

11 November 2025

Dear **Re: Official Information Act request for ERO's 2025 progress report on Wesley College**

I refer to your email to the Education Review Office dated 21 October 2025 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

A copy of the Wesley College progress report

Please find our full response below.

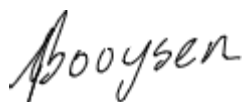
As noted in the report, a recommendation to suspend the hostel's license has serious implications for the students and staff at Wesley College. The recommendation speaks to a lack of confidence that hostel culture has sufficiently improved and that the five hostel buildings are positive, inclusive and emotionally safe climates and environments for all boarders.

Please note ERO has withheld some information under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA. ERO has chosen to withhold this information so as protect the privacy of students and staff at the Hostel, and that to publicly publish this information would be in bad faith to the individuals concerned during an ongoing, distressing time for all involved.

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 We do not publish requesters' personal information.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.

Yours sincerely,



Shelley Booyesen
Deputy Chief Executive – Review and Improvement Services

Progress Report - September 2025

School Name: Wesley College

Profile Number: 104

Location: Pukekohe, Auckland

Wesley College Overview

Wesley College is a 180-year-old Methodist boarding school in Pukekohe. It is a state integrated school for students in Years 9 to 15. Pacific learners are the largest student group at the college, with 82% identifying as Pacific heritage, 21% as Māori, 11% as New Zealand European/Pakeha, 3% as Asian, and 1% as MELAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African).

Approximately 45% of students enrolled at the college live in the Wesley College Trust Board boarding hostel. The hostel accommodates both male and female students in 5 boarding houses. Students travel from various parts of Auckland to attend the college. The number of students boarding at the college has decreased. Increasing numbers of students attend as day students.

The Wesley College mission is grounded on the Methodist ethos of Rangatahi, being prepared to lead positive change wherever they are. This is underpinned by the Wesley College vision, 'Toku Toioru, Toku Toioru, Toku Manaaki' - When service *is my wellbeing, my wellbeing is served*'. The school aims to fulfil this vision by Faith 'Whakapono', by Learning, 'Ako', and by Hard Work, 'Puku Mahi'. A strong sense of loyalty and pride is exhibited by both current and former students and their families.

Summary

The July 2025 ERO monitoring visit revealed a further serious incident of bullying and assault in the Wesley College Hostel. ERO found that the hostel continues to face deeply rooted challenges, inconsistent staff oversight, and an ongoing code of silence continues to undermine student safety. School leaders, the School Board and the Wesley College Trust Board have demonstrated a commitment to improvement but face significant challenges in shifting long-standing practices and culture.

Following the July 2025 review and analysis of both historical and recent incidents, ERO is not assured that physical bullying and assault will not recur in the Wesley College hostel. The findings indicate ongoing safety concerns, insufficient supervision, and a hostel culture that has yet to demonstrate a consistently safe and inclusive environment for all boarders. This report includes a recommendation to suspend the hostel licence. The suspension of the hostel licence is a significant action that may affect the school's capacity to sustain its enrolment numbers.

The second part of this report outlines the progress the school has made, what it is doing well and identifies actions for improvement. We find that Wesley College has made progress in attendance, academic achievement, and curriculum engagement, but further improvement is needed in leadership alignment, safeguarding, and accountability to ensure sustained and inclusive outcomes for all students.

Hostel Safety and License Concerns

Historical Issues

The Wesley College hostel has a long history of abuse, highlighted in the Royal Commission of Inquiry. A 2019 independent review identified serious issues and made a number of recommendations for improvement. This was followed by further safety concerns and incidents between 2019 and 2023. The Ministry of Education (MOE) suspended the hostel license in late 2022 due to safety concerns. The hostel reopened in January 2023, with five of six hostel buildings meeting standards by March 2023.

ERO reviews and monitoring

The 2023 ERO review of the Wesley College hostel identified ongoing risks to student health, safety, and wellbeing, along with limited progress on critical improvements, inadequate management of complaints, and an insufficient response from leadership.

ERO maintained regular oversight of Wesley College hostel in 2024, raising safety concerns and initiating a full review in November 2024 following a serious incident involving assault of a student.

