

Children's Commissioner Priority #4

Access to Education for All



2018–2019



Children have an inalienable right to an education. The Children's Convention and the New Zealand education system require that education should develop children to their fullest potential.

The system works well for the majority but does not always deliver so well for students who live with disadvantages such as poverty, neurodisabilities, or racism.

The Children's Commissioner is independent from Government and is committed to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi. He has a duty to advocate for the wellbeing of all children.

In addition to education, some of our other priorities include advocating to reduce child and family poverty, addressing unconscious bias and systemic racism, and promoting the learning of te reo me ngā tikanga Māori by young people.

In education, the Children's Commissioner is advocating for the following:



1. Listening to children and taking account of their views at all levels of education

- Using a child impact assessment tool and listening to children to inform government legislation, regulation and policy including all the education system reviews
- Taking account of student voice in school board decision-making
- Encouraging child participation in classroom learning decisions.



3. Protecting every child's right to attend free full-time education with their peers

- Enabling inclusion for all children – especially those with neurodisabilities – by providing adequate resources and support for them to develop to their full potential at their local school
- Nurturing children's holistic wellbeing including support for those with emotional, cognitive and mental health difficulties
- Improving support for teachers and schools to understand and respond to children's behaviour
- Encouraging every school to have a policy to prevent and respond to bullying that is co-designed by students and evidence-based. Measuring and understanding bullying trends locally and nationally.



2. Improving education systems, services and supports for mokopuna Māori

- Ensuring there are systemic, long term plans in place to achieve equitable education outcomes for Māori
- Enabling greater whānau engagement in their children's education
- Strengthening culturally responsive teaching and learning
- Encouraging more engagement of hapū and iwi in education co-design in local communities.



4. Reducing suspensions and exclusions from school, and developing an avenue for appeal

- Supporting the introduction of a pilot appeal mechanism so Boards of Trustees' decisions to exclude students can be readily reviewed
- Encouraging schools to learn about and use restorative approaches to discipline
- Ensuring children in care and transitions receive consistent and ongoing education facilitated by Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry of Education working in partnership.

The Children's Commissioner's priorities are informed by what young people have told the Office. You can read some perspectives of children and young people in the [Education Matters to Me](#) series of reports.