

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

March 2005

Kia ora koutou katoa.

This report provides statistics and analysis of stand-downs and suspensions for students enrolled in state or state-integrated schools for the 2004 school year to 31 December 2004.

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

The Ministry of Education's Statement of Intent 2004-2009, centred on its mission to 'Raise Achievement and Reduce Disparity', incorporates three Vital Outcomes that are focused on increasing student engagement through Effective Teaching, Family and Community Engagement and Quality Providers. Increased student engagement in the learning process is undoubtedly linked to better learning outcomes for students. Statistics for stand-downs and suspensions are indicators of a form of behaviour management.

Stand-downs, introduced in 1999, are a short-term measure. Stand-downs allow schools, students and their families, time to evaluate the problems that have occurred and determine how to prevent reoccurrence. Students can then return to their schooling.

The use of stand-downs and suspensions is seen as a last resort when other options have not proved successful. Schools are encouraged to continue to use this form of behaviour management as infrequently as possible.

During 2004, while the number of stand-downs cases continued to rise in line with the increasing student population, the number of suspension cases reduced. Eight regions had an increase in the rate of stand-downs per 1,000 students, three retained the same and five regions showed a reduction (refer to table page 7). More significantly, seven regions reduced their suspension rates, five retained theirs, and four showed a minimal increase (refer to table page 11).

Male students continue to represent the majority of stand-down and suspension cases. Students aged between 13 - 15 years continue to be the most likely to be stood-down or suspended. Compared with the proportion of the school population they represent, Maori students have comparatively high stand-down and suspension rates but these rates are continuing to reduce.

Of note are the schools in the Marlborough and West Coast Regions who have made significant reductions in their stand-down and suspension rates.

The Suspension Reduction Initiative (SRI) is an initiative that has assisted many schools to increase engagement and reduce unacceptable student misbehaviour leading to disciplinary action and eventual stand-down or suspension. The SRI schools continue to reduce suspensions in most schools that are in the initiative indicating it is having a sustainable effect.

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 these regulations introduced stand-downs for the first time, statistics prior to mid-1999 are not available. 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 2000 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. The current report covers the 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004 period, and is based on data as at 24 February 2005.

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 by the principal 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 with the requirement that the student enrol elsewhere.

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

Understanding stand-downs and suspensions.

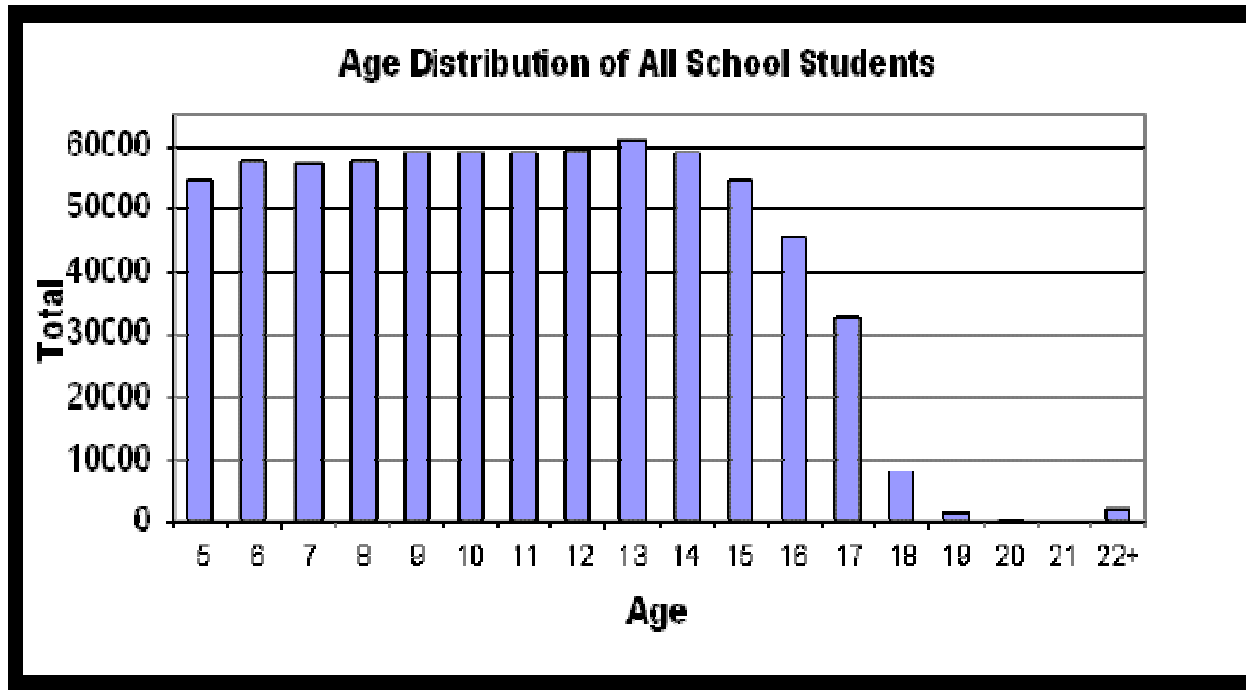
Stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions are some of the ways to deal with student behaviour that disrupts teaching and learning and threatens the well-being of other students. These approaches are not used lightly by most schools, but are part of a process to help students return to productive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

