cases, the peak age for suspensions was 14 years, although total suspension cases for this group were about the same for 2002 as they were for 2001 (from 1,444 in 2001 to 1,440 in 2002). This age group increased by 6% as a proportion of the total school roll between 2001 and 2002.



The 13 to 15 year age group made up 71% of suspension cases (3,498). This was the peak age band for suspension cases related to all behaviours. The 10 to 12 year age group made up 16% of suspension cases (790).

School types

- There were no suspensions in 37% of secondary and area schools and fewer than five suspensions in a further 16% of secondary and area schools. Seventy-five per cent of all schools had no suspensions.
- Most suspension cases occur in secondary schools (77%). During the same period in 2001, secondary schools were responsible for 80% of suspension cases.
- Full primary schools suspended at a rate of 2 per 1,000 students.
- Intermediate schools suspended at a rate of 7 per 1,000 students. The rate was 6 per 1,000 for the same period in 2000.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	% of all suspensions	% of school population
NZ European/Pākehā	40	62
NZ Māori	47	21
Pasifika	11	8
Asian	1	6
Other	1	3

There has been very little overall change in the number and rate per 1,000 of Pākehā suspension cases. A significant drop was recorded in the West Coast region from 78 (17 per 1,000) in 2001 to 54 (12 per 1,000) in 2002 while for the Nelson region numbers rose from 13 in 2001 to 28 in 2002 with rates increasing from 2 per 1,000 to 4 per 1,000. It is interesting to note that, for schools participating in the SRI, the Pākehā suspension rate has fallen from 21 per 1,000 in 2000 to 15 per 1,000 in 2002.

Māori continue to be over-represented in suspension cases compared with the Māori proportion of the total school population with suspensions at a rate of 49 per 1,000. Māori suspensions in the 10 to 14 year age group were 26 per 1,000 in 2002 and 27 per 1,000 in 2001. Māori students aged 10 to 14 years make up 21% of the total school population aged 10 to 14 years.

The proportion of suspension cases in 2002 involving Asian students remained stable compared with 2001, suspension cases involving Pasifika students rose slightly while those for Pākehā students dropped slightly.

In Northland there was a further significant drop in total Māori suspension cases in the region from 300 (22 per 1,000) in 2001 to 226 (17 per 1,000) in 2002. There were 332 (24 per 1,000) in 2000. Hawke's Bay schools also continue to show a drop in Māori suspension cases from 177 (18 per 1,000) in 2000 to 141 (14 per 1,000) in 2001 and 104 (10 per 1,000) in 2002.

In the Gisborne region, Māori suspension cases rose from 36 (6 per 1,000) in 2001 to 73 (12 per 1,000) in 2002 while remaining below the 2000 rate of 85 (14 per 1,000). Māori suspension cases in the Southland region also rose from 27 (10 per 1,000) in 2001 to 50 (18 per 1,000) in 2002.

There is evidence that suspensions of Māori students from secondary schools participating in the Suspension Reduction Initiative (SRI) are reducing. In 2000 (before the SRI was launched) the rate of Māori suspension in these schools was 76 per 1,000 students. This has been reduced to 48 per 1,000 for 2002.

The number of suspension cases relating to Samoan students is the highest for Pasifika peoples although the rate remained stable at 8 per 1,000. Suspension rates for Tongan students were 8 per 1,000 in 2000 and 2001 and 10 per 1,000 in 2002. Cook Island Māori suspension cases have risen from 10 per 1,000 in 2000 to 12 per 1,000 in 2002.

Regions

Local Body	2001 Total	2001 Rate per 1,000	2002 Total	2002 Rate per 1,000
Auckland	1197	6	1274	6
Bay of Plenty	517	11	535	11
Canterbury	445	5	456	6
Gisborne	46	5	76	8
Hawke's Bay	212	7	164	5
Manawatu-Wanganui	396	9	395	9
Marlborough	60	9	71	10
Nelson	18	2	37	4
Northland	408	14	351	12
Otago	138	4	156	5
Southland	97	5	130	7
Taranaki	86	4	122	6
Tasman	49	7	52	7
Waikato	593	9	613	9
Wellington	449	6	433	6
West Coast	91	17	72	13
Total	4802	7	4937	7

During 2002 regional suspension rates were generally similar to those of 2001. Biggest reductions were in the Northland, West Coast and Hawke's Bay regions. In previous years Northland and West Coast regions have had the highest suspension rates and remain highest although the trend of suspension reduction in these areas is encouraging. The suspension rate for the Nelson region has risen to match that of 2000 after falling in 2001. For the Gisborne region, the rate has risen but remains below that of 2000.