ERO's 2024 review found that while some improvements had been made to hostel safety and systems, progress remained slow and inconsistent. This prompted the MOE to review the hostel license and in April 2025 it imposed five conditions on the hostel licence, including enhanced supervision, strategic planning, facility upgrades, and mandatory incident reporting.

Ministry Intervention

A Limited Statutory Manager (LSM) was appointed by the MOE in April 2023 to support the school to improve governance and leadership and respond to recommendations made by ERO. In August 2024 a second LSM was appointed. In May 2025 the LSM was revoked by the MOE.

Hostel License and conditions

As a result of the November 2024 ERO review, the Ministry of Education completed a licensing check and placed five conditions on the hostel licence as follows:

- Special condition 1: The hostel owner must implement specific changes to the supervision of boarders and report on performance as detailed in the accompanying letter.
- Special condition 2: The hostel owner must provide reporting on the operation of the hostel each term; Strategic Plan on the future of the hostel; and evidence of review and consultation on hostel policies, as detailed in the accompanying letter.
- Special condition 3: The hostel owner must provide an inventory of premises, equipment and facilities and report on improvements. The hostel owner will be subject to inspections by authorised Ministry staff to confirm improvements to specified aspects of provision, as detailed in the accompanying letter.
- Special condition 4: The hostel owner must provide information not yet provided for its licence renewal Application.
- Special condition 5: The hostel owner must provide reporting on incidents of abuse, harm or ill-treatment.

2025 ERO monitoring

Following the 2024 report, ERO undertook to monitor progress regularly. On July 25, 2025, ERO held a progress meeting with the Principal and Presiding Member to review the school's status regarding improvement priorities and compliance matters.

During this meeting, the ERO was informed that, since the previous visit, another significant bullying incident had occurred in the hostel. 9(2)(a)

Subsequent to the online meeting, an onsite ERO visit was conducted on Wednesday, 30 July to further investigate concerns regarding student safety within the hostel.

ERO's onsite visit involved three ERO evaluators onsite at the college for one day, followed by five online meetings. ERO evaluators:

- spoke to 9(2)(a) - Year 10 and 12 boys and a group of mixed year level girls
- met with the Trust Board Chair
- met with the Principal who was accompanied by his principal consultant
- 9(2)(a)
- 9(2)(a)
- read a range of documents
- had a guided tour of the hostels
- engaged in online follow-up meetings with 9(2)(a)
- met with the principal to discuss ERO's emerging findings at the school
- met with the Wesley College Trust Board at the school.

Findings for the Wesley College Hostel

- Leadership members of the School Board and Trust Board reacted promptly to the incident once it was disclosed to them.
- School and hostel staff faced difficulties conducting thorough investigations and determining the individuals responsible for the assaults.
- A pervasive culture of not speaking out (a code of silence) and accepting bullying and assault as a 'rite of passage' in the hostel persists, despite the efforts of the principal, senior school leaders and some hostel staff to shift this.
- Deeply entrenched practices and intergenerational beliefs and attitudes within the student body and some of the hostel staff continue to perpetuate a culture of intimidation and systemic abuse.
- The Trust Board and school leaders report that there have been ongoing improvements in the hostel, particularly following this incident several months ago. Investments have been made in safeguarding planning and actions to change the ethos, with a stated commitment to supporting and caring for all students enrolled.

