



7 June 2023

Response to Harwood Wilson Official Information Request

Dear Harwood,

I enclose my responses to your questions emailed to me on the 10th May 2023.

1. We are very conscious of the world of students and their relationships. The reference to 'old fashioned ways', meant interacting in a positive social setting, largely free of electronic devices, where a large number of students were able to enjoy each other's company. A sit down dinner with photographs and dancing. Follow up communication with parent's stressed that the gender and or identity of the partner was not an issue. I met with individuals, a class and then finally the whole of the Year 13 group before I made the decision. They were offered the chance to come up with another event if they did not want this style of formal occasion. They did not provide an alternative option because they wanted the formal.
2. The doubling up of partners was only within the school. A confidential discussion with a student leadership group (where no names were discussed) prior to the decision, indicated there were no known same sex couples within the year group. All school anti-bullying policies were in line for this event as it is with all events.
3. I feel this has been answered in Questions 1 and 2.
4. Policy attached.
5. No, the school does not accept that as a single sex school, there is limited opportunity to meet anyone outside of the school. This question implies single sex students are naturally socially isolated and I do not believe that to be the case. Our students are members of wider communities, through whanau, work and social and sports clubs. For instance, we have a school production with Otago Girls' High every year. This year at the Formal most boys brought a friend from outside of our school, rather than someone they were in a relationship with.
6. This is an opinion, not based on any knowledge of our school or its students. Many students were accompanied on the night by friends, cousins and some used contacts with friends in other schools to find someone to accompany them. The school prefect team arranged for students from here to accompany students from other schools, as friends, through their prefect network. One brought his twin brother who attends a different school.
7. None, the students were offered the opportunity for an alternative event and decided to proceed with the Yr 13 Formal event.
8. No minutes were taken.
9. Fairness to those who had met the requirement. In 2022 when we allowed single ticket sales or doubling up, we had to postpone the event by 3 months due to low ticket sales. By changing the requirement, we did not have to postpone or shift the event.
10. I believe I have answered this in question 2.

The school formal was held on the 20th of May and was very successful. Traditionally 55-60% of the year group attend the ball, this is with single sales, this year, with only doubles that increased to 65% of the year group. More bought the double passes. Students could bring a partner of any gender or identity from outside of the school.

Regards,



Richard Hall
Rector/Tumuaki