

OT-OIA-2026-0182

24 June 2026

s9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe s9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email, received on 29 May 2026, to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) requesting reconsideration of our response to your previous request (our reference: OT-OIA-2026-0166). Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

I would like to start by apologising for not providing you with data in response to your original OIA request. While we cannot provide you with the exact data you have requested, we should have provided you with data that is close to what you asked for. The decision to decline in our previous response was an oversight rather than a decision to withhold. We believed at the time that the information was not recorded as a structured data field in our case management system, but missed a field under demographics that records school type against a child in a structured format.

In your most recent email, you requested:

I'd like to give you the opportunity to reconsider your response before I complain to the ombudsman.

That's because:

- Before I made my request, I checked with a source within Oranga Tamariki, who confirmed that "school" is one of the fields filled in when filing reports of concern (RoC) therefore I believe that contrary to your claim, the information I seek is held in a structured and reportable format.*
- More 1.3% of New Zealand children are homeschooled. That's more than 11,000 children. The vast majority of them never receive a visit by the Education Ministry or Education Review Office. It's in the public interest to know how many, and what proportion of them, have been on the radar of child protection services.*
- The public interest in this issue has never been higher because the Education Minister has indicated she will be reviewing homeschool regulations. As such, the public needs this information - which in fact*

belongs to the public - in order to have an informed debate about the best system for children.

Please will you reconsider your decision, and send me the answers to the two questions I asked?

Here they are again:

- *how many reports of concern have been made about homeschooled children for each of the past five years, and*
- *how many of those reports of concern were substantiated*

Please find in the tables below data that is close to the data you have requested. These tables provide the number of children or young people whose school type was recorded as “home school” at any time between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2025, and who subsequently had a Report of Concern (first table), or a substantiated finding (second table) during the period.

Number of children enrolled in home school who subsequently had a Report of Concern during their enrolment (1 July 2021 – 30 June 2025)

Financial year	Number of children
2021/22	19
2022/23	33
2023/24	24
2024/25	60

Number of children enrolled in home school who subsequently had a substantiated finding during their enrolment (1 July 2021 – 30 June 2025)

Financial year	Number of children
2021/22	6
2022/23	11
2023/24	9
2024/25	23

Please note there are a number of important caveats to this data:

- Children or young people are counted if they were recorded as home schooled during the period and later received a Report of Concern or substantiated finding within that same period. As a result, this may include some children who were no longer home schooled at the time of the Report of Concern or substantiated finding. This limitation exists because separating out these cases would require bespoke coding, which was not feasible within the timeframe.
- The reason for Report of Concerns may be unrelated to a child’s homeschooling status.
- Our data on the type of school a child attends is manually entered by social workers, and its accuracy and currency depends on timely data entry by social workers. There are times when there are delays or omissions in updating records, which impacts data accuracy.
- We are not privy to changes in circumstances that occur when Oranga Tamariki are no longer involved, such as a change in schooling.

You may also be interested in the types of findings that were substantiated for this group of children and young people.

Finding types for children who had findings following their enrolment in home schooling (1 July 2021 – 30 June 2025)

Type of finding	Number of instances
Physical abuse	9
Sexual abuse	5
Neglect	7
Emotional abuse	14
Behaviour / relationship difficulties	14

The number of findings are higher than the number of children or young people because more than one finding can be made for the same child or young person.

As discussed by phone, I have also requested similar data as provided in this response, but for children and young people recorded as receiving education through Correspondence School / Te Kura. I will email this data to you directly once I have it.

Oranga Tamariki may make the information contained in this letter available to the public by publishing this on our website with your personal details removed.

I trust you find this information useful. If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@ot.govt.nz. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by contacting them on 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Simon Harding
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