

OIA-CE-2024-02616

25 October 2024

9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email, received on 9 October 2024, to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) requesting information on the operational matters preventing visits to the Whakatakapokai Youth Justice residence. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

You have requested:

Context: in the month of September 2024, Oranga Tamariki was unable to accommodate visits to Whakatakapokai, and the reason given was “operational matters”. Question: what operational matters, specifically, have prevented Oranga Tamariki from being unable to accommodate visits to Whakatakapokai in the month of September 2024?

Context: Oranga Tamariki is able to accommodate visits to Whakatakapokai in the month of November 2024. Question: How, specifically, will the “operational matters” that prevented visits in September 2024 be resolved by November 2024?

Whakatakapokai is currently operating under reduced parameters while operational changes, including kaimahi recruitment, are completed. We anticipate visits being more appropriate in early 2025, when further progress has been made and particularly when a new Residence Manager will be in place and ready to lead the visit process. We note that Oranga Tamariki did not state that a visit to Whakatakapokai in November 2024 could be accommodated.

I understand that the Minister for Children advised all Members of Parliament in a letter sent on 29 August 2024 that visits are an operational decision to be made by Oranga Tamariki and will only be approved if we feel confident that they will not interfere with the usual operation of the residence. This is a matter of safety and security for tamariki and rangatahi residing there, and for our kaimahi.

Oranga Tamariki may make the information contained in this letter available to the public by publishing this on our website with your personal details removed.

IN-CONFIDENCE

I trust you find this information useful. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise them with Oranga Tamariki. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by contacting them on 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Iain Chapman', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Iain Chapman
Acting Deputy Chief Executive
Youth Justice Services and Residential Care