- The Trust Board acknowledge that altering long-standing practices presents challenges and described their efforts as a work in progress.
- Policies and processes in place for supervision and support in the hostels are much improved. The recording of incidents and reporting to the Board is improved.
- However, in the absence of a culture where students are confident and feel safe to speak up, and where currently not all staff actively supervise, react, follow expectations, and record sufficiently, it is challenging to rely on the information being collected about the number of incidents occurring.
- A new platform for students to anonymously report incidents is now in use and the Board and leaders are confident that this is contributing to more of a 'Speak Up' culture.
- Senior leaders and Trust Board members continue to express that numbers of reported incidents are increasing as students are starting to feel more comfortable to report events anonymously.
- Improvements to the hostel buildings' physical environment have been made. The upgrading of surveillance cameras in the hostels, a condition on the hostel licence, is in process but not complete at the time of this review. Students reported to ERO that they are still wandering at night and only being apprehended 50% of the time.
- The school has taken steps to strengthen record keeping and communication of day leave, student absence and attendance. There is currently no evidence that attendance data between the hostel and the school has been compared, analysed, monitored, or tracked.
- Expectations for supervision are clear and professional learning and development has been provided for hostel staff. However, supervision is not sufficiently rigorous and proactive, and guidance and expectations have not been consistently implemented or applied in practice when needed by all staff.
- 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Without a unified and endorsed culture of care supported by all hostel staff and current students, the safety and security of boarders continue to be at risk.

ERO is not assured that further physical bullying and assault will not occur again. This judgement is made on the basis of the evidence collected alongside a comprehensive examination of historical and recent 2025 documented hostel incidents that include:

- physical assaults
- fighting
- bullying with physical violence
- online bullying
- use of vapes, drugs and alcohol
- abusive behaviour
- damage to property
- students leaving without permission
- students leaving without signing out
- 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]
- students wandering/roaming during the night
- ongoing defiance of rules and instructions, continual disobedience
- disrespectful behaviour
- filming and sharing of student assault
- theft

- 9(2)(a)
- lack of supervision
- faulty or ineffective cameras.

ERO does not have confidence that hostel culture has sufficiently improved and that the five hostel buildings are positive, inclusive and emotionally safe climates and environments for all borders.

Area of Non-Compliance

These ongoing concerns have led ERO to identify areas where compliance with regulations and conditions of the hostel licence are not being met.

- The Hostel Trust Board should ensure that following any incidents, communication with all appropriate agencies is timely (*Education (Hostels) Regulations 2005: Regulation 58*).

Recommendation

ERO recommends that the Secretary for Education takes formal steps under the Education (Hostels) Regulations 2005 to suspend the hostel's licence.

ERO acknowledges that suspending the hostel licence is a serious step which may impact the school's ability to maintain its roll.

Improvement and Progress in the School

Findings for the School

This section more detail for the school to include in its strategic and annual planning for ongoing improvement across the school. It outlines what the school is doing well and identifies actions for improvement.

Learner wellbeing, success and achievement

- NCEA results for 2024 show gains at Levels 2 and 3, with University Entrance up by 15%.
- Achievement levels exceed national averages and those of schools with similar Equity Index ratings
- Baseline wellbeing data was collected from approximately one third of the student cohort in Term One 2025 and reported to the Board to guide improvement
- Regular attendance is improving, and chronic absences are decreasing.

Teaching and learning

- Curriculum relevance and authenticity is developing positively, with students indicating a greater sense of purpose in learning.
- Student voice is influencing teaching practices. Further personalisation and culturally responsive approaches are needed to help students.

Leadership and Planning

- A review of leadership roles and responsibilities is currently underway, efforts to enhance alignment between the school and hostel are progressing slowly.
- Key next steps include embedding safeguarding priorities into annual planning, assigning clear leadership responsibilities, and improving monitoring and reporting.

Key next steps for improvement:

- School leaders and the Board work together to fully embed the improvement priorities into the annual plan, including the child safeguarding plan.
- Leaders establish a plan to regularly reviewing how well teaching and learning initiatives are working and identify areas for further improvement.
- Leaders document coherent and clear roles and responsibilities for all school leaders to bring about improvement.
- Leaders and the School Board include measures of progress in planning, monitor these closely and regularly review progress to ensure accountability for delivery, with a strong focus on driving progress at pace.

Planning for ERO's next engagement with the school

ERO will continue to monitor progress. This will include visiting the hostel to verify any issues identified have been addressed, including responding to Ministry of Education hostel licensing conditions.

Thank you for your participation and engagement in the recent ERO review.

We look forward to working with you and seeing progress for your learners, staff, board and school community.

Ngā mihi

Shelley Booysen

DCE Review and Improvement Services

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Ko te tamaiti te pūtake o te kaupapa | The child — the heart of the matter

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