In 2004, 2.8% of the national school population was involved in stand-down cases and 0.7% in suspension cases; this shows a mild increase from 2003 figures (2.7% and 0.6%, respectively). As some students were stood-down or suspended on more than one occasion, the number of students stood-down or suspended is less than the number of cases. This report records only the number of cases not the number of students.

Quick Facts

- At 1 July 2004 there were 726,891 students attending New Zealand's 2,700 state and state integrated schools. The primary level (Years 1-8) rolls totalled 463,206 and the secondary school rolls (Years 9-15) 263,685. Stand-down and suspension figures must be read in the context of the total school roll.
- Less than 1% of the total school population was suspended from school. The majority of these students returned to schooling, and 61% returned to the school they were suspended from. Just 0.1% of the school population was expelled or excluded during the period 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004.
- There were 20,447 stand-down cases during 2004, at a rate of 27 per 1,000 students. This is the same as the 2003 rate.
- The most common reasons to stand-down students were continual disobedience (25%), physical assault on other students (25%) and verbal assault on staff (16%).
- There were 4774 suspension cases in 2004, a rate of 6.56 per 1,000 students. This is lower than the 2003 rate of 6.75 per 1,000 students.
- The most common reasons to suspend students were continual disobedience (26%, an increase of 65 cases from 2003), and drugs (26%, a decrease of 79 cases from 2003).
- The peak age for stand-downs and suspensions, for both genders, remains at 14 years of age.
- Students in the 13 to 15 year age group, comprised 24% of the whole school population, and 65% of stand-down cases (at a rate of 77 per 1,000 students). This age group represented 73% of suspension cases (at a rate of 20 per 1,000 students).
- Students who are male, Māori or 14 years old continue to be over-represented in stand-down and suspension statistics compared to the general school population.
- The stand-down rate of Māori males was 70 per 1,000 students and the suspension rate of Maori males was 19 per 1,000 students in 2004. Pasifika students, both male and female, showed comparatively high rates of stand-downs.
- Seventy-five percent of all schools had no cases of suspension the same as in 2002 and 2003. There were no suspension cases in 39% of secondary and area schools and less than five suspensions in a further 17% of secondary and area schools. Forty one percent of intermediate schools had no suspensions and 83% of primary schools had no suspensions.
- Areas with the highest reductions in cases of stand-downs were the West Coast, Marlborough and Southland regions. Areas with the highest increases were the Bay of Plenty, Wellington, Canterbury and Auckland regions.
- The data indicates that both stand-downs and suspensions have reduced or have not increased where specific interventions are in place. 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, when the initiative began, to 39 per 1,000 in 2004.



STAND DOWNS

Over the last three years, the proportion of the school population stood-down has increased by only 0.3%.

Reasons for stand-downs

Behaviour	2002	2003	2004
Alcohol	799	707	772
Arson	86	101	92
Continual disobedience	4633	4932	5157
Drugs (including substance abuse)	1077	935	986
Other harmful or dangerous behaviour	1227	1429	1484
Physical assault on staff	395	450	435
Physical assault on other students	3998	4687	5089
Sexual harassment	114	110	150
Sexual misconduct	96	109	143
Smoking	867	799	734
Theft	815	945	955
Vandalism	386	529	526
Verbal assault on other students	394	492	491
Verbal assault on staff	2877	3438	3197
Weapons	148	195	236
Total	17,912	19,858	20,447

Over the last five years, the most common reasons to stand-down a student were continual disobedience, physical assault on students, and verbal assault on staff. During the 2004 year, there were considerably fewer stand-down cases for arson,

verbal assault on staff, and smoking, than in the previous year. Of concern is that the number of stand-down cases involving sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and harmful or dangerous behaviour in our schools is increasing.

