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Arran Jones
Chief Executive
Aroturuki Tamariki | Independent Children's Monitor

Tēnā koe Arran

Experiences of Care in Aotearoa – Agency Compliance with the National Care Standards and Related Matters Regulations 2023 – 2024

Thank you for providing the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) with your report *Experiences of Care in Aotearoa, Agency Compliance with the National Care Standards, and related matters – 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024*.

Collaboration between the Ministry and other agencies is crucial for a successful education system for all tamariki and rangatahi. The report provides valuable insights that inform our commitment to providing equitable access to education services and support for tamariki and rangatahi in care, enabling them to achieve academically and navigate meaningful educational pathways.

In responding to the previous report, we identified three key themes our work would be focused on:

- collaboration and sharing
- support attendance and engagement
- access to responsive education.

The findings of this most recent report indicate that these themes should continue to be our focus.

Collaboration and sharing

We are committed to working collaboratively with our colleagues within and across agencies to support children in care to engage and succeed in education. Your report states that you have heard examples of good practice, and we continue to look for ways to improve.

As previously advised, the Ministry has established an Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) with Oranga Tamariki. Agencies are working together closely to operationalise the information sharing work and we expect this to be completed by the end of the month. The first information shares will be for enrolment and attendance data.



Over the next 12 months the Ministry and Oranga Tamariki will identify further data to share that will support attendance, engagement and achievement at school.

As part of our Attendance Work Programme, the Ministry is working with Oranga Tamariki, Police, Kāinga Ora, Ministry of Social Development and Te Puni Kokiri to identify opportunities to support student attendance by sharing information at a national and regional level.

Support attendance and engagement

Supporting all children and young people to be present and participate in education remains a key focus for the Ministry. The evidence tells us that when children and young people go to school more regularly, their chances of better employment, social outcomes and progress improve significantly. The Ministry's Attendance action plan is an evolving set of initiatives that collectively will improve participation in education.

Your report states you have heard examples of schools refusing to enrol tamariki and rangatahi in care, and the Ministry appears reluctant to use the process to direct a school to enrol them. The report identifies several contributing factors to this complex issue.

All tamariki and rangatahi have a right to access education. While this is a complex issue it is important that tamariki and rangatahi in care are supported to engage in education. We have identified changes we can make to help address this issue:

- improvements to our operational guidance for directed enrolments
- information about these processes for schools and our Oranga Tamariki colleagues.

We will incorporate these improvements into our Attendance action plan.

Access to responsive education

The Ministry has supported cross-agency reviews (led by Oranga Tamariki) of the Gateway Assessment process and Student Aide Support to improve the provision of support for children in care.

The Gateway Assessment review identified improvements that could be made to the education profile to better inform Gateway Assessments. We have created an improved profile and are currently testing this with colleagues at the Ministry of Health and Oranga Tamariki to ensure the changes will support the assessment process. We are considering process improvements that will increase timeliness and accountability.

The Student Aide review has now been completed, and we are working with Oranga Tamariki to consider the findings. We expect this to be completed in March 2025 with the outcomes to be reflected in the focus areas for the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan 2025-2026.

We are committed to working alongside Oranga Tamariki and other agencies to improve education outcomes and experiences for children and young people in care. I hope this information is useful for you and your team at Aroturuki Tamariki. If you wish to discuss these matters in more detail or have any questions, my team and I welcome hearing from you.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynda Pura-Watson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'L'.

Lynda Pura-Watson
General Manager, Ākonga and Community Outcomes
Te Pae Aronui
Phone 04 463 1075
lynda.purawatson@education.govt.nz