

Our Ref: 24 - 257

29 January 2025

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

**Re: Official Information Act request regarding teaching in Christian schools**

I refer to your email to the Education Review Office dated 13 December 2024 requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982 as follows:

*What is the ERO view on enforcing sinful teachings on to Christian Schools*

Religious education in New Zealand is guided by school's compliance with the Education and Training Act 2020, the NZ Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.

New Zealand's education law requires that teaching in state primary and intermediate schools must be of a secular character (non-religious) while the school is open. It also gives Boards a choice about whether or not to close the school (for a period of time up to 60 minutes per week, and no more than 20 hours per year) to allow religious instruction to take place. Parental consent and community consultation are required before children can receive religious instruction in state primary and intermediate schools.

State schools can teach about different religions as part of the religious education curriculum.

State integrated schools may have a religious philosophy as part of their special character and teaching does not need to be secular, and religious instruction may form part of the school programme. This is approved through their integration agreement with the Ministry of Education.

Registered private schools may choose to deliver their own curriculum which may include religious philosophy.

The role of the Education Review Office is to undertake reviews in schools and early learning institutions in accordance with the Education and Training Act 2020. The Ministry of Education is responsible for setting education policy direction for schools and services.

The functions and powers of the Chief Review Officer are described in the Education and Training Act 2020. This includes the review of the performance of all schools in the delivery of education services to students. [Te Ara Huarau](#) is ERO's methodology for undertaking reviews of state and state integrated

schools. Our school evaluations have a strong focus on areas of learner success and wellbeing, including attendance, assessment, achievement, and progress.

The review of registered Private Schools follows a different approach to State and State-integrated schools. The purpose of a registered Private School review is to report to the Secretary for Education on whether it meets the criteria for registration. The review process involves ERO meeting with a range of stakeholders including parents.

While Private Schools are not required to follow the Government's national education guidelines and have the freedom to choose an appropriate curriculum, Private Schools must have regard to the Statement of National Education Learning Priorities (NELPs) in the operation of the school. They must ensure that the principal and staff have regard to the NELPs when developing and delivering the curriculum.

ERO has a role in evaluating the extent to which the curriculum aligns with the NELPs. More about our reviews of Private Schools can be found [here](#).

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. We do not publish requesters' personal information.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at <http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz> or freephone 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi,



Shelley Booyser  
Director Schools  
Education Review Office