Number of Days Stood-down

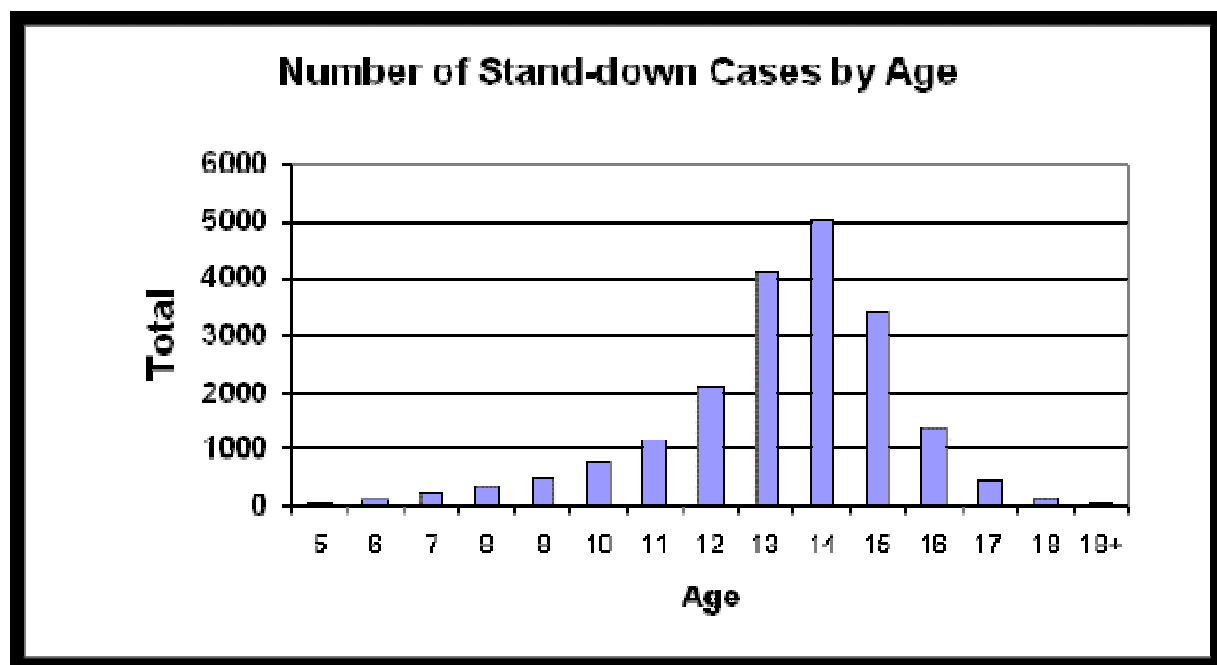
Days Stood Down	Number of cases
1	3896
2	7708
3	6278
4	726
5	1839
Total	20447

Gender

Male students comprised 71% of all stand-downs. There were 39 stand-down cases per 1,000 male students and 17 cases per 1,000 female students.

Age Groups

The peak age for stand-downs continues to remain at 14 years, at a rate of 94 per 1,000 students. In 2003, the stand-down rate of students in this age group was 88 per 1,000 students. Stand-down cases for the 10 to 12 year age group were at a rate of 21 per 1,000 students, one less than in 2003.



Ethnicity

In comparison to their proportion of the whole school population, Maori students were over-represented in stand-down cases. Asian and Pakeha students had very low stand-down rates compared with their proportion of the population.

Ethnicity	% of all stand-downs	% of school population
NZ European/Pākehā	42	56
NZ Māori	41	21
Pasifika	11	9
Asian	2	8
Other	4	6

Schools that stand-down the most students

In 2004, 1225 schools had stand-down cases. 54% of schools had no stand-downs. Of schools with stand-down cases, 49% had less than five cases, and 33% had more than ten cases.

