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3 July 2013

Kathryn Buckley
fyi-request-911-c027c052@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Kathryn Buckley

Thank you for your email of 3 June 2013 requesting the following a copy of any relevant (external and internal) policies, principles, rules or guidelines (if they exist) relating to:

1. Closure of small rural schools in isolated areas
2. Accountability processes for oversight and monitoring of School Commissioners
3. Complaints process for Commissioner's conduct and performance.

You also requested:

1. *A list of all schools in New Zealand which have had, or still have, statutory intervention by means of a Commissioner in the last two years from date of receipt of this request*
2. *That this list includes a note to indicate whether the school has closed, or is intended for closure*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982.

The Ministry of Education does not have guidelines that apply to the closure of small rural schools only. For all school closures, we are required to comply with section 154 of the Education Act 1989. We have a single deskfile that deals with the closure of all types of school – a copy is attached.

Our Statutory Interventions deskfile contains information related to the monitoring of Commissioners. A copy of that deskfile, and a document dealing with the role of a Commissioner, are attached.

There are no formal guidelines about a complaints process for a Commissioner's conduct and performance. We would advise that in the first instance, a complaint should be directed to the Commissioner. If that does not result in a satisfactory resolution, then the next step would be to contact the local office of the Ministry of Education.

The fourth document lists schools that have had, or still have, a Commissioner. It also identifies (as requested) those schools that have either closed or are intended for closure. In respect of Potaka School, which is identified as being intended for possible closure, the closure process has been put on hold pending a review. Two versions of that document are provided for your convenience – one is an alphabetical listing by school name, and the other lists schools according to the date on which the Commissioner was appointed.

The attached appendix lists the four documents that are being released.

Withholding of information – Sections 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(f)(iii)

Deletions have been made under section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons and under 9(2)(f)(iii) of the Act to maintain the constitutional convention protecting the neutrality of officials.

There do not appear to be overriding public interest reasons that support the release of the information withheld.

Under sections 19 and 28(3) of the Official Information Act 1982 you have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision.

Yours sincerely



Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Regional Operations

Encls