Bay of Plenty and West Coast regions had the most suspensions per thousand for drugs (including substance abuse) at 5 per 1,000 while Northland schools lowered their rate from 6 to 4 per 1,000. The national rate was 2 per 1,000.

There was a slight drop in suspension cases for physical assault on staff although little regional fluctuation when comparing 2001 with 2002 figures. Auckland schools dealt with the most cases in 2001 (34) and 2002 (32), while other regions dealt with substantially fewer and seven regions dealt with less than five cases in both 2001 and 2002. Suspension cases in this category have remained between 2% and 3% of all cases for the last three years.

Suspension cases related to verbal assault on staff remain below the 2000 level but have increased between 2001 and 2002. Auckland, Bay of Plenty and Northland schools dealt with an increased number of suspension cases for verbal assault on staff while cases were substantially fewer for West Coast schools. Five regions had fewer than five suspensions for verbal assault on staff. This category of suspension cases has made up between 5% and 6% of all suspension cases nationally for the last three years.

Suspensions by School Deciles

	2001	2001	2002	2002
Decile	Suspensions	Rate per 1000	Suspensions	Rate per 1000
Decile 1	521	8	497	9
Decile 2	617	10	720	12
Decile 3	682	10	585	9
Decile 4	667	8	660	10
Decile 5	732	10	797	11
Decile 6	495	7	513	7
Decile 7	432	6	497	7
Decile 8	310	4	379	5
Decile 9	162	3	134	2
Decile 10	184	2	155	2
Total	4802	7	4937	7

The rates for suspension cases by school decile in 2002 are very similar to rates for 2001.

The number of suspension cases for drugs (including substance abuse) ranged from 266 (4 per 1,000) in decile 2 schools to 44 (1 per 1,000) in decile 9 schools.

While suspension rates for continual disobedience by decile were similar in 2002 to those of 2001 (between 1 and 3 per 1,000 in each region), suspensions in this category were again highest in decile 5 schools. Decile 9 and 10 schools had fewest suspensions in this category and the lowest rates of suspension per 1,000 students.

Decile 2, 3 and 5 schools made up 43% of students suspended for physical assault on other students.

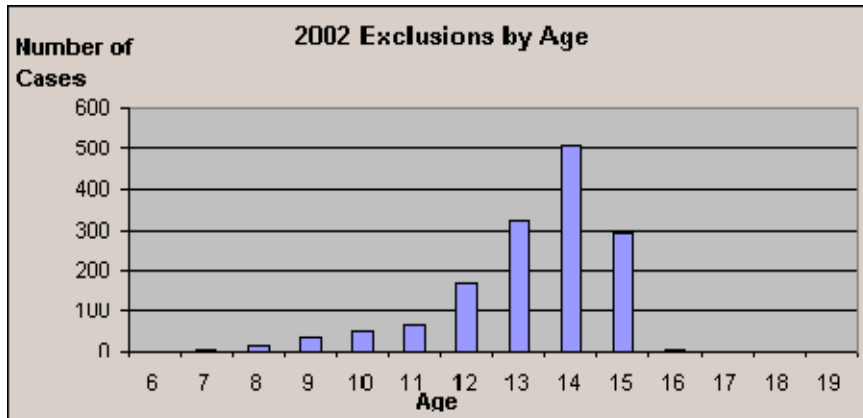
Significantly fewer students returned to a suspending decile 10 school at 43% while between 56% and 65% of suspended students returned to schools in other decile groups.

The highest rates of exclusion were recorded by deciles 6 (37%), 10 (34%) and 1 (33%) schools with the highest rates of expulsion being by schools in deciles 10 (10%), 8 (5%) and 5 (4%).

ACTIONS FOLLOWING A SUSPENSION

At a suspension meeting, a board of trustees will receive a report from the principal about the suspension and will hear comment from the student, the student's family and support people. The board, excluding the principal, then makes a decision about the suspended student's continued attendance at the school.

- Of the 4,937 suspensions for the period 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002, 2,924 (60%) returned to their suspending school, either with or without special conditions being imposed, and 4,140 (82%) had resumed schooling during 2002.
- In 1,210 cases (25%) the suspensions were extended before the board determined a final outcome.
- Exclusions numbered 1,465 (30%).