School types

- Most stand-down cases (73%) occurred in secondary schools (including area and composite schools) in 2004. This is similar to the proportion of stand-down cases in secondary schools as for 2003.
- The average stand-down rate in contributing and full primary schools was 11 per 1,000 students, the same rate as in 2003.
- In intermediate schools, the average stand-down rate reduced from 29 per 1,000 students in 2003 to 28 cases per 1,000 students.

Stand-downs by School Decile

Decile	2003	2003	2004	2004
	Stand-downs	Rate per 1000	Stand-downs	Rate per 1000
Decile 1	1765	30	1692	29
Decile 2	2737	44	3125	51
Decile 3	2481	36	2758	40
Decile 4	2385	34	2266	32
Decile 5	2563	34	2653	35
Decile 6	2228	31	2299	32
Decile 7	1935	26	1850	25
Decile 8	1779	25	1726	24
Decile 9	1229	15	1277	16
Decile 10	756	8	799	8
Total	19,858	27	20,447	28

Regions

Local Body	2003 Total	2003 rate per 1,000	2004 Total	2004 rate per 1,000
Auckland	5446	23	5539	24
Bay of Plenty	1194	24	1485	29
Canterbury	2519	30	2659	31
Gisborne	344	35	335	34

Hawke's Bay	918	30	900	30
Manawatu-Wanganui	1787	42	1682	40
Marlborough	169	25	96	14
Nelson	168	19	185	22
Northland	1238	42	1315	44
Otago	621	20	615	20
Southland	537	30	482	28
Taranaki	568	27	613	30
Tasman	143	19	170	23
Waikato	2164	31	2219	31
Wellington	1803	24	1996	26
West Coast	240	45	155	29
Total	19,858	27	20,447	28

The rate of stand-down cases dropped in five regions, rose in eight, and was static in three. The Marlborough and West Coast regions had the most dramatic reduction in stand-down rates. The whole school population has increased over the same period from 711,144 students in 2002 to 726,891 students in 2004.

SUSPENSIONS

Number of suspensions

The number and rate of suspension cases has steadily reduced since 2000. The suspension rate was 6.75 per 1,000 students in 2003, a reduction from 7 per 1,000 students in 2002. In 2004, the rate reduced to 6.56 per 1,000.

Reasons for suspensions

Behaviour	Suspensions		
	2002	2003	2004
Alcohol	165	185	136
Arson	34	38	50
Continual disobedience	1230	1154	1219
Drugs (including substance abuse)	1471	1309	1230
Other harmful or dangerous behaviour	265	298	272
Physical assault on staff	142	187	155
Physical assault on other students	761	717	849
Sexual harassment	30	32	37
Sexual misconduct	43	37	41
Smoking	47	36	54
Theft	233	294	228
Vandalism	100	123	96
Verbal assault on other students	56	40	57
Verbal assault on staff	282	331	276
Weapons	78	106	74
Total	4937	4887	4774

