Dear [Redacted]

Thank you for your email of 4 July 2018 to Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development. Your email has been forwarded to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki), for response as the matters raised fall within our area of responsibility. You have requested the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. [Redacted]

2. How long can Government agencies hold information about an individual.

3. What happens to the information.

4. Where and who is in charge of holding and releasing the requested information.

5. Can a search be done to locate specific information.

I understand you have spoken with [Redacted] from our Privacy and Official Information team about your request for information regarding [Redacted] (point one above). This response addresses the remaining questions you have raised.

Oranga Tamariki was established on 1 April 2017. It was formerly Child, Youth and Family (CYF), a service arm of the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). Oranga Tamariki was formed as part of a bold overhaul of the existing care and protection, and youth justice systems in New Zealand.

I have interpreted your request as relating to information about children who have come to the attention of Oranga Tamariki or our predecessor agencies. Below I have provided some general information relating to the storage and management of information held by Oranga Tamariki.
How long can Government agencies hold information about an individual. 
What happens to the information

The maintenance, management and destruction of records/information held by government agencies is governed by legislation, including the Privacy Act 1993, the Public Records Act 2005 and the Official Information Act 1982. You can view specific pieces of legislation online at: www.legislation.govt.nz. Other relevant legislation you may wish to review includes the Adoption Act 1955 and the Adult Adoption Information Act (1985) which have sections concerning the collection and release of information.

Under the Public Records Act 2005, public agencies, such as Oranga Tamariki, are required to have legal instruments called Disposal Authorities to help them decide how to manage information, including potential destruction or transfer to Archives New Zealand. You can find more information about records management for the New Zealand public sector here: https://records.archives.govt.nz/

Where and who is in charge of holding and releasing the requested information
Can a search be done to locate specific information

Individuals are able to request access to their files from Oranga Tamariki under the provisions of the Privacy Act 1993 and the Official Information Act 1982. Oranga Tamariki is able to provide information as far back as the child’s initial involvement with Oranga Tamariki (or its predecessor agencies). In some cases, we have records that date as far back as the 1900s. Some are managed by Archives New Zealand for Oranga Tamariki.

Our Privacy and Official Information (POI) Group process requests for access to an individual’s files that we hold. The team ensures consents and entitlements are checked prior to release. When our POI team receive a request, a thorough search of computer records is completed along with a search of archived material. In the event that material relevant to the request or requester has been placed in archives, this information (the physical file) will be recalled from archive to ensure all relevant information is identified and considered for release. More information about the procedures and policies can be found here:


I trust the information above is helpful in supporting your understanding of how we hold and manage information relating to the children who come to our attention.

I understand from [redacted] that you are interested in what the policies were in 1968; specifically what kind of information would be shared between departments and whether information would have been destroyed. In 1968 the Department of Education – Child Welfare Division was responsible for the work now managed by Oranga Tamariki. From the 1970s to the 1990s this work was managed by the Department of Social Welfare and from the 1990s until 1 April 2017, the Ministry of Social Development was the responsible department. You can read more about the history of the Ministry of Social Development and its predecessors at this link:

I am declining your request for information about the information sharing policies and records management policies in place in 1968 under section 18(e) of the Act, on the grounds that the information does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts, cannot be found.

You may wish to contact Archives New Zealand which may hold some information relevant to your enquiries. Further, you may wish to review the Archives Act 1957 which governed the maintenance and destruction of official information in the 1960s.

If you require any further information or you wish to discuss this response you can contact our Ministerial Support Team via OIA_Requests@ot.govt.nz.

We intend to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. We will do this by publishing this letter on the Oranga Tamariki website. Your personal details will be deleted and we will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. Information about this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by contacting them on 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

Steve Groom
General Manager Public, Ministerial and Executive Services