- Expulsions numbered 154 (3%).

While the number of students that returned to their suspending schools decreased, the numbers of extensions, exclusions and expulsions remained about the same as for 2001.

The Ministry of Education follows up on all cases leading to *exclusion* (either immediately or following a suspension extension) to ensure that an appropriate alternative is found for every student concerned.

- 49% of excluded students enrolled at a new school.
- 7% of excluded students re-enrolled at the suspending school.
- 14% of excluded students enrolled at the Correspondence School.
- Remaining cases were awaiting action, or students had elected to apply for an early leaving exemption, a home schooling exemption, left New Zealand or had turned 16 years and may have chosen to leave school.

Outcomes for suspended students

Following a suspension, and an appropriate response by the board, the majority of cases (82%) resulted in students resuming schooling during the period 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002, 60% of the total at the suspending school. For the comparable period 2001, 86% resumed schooling.

Enrolment at the Correspondence School, following suspension in the period 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002, was 5%, about the same as for 2001.

KEY ISSUES AND INTERVENTIONS

The data on suspensions and stand-downs continue to reveal several areas of concern:

- males and Māori remain over-represented in the statistics.
- young people aged 13 to 15 years are over-represented in both stand-downs and suspensions.
- most stand-downs and suspensions occur in a relatively small number of secondary schools.
- drugs, including substance abuse, remains the most frequent reason for suspension although the number has reduced between 2001 and 2002.

Addressing the concerns

In order to address and reduce suspensions, particularly for Māori, the Ministry of Education has initiated two specific initiatives that target Māori secondary students; the Suspension Reduction Initiative and He Ara Tika, a Māori Youth Mentoring programme.

Suspension Reduction Initiative

The Ministry established the Suspension Reduction Initiative (SRI) in 2001 specifically to address the high proportion of Māori suspensions in secondary schools. The SRI involves working with 86 schools that have a history of high suspensions of Māori students. The implementation strategy involves schools sharing best practice in managing student behaviour and assisting schools and communities to work better to meet the needs of students at risk.

Statistics tabulated below show that national suspension rates for all Māori in all types of school and secondary schools in particular have reduced. In secondary schools that have chosen to become part of the SRI suspensions of Māori students have reduced markedly while rates for other groups are also reducing. *This indicates that while programmes may have been put in place by schools with the aim of reducing Māori suspensions in particular, changes have had an effect on schools' overall suspension rates.*

SUSPENSION REDUCTION INITIATIVE 2002 STATISTICS

1 January 2000 to 31 December 2000		1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001		1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002	
Group	Per 1,000	Group	Per 1,000	Group	Per 1,000
All (total population)	7	All (total population)	7	All (total population)	7
Māori (total population)	17	Māori (total population)	15	Māori (total population)	15
Secondary schools		Secondary schools		Secondary schools	
Māori	48	Māori	43	Māori	41
NZ European/Pākehā	12	NZ European/Pākehā	11	NZ European/Pākehā	11
SRI		SRI		SRI	
All (total cluster population)	36	All (total cluster population)	28	All (total cluster population)	25
Māori	76	Māori	56	Māori	48
NZ European/Pākehā	21	NZ European/Pākehā	17	NZ European/Pākehā	15

The Government has set aside funds to initiate a youth mentoring programme to provide extra support to Māori secondary students. Better engagement of students in learning will reduce the need for behavioural intervention. Currently there are 17 community providers managing mentoring services in schools across the country. The providers are training mentors and matching up these mentors with students in 2002.

Other interventions

In addition to these specific initiatives the Ministry of Education has undertaken several other steps, in consultation with schools and communities, aimed at keeping students engaged in schooling. These include:

- Strengthening Families, helping schools and communities support students;
- increased numbers of Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour;
- Social Workers in Schools established at 182 low decile primary schools;
- assisting Study Support Centres;
- provision of an Innovations Funding Pool for school programmes designed to improve the educational outcomes of students at risk;
- funding for Alternative Education programmes for students under 16 who are alienated from regular schooling; and
- a Parents' Advocacy Phone Service through the Office of the Commissioner of Children and Wellington Community Law.

Further information

Regional stand-down and suspension information will be provided on the Ministry's website www.minedu.govt.nz. More specific regional or city information may be available from the Ministry's regional offices.

The media spokesperson on this issue is Jim Matheson, Operational Policy Manager, National Operations, ph 04-463-8231.

Schools with queries should contact their local office of the Ministry of Education.

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