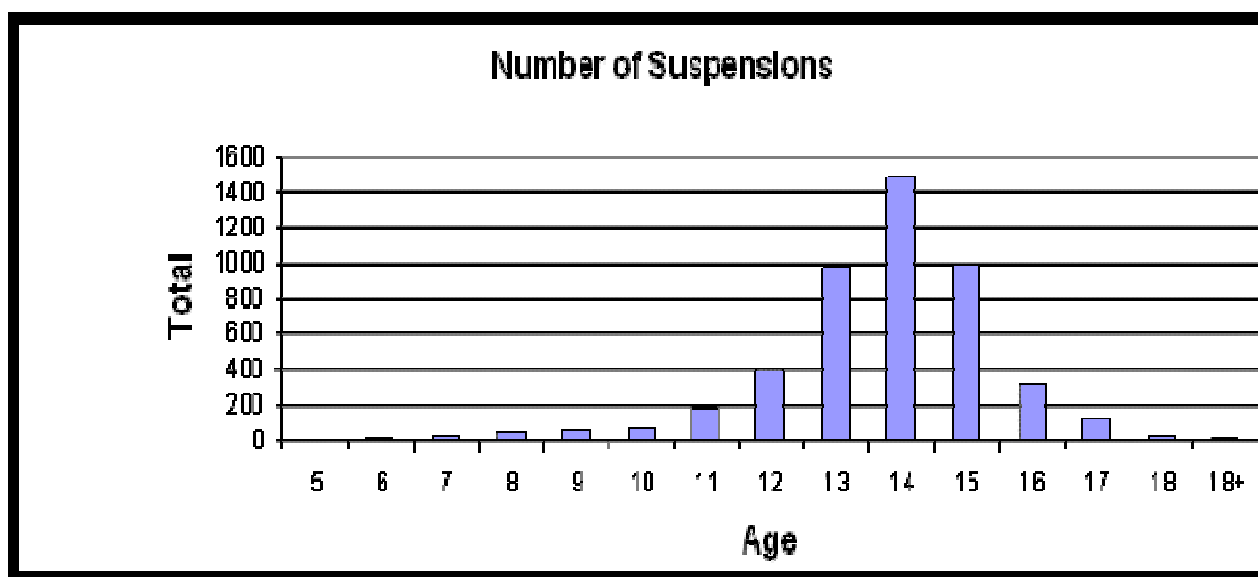
While the number of suspension cases is steadily decreasing, the composition of suspensions is changing. In 2003, drugs, continual disobedience and physical assault on staff comprised 65% of suspensions. In 2004, they featured in less than half (46%) of suspension cases. This change may reflect the efforts to reduce these behaviours within schools or it may reflect the increase in other behaviours.

Gender

Male students comprised 71% of all suspension cases. The suspension rate of male students was 9 per 1,000 students and the rate of female students was 4 per 1,000 students.

Age groups

As with stand-down cases, the peak age of suspended students was 14 years old. The number of suspended students of this age has not varied considerably over the last three years (1,440 in 2002, 1,487 in 2003, and 1,489 in 2004).



The 13 to 15 year age group comprised 73% of suspension cases (3,476) slightly less than the 2003 figure (3,498). The 10 to 12 year age group comprised 14% of suspension cases (671).

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	% of all suspensions	% of school population
NZ European/Pākehā	36	56
NZ Māori	47	21
Pasifika	12	9
Asian	1	8
Other	4	6

The number and rate of Pākehā students suspended has reduced since 2003. Māori students, however, continue to be over-represented in suspension cases compared with the proportion of Māori in the total school population. In 2004, the rate of

suspension of Māori students was 15 per 1,000 students; the rate of suspension of Pakeha students was 5 per 1,000 students. Just 0.4% of Pakeha students were suspended in 2004, compared with 1.4% of Māori students.

The total number of suspension cases involving Pasifika students has increased since 2000 from a rate of 7 per 1,000 students to a rate of 9 per 1,000 students in 2004.

Schools that suspend the most students

Continuing the trend of 2002 and 2003, 75% of schools did not suspend any students in 2004. Of schools with suspension cases, 62% had less than five cases, and 22% had more than ten cases. Of the schools that suspended students, around 10% were responsible for 43% of all suspensions.

School types

The highest rate of suspension cases occurred in Year 9-15 secondary schools (15 per 1,000 students), and full primary schools (including composite and intermediate schools) had the lowest rate (2 per 1,000 students).

- There were no suspensions in 39% of secondary and composite schools, an increase of 2% from 2003.
- Most suspension cases occurred in secondary schools (79%); compared to 77% in 2003.
- The rate of suspensions in intermediate schools was 6 per 1,000 students, the same rate for the 2003 period.

In full primary schools the suspension rate was 2 per 1,000 students.

Suspensions by School Deciles

Decile	2003	2003	2004	2004
	Suspensions	Rate per 1000	Suspensions	Rate per 1000
Decile 1	454	8	414	7
Decile 2	641	10	652	11
Decile 3	576	8	702	10
Decile 4	695	10	576	8
Decile 5	651	9	660	9
Decile 6	520	7	549	8
Decile 7	516	7	467	6
Decile 8	441	6	379	5
Decile 9	258	3	273	3
Decile 10	136	1	101	1
Total	4887	7	4774	7

Suspensions occur in schools of all deciles. In 2003 the average number of suspension cases across all schools was 444; in 2004 the average reduced to 434. The average number of suspension cases across schools of all deciles during the 2000 - 2004 period is 446.

