You have been told by the school that your child has been stood-down. This information sheet gives you some information. You may also want to refer to the legislation and rules about stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions, available from the principal.

If your child faces disciplinary action from the school, you may feel devastated or angry at the school or your child. You may want to support your child no matter what, or you may want the school to punish your child.

It is always important to hear both sides of the story and work with the school and your child to get your child back to school again.

What is a stand-down?
A stand-down is the formal removal of a student from school by the principal for a specified period. Stand-downs can be no more than five school days in a term or ten school days in a year.

What are the reasons for a stand-down?
The principal has to be satisfied that:
- the student’s behaviour is a harmful or dangerous example to other students at the school, or
- the student’s continual disobedience is a harmful or dangerous example to other students at the school (Section 14(1)(a) of the Education Act 1989), or
- because of the student’s behaviour, it is likely that the student, or other students at the school, will be seriously harmed if the student is not stood-down (Section 14(1)(b) of the Education Act 1989).

Can a student be stood-down just for breaking a school rule?
The principal cannot automatically stand-down a student because the student has broken a school rule or behaved badly. The principal has to consider the circumstances of each situation and be satisfied that the situation warrants standing-down the student.

The principal must act fairly.

If my child has been stood-down, what happens next?
1. Your child will be able to return to school on the date given in the principal’s letter (Section 14(3) of the Education Act 1989).
2. You and/or your child may ask to meet the principal (or the principal may ask to meet you) to discuss the stand-down. You can take another support person with you.
3. Your child may be required to go to the school for guidance and counselling during the stand-down period (Section 14(3) of the Education Act 1989).
4. Your child may be able to go to school during the stand-down period for specific activities or classes, if you ask the principal and the principal considers your request is reasonable (Section 14(3) of the Education Act 1989).
5. You may ask the school or the Ministry of Education for a copy of the Education (Stand-down, Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion) Rules 1999. The rules are on the Ministry’s website at www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/sdsrules. These rules contain detailed information about stand-downs and suspensions (see the back page for Ministry phone numbers).

Stay Calm
Talk to your child about what happened
Think about your child’s behaviour, then go and talk to the principal

A stand-down is not a criminal offence and does not appear on a Police record.
There is no need for your child to change schools because of the stand-down.
At a stand-down meeting, ask the principal:

» what happened from their perspective, and if they talked with your child about their concerns and listened to your child’s point of view
» how they helped your child understand the consequences of their behaviour and learn from it
» how the disciplinary process works and how you can support your child
» if what happened is part of a bigger problem
» what other support and guidance is available
» how your child can successfully return to school.

Note: Schools can link you with relevant agencies and suggest options for counselling and support. Many schools have a plan to get students back into a normal school routine. You can help by:

» working with the school
» agreeing to a shared plan
» checking the plan is working
» having ongoing discussions with the school.

Where can you go if you would like some guidance and advice?

Parent Legal Information Line for School Issues (PLINFO)
PO Box 24005, Wellington 6142
Tel: 0800 499 488
Email: info@wwcl.org.nz
Web: wwwwwcl.org.nz

Youth Law (Auckland)
Tel: 0800 884 529
Email: info@youthlaw.co.nz
Web: www.youthlaw.co.nz

Commissioner for Children
PO Box 5610, Wellington 6145
Tel: 0800 2244 53
Email: advice@occ.org.nz
Web: wwwocc.org.nz

Community Law Centres
Web: www.communitylaw.org.nz

Citizens Advice Bureau
Tel: 0800 367 222
Web: www.cab.org.nz

Also consider people who know your child well and can speak for them, such as a coach, teacher aide or guidance counsellor.

Please note: it may be better not to ask a school staff member or member of the school’s board of trustees, as they may not be able to speak on your child’s behalf.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Tai Tokerau
Tel: 09 436 8900
Email: enquiries.whangarei@education.govt.nz

Auckland
Tel: 09 632 9400
Email: enquiries.auckland@education.govt.nz

Waikato
Tel: 07 850 8880
Email: enquiries.hamilton@education.govt.nz

Bay of Plenty/Waiariki
Tel: 07 349 7399
Email: enquiries.BoP-Waiariki@education.govt.nz

Hawke’s bay/Tairāwhiti
Tel: 06 833 6730
Email: enquiries.napier@education.govt.nz

Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatu
Tel: 06 349 6300
Email: enquiries.wanganui@education.govt.nz

Wellington area
Tel: 04 463 8699
Email: enquiries.lowerhutt@education.govt.nz

Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast area
Tel: 03 546 3470
Email: enquiries.nelson@education.govt.nz

Canterbury
Tel: 03 378 7300
Email: enquiries.christchurch@education.govt.nz

Otago/Southland
Tel: 03 471 5200
Email: enquiries.dunedin@education.govt.nz

You may also contact:

Human Rights Commission
Infoline: 0800 496 877
Email: infoline@hrc.co.nz
Text: 0210 236 4253
Web: www.hrc.co.nz

Office of the Ombudsmen
PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143
New Zealand-wide answer phone
Tel: 0800 802 602

Complaints
Email: info@ombudsmen.parliament.nz
Web: www.ombudsmen.parliament.nz