

School Suspensions and Stand-Downs

What this is about...

Suspensions are the formal removal of a student from school until that school's board of trustees decides the next step at a suspension meeting. Stand-downs are the formal removal of a student from school for a specified period. The more formal process for a suspension means that these usually relate to longer time periods away from school, and are usually for more serious matters. Ultimately a student may be expelled from a school, but the school must usually arrange a new school if the child is under the legal leaving age.

There may be substantial differences between the application of these procedures between schools. Both are subject to guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education but are strongly influenced by the policies set by school boards of trustees. It is also possible that some schools may be able to deal with issues at an early stage and so avoid the necessity for these more formal procedures.

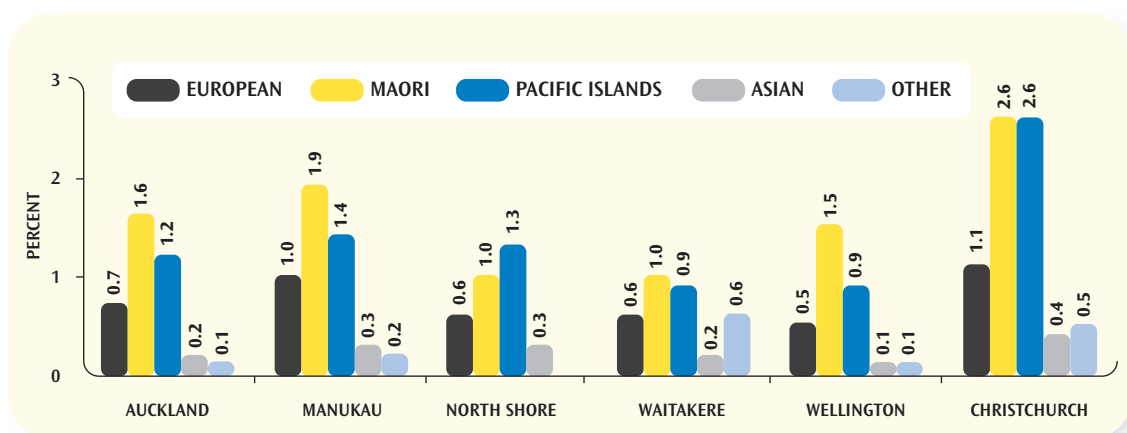
This indicator presents the percentage of the population aged 5 to 15 years in each of the six largest cities who were suspended or stood-down, for the period July 1999 to December 1999.

Some children may have been suspended or stood-down more than once during this period but the numbers are likely to be small because the figures are for six months only. Figures for suspensions and stand-downs have been aggregated because suspensions are relatively few on a per school basis and thus there may be a significant margin of error.

What did we find ?

- There appears to be broad consistency in the application of stand-down and suspension policies across cities, because the percentages are comparable.
- Proportions of suspension and stand-downs are higher among Maori and Pacific Islands children.
- Asian students are rarely stood-down or suspended.

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION AGED 5 TO 15 YEARS WHO WERE SUSPENDED OR STOOD-DOWN, BY ETHNICITY (JULY TO DEC 1999)¹⁰⁶



Data Source: Ministry of Education

There is no evidence of a relationship between socio-economic status of cities and rates of suspensions and stand-downs. There may be a connection however, between high rates and subsequent juvenile offending rates. For example, Christchurch shows the highest level of suspensions and stand-downs over this period and has high levels of juvenile offending (refer page 83).

¹⁰⁶ Proportion has been calculated using 1996 Census ethnicity data and the proportion is per ethnic grouping. There may be some differences between the 1996 Census data and ethnicity identified by the students when a suspension or stand-down is recorded.