Regions

Local Body	2003	2003	2004	2004
	Total	Rate per 1,000	Total	Rate per 1,000
Auckland	1402	6	1282	5
Bay of Plenty	434	9	421	8
Canterbury	531	6	522	6
Gisborne	57	6	50	5
Hawke's Bay	223	7	173	6
Manawatu-Wanganui	340	8	383	9
Marlborough	84	12	51	8
Nelson	36	4	46	5
Northland	346	12	349	12
Otago	133	4	131	4
Southland	100	6	85	5
Taranaki	114	5	140	7
Tasman	50	7	67	9
Waikato	532	8	562	8
Wellington	450	6	484	6
West Coast	55	10	28	5
Total	4887	7	4774	7

During 2004 regional suspension rates showed considerable decreases. The greatest reductions were seen in Marlborough and the West Coast.

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.

Outcomes for suspended students

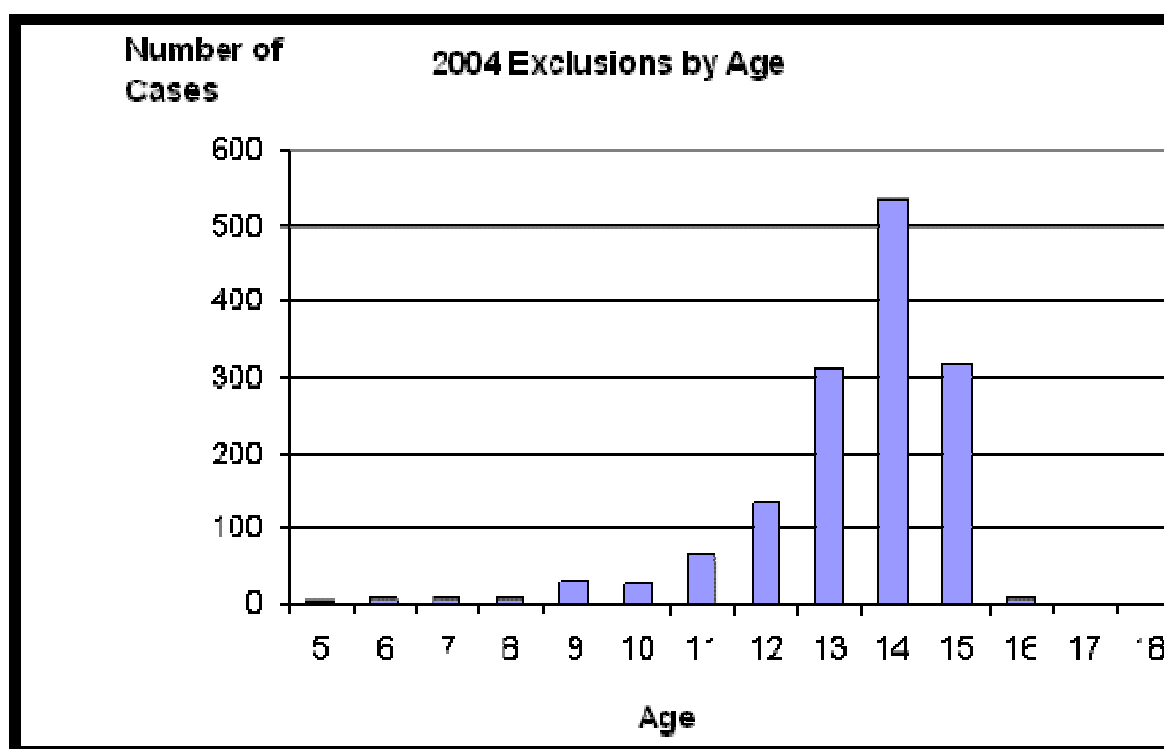
Following a suspension and an appropriate response by the board, the majority of students (81%) resumed schooling during the period 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004, and 61% of this group returned to the suspending school. By comparison, 84% resumed schooling in 2003.

The proportion of students enrolled at The Correspondence School following suspension in the period 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004, has remained static at around 5% for the last four years.

The number of students returning to their school following suspensions was similar across all deciles. Students suspended from decile 2 schools had the highest returning rate (63%), students from decile 10 schools had the lowest (54%).

Of the 4774 suspension cases during the period 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004, 61% (2903) of students returned to their suspending school either with or

without special conditions being imposed. Of those suspended, 30% were excluded and 2.7% were expelled.



