



Have your say about potential changes to private school registration criteria

Background

We know that the safety and wellbeing of students is the highest priority for managers of private schools. But the minimum student welfare standards expected of State schools, State integrated schools and early childhood education centres (ECEs) don't currently apply to private schools.

All State, State integrated schools and early childhood education providers are required to ensure that there is a safe physical and emotional environment for students.

Currently, private schools are subject to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and, under the Education Act 1989, are required to have suitable premises and equipment, as approved by the Secretary for Education. In certain circumstances, a private school's registration may be suspended by the Secretary for Education, if the welfare of the students is at risk.

However, the Education Act 1989 does not permit the Secretary for Education to consider students' physical and emotional welfare when registering a private school. Nor does the Act allow the Secretary to deregister a school if it fails to provide a safe environment for its students.

Proposed change

The Government is considering adding a new registration criterion for private schools, requiring the provision of a safe physical and emotional environment for students.

This change would allow the Secretary for Education to consider the ability of a private school to provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students when making decisions about school registration.

It would also mean that, where safety standards are not being met in an existing private school, the Secretary could cancel registration based on risk to student welfare. At present this power is not available to the Secretary.

This proposed change is intended to provide more certainty for private school students, and their families/whanau, that they can expect the same standards of physical and emotional safety at private schools as students in other educational institutions.

How to have your say

We are seeking your views on the proposed change to the registration criteria.

You can email your submission to consultation@education.govt.nz or write to:

Education Consultation
Ministry of Education
PO Box 1666
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

Submissions close on **13 April 2018**.

Personal information and confidentiality

Submissions and documents associated with the consultation process meet the definition of official information, and are therefore subject to the Official Information Act 1982.

Please clearly indicate in your submission if you do not want your name to be included in any summary of submissions that we may publish.

Further information

If you have any questions about making a submission, or would like more information, please email consultation@education.govt.nz.