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. During 2004:

- 50% of excluded students enrolled at a new school;
- 6% of excluded students re-enrolled at the suspending school;
- 14% of excluded students enrolled at The Correspondence School; and
- The 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.

The highest rates of exclusion were recorded by schools of decile 3 (35%), 6 (33%), 9 (32%) and 5 (32%). Schools with the highest rates of expulsion were schools of deciles 5 (11%), and 10 (7%).

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;
- A relatively small number of secondary schools still have stand-down and suspension rates that are significantly higher than most schools; and
- Drugs, including substance abuse, remain the most frequent reason for suspension although the number of cases has reduced between 2002 and 2004.

Suspension Reduction Initiative

The Ministry established the Suspension Reduction Initiative (SRI) in 2001 specifically to address the high proportion of Māori suspensions in some secondary schools. The SRI involved 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.

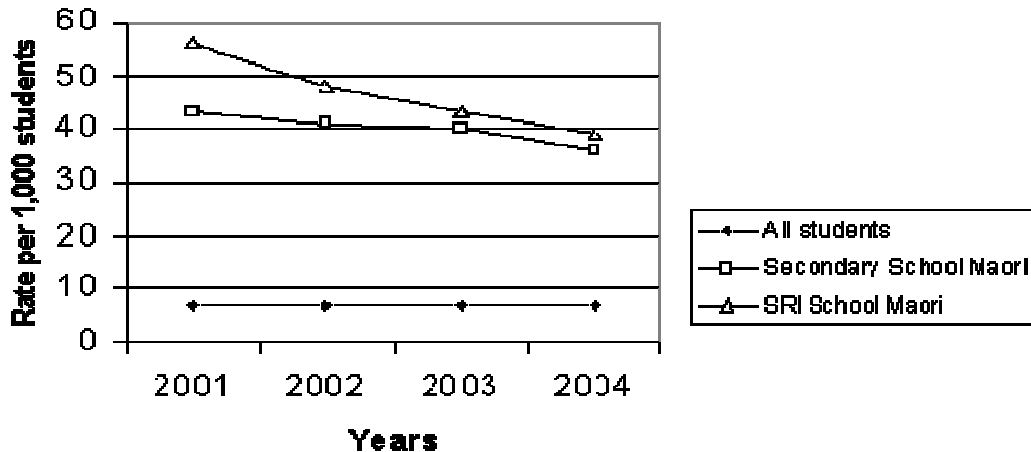
Statistics below show that the national suspension rates for Māori in secondary schools has reduced. In secondary schools that have chosen to become part of the SRI, suspensions of Māori students have reduced markedly and rates for other groups are also reducing. This indicates that while programmes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

The initial suspension rate of Maori students in the secondary schools that chose to be part of the SRI was 76 per 1,000 students in 2000 which dropped to 56 in 2001, 48 in 2002, 43 and in 2003. The suspension rate of Maori students now sits at 39 per 1,000 students. The data indicates that all students in these schools are benefiting from the intervention.

SUSPENSION REDUCTION INITIATIVE 2004 STATISTICS

	1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001	1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002	1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003	1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004
Group	Per 1,000	Per 1,000	Per 1,000	Per 1,000
All (total population)	7	7	7	7
Māori (total population)	15	15	15	14
Secondary schools				
Māori	43	41	40	36
NZ European/Pākehā	11	11	10	10
SRI schools				
All (total cluster population)	28	25	23	20
Māori	56	48	43	39
NZ European/Pākehā	17	15	13	11

Maori Secondary School Student Suspensions



Other interventions

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

- Group Special Education assistance
- Funding for initiatives for enhanced learning
- Special Education Grants to all schools
- Targeted Funding for Educational Achievement to all schools
- Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour
- assisting Study Support Centres in 84 schools and 67 communities
- 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
- a Parents' Advocacy Phone Service through the Office of the Commissioner of Children and Wellington Community Law.

Inter-sector activities helping resolve issues that may otherwise be barriers to student engagement include:

- the provision of Social Workers in Schools (SWIS)
- Strengthening Families, helping schools and communities support students
- therapeutic interventions for groups of students with high care and protection or mental health needs.

Further information

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

The Ministry spokesperson 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.

OFFICES OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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