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Tasmanian Government

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25 July 2023

Sarah Redden
Committee Secretary
Senate Education and Employment References Committee
eec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Redden

INQUIRY INTO THE NATIONAL TREND OF SCHOOL REFUSAL AND RELATED MATTERS

Thank you for your letter of 27 June 2023 requesting the Department *for* Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) provide responses to a number of questions on notice.

DECYP's approach to student attendance

DECYP recognises attendance is foundational to learning and that the more regularly a student attends school, the higher the likelihood of their academic and future success. DECYP's Access, Participation and Engagement System Goal goes to the heart of public education in Tasmania. We work to the principle that everyone is able to participate, engage in learning, and pursue life opportunities regardless of background, culture, ethnicity, identity, or level of ability. In our efforts to increase attendance and engagement, DECYP continues to:

1. develop system-wide approaches to improving student and family engagement
2. support schools to measure, monitor and improve student wellbeing and engagement
3. improve reporting systems for reviewing student attendance, including a suite of real-time suspension and attendance tracking and reporting tools at a school and system level.

School refusal

DECYP does not capture school refusal as a separate absence reason within school attendance data, however DECYP initiatives and strategies to increase student engagement for learning and attendance at school apply to students engaged in school refusal.

Questions on notice

Please find attached DECYP's response to the questions on notice, including explanatory information and data tables where applicable (Attachment 1).

DECYP is committed to improving data capture and reporting to gain insight to assist individual learners and to supporting inclusive practice through data-informed school and system improvement planning.

Should you require further information or clarification relating to any of the issues raised please contact Strategic Policy and Projects by email at SPP.admin@decyp.tas.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Burgess
ASSOCIATE SECRETARY

Attachments
1   DECYP responses school refusal senate inquiry questions on notice (DOC/23/105350)

Inquiry into the national trend of school refusal and other matters: DECYP responses to questions on notice

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Questions on notice: inquiry into the national trend of school refusal and related matters

Please provide attendance data by year level

Appendix 1 summarises the average daily absence rates (per cent) by reason and year level in Tasmanian Government schools in 2022, including the average daily attendance rate (per cent).

Do you collect data on reasons for absenteeism?

If so, please provide the categories you collect data against

Please provide the absenteeism data by year level and by category you collect this data under.

Data is collected against two categories: 'authorised' and 'unauthorised'. **Appendix 1** details average daily absence rates (per cent) by absence category and reason.

Authorised:
Authorised absences are recorded as one of three options:

- Explained - Sickness/Incapacity
- Explained - Other
- Discipline - Suspension or Exclusion

Unauthorised:
Unauthorised absences are recorded as one of three options:

- Unauthorised - Unexplained by Parent/Carer
- Unauthorised - Not an excusable circumstance
- Unauthorised - Truant

What is your attendance target level for students? Is this consistent across all year groups?

If this varies by year level, please provide the target for each year level.

The Department *for* Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) does not have a state-wide school attendance target, however has many initiatives and policies to support students to attend school each day to gain skills and knowledge for success later in life.

The Tasmanian Budget Paper No. 2, Vol. 1 2023-24 reports on the engagement through the measure of the number of students who are in the 90 per cent attendance threshold (i.e. attend 9 out of every 10 days). The Budget Paper on page 25 sets out the following targets (set out in Table 2.3).

Academic literature establishes the 90 per cent attendance threshold as a reasonable measure, however this is considered an ambitious threshold in the context of post-covid, with increased sickness and the alternative provision of learning.

Table 2.3: Performance Information - Output Group 1[1] (continued)

Performance Measure	Unit of Measure	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Target	2023-24 Target
Students attend school 9 out of 10 days (Prep-6)[6]	%	53.6	63.4	45.1	+10pp
Students attend school 9 out of 10 days (7-10)[6]	%	37.8	43.4	28.0	+10pp
Students are directly retained to Year 12[7]	%	66.0	66.4	63.2	+1pp

The Report on Governments Services (ROGS) 20223, No 4 in relation to School Education publishes a further breakdown of attendance rates and levels for Year 1 to 10.[1]

Table 4A.22 — Student attendance level, government schools, by Indigenous status (a), (b)

	Unit	NSW (c)	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT (d)	NT	Aust
Full time students										
Proportion of student attendance rates greater than or equal to 90 per cent										
All students										
Years 1–6										
2022 (e)	%	48.7	56.6	53.5	51.3	50.2	49.4	43.3	40.0	51.8
2021	%	74.9	79.4	68.4	72.1	71.2	68.5	75.4	53.3	73.7
2019	%	78.5	75.5	73.2	74.0	73.7	74.5	72.0	51.0	75.3
2018	%	79.4	78.6	75.3	78.5	75.3	78.2	73.9	52.6	77.5
2017	%	na	79.5	76.4	78.3	75.0	79.0	77.6	53.9	77.4
2016	%	na	81.1	77.4	78.1	76.0	79.8	78.6	51.9	78.3
2015	%	na	82.2	76.3	78.8	76.0	79.6	80.1	53.9	78.5
Years 7–10										
2022 (e)	%	36.6	51.3	42.7	40.6	41.7	35.2	35.1	29.1	42.1
2021	%	55.4	68.1	55.5	52.7	58.1	52.3	62.2	40.8	58.3
2019	%	64.0	68.1	62.4	60.8	64.9	60.2	57.6	40.1	63.8
2018	%	64.5	71.1	63.2	64.1	66.6	62.7	59.0	39.2	65.5
2017	%	na	72.0	66.3	64.2	66.4	63.4	63.7	40.1	67.4
2016	%	na	73.5	66.9	63.7	67.2	63.7	65.0	41.4	68.1
2015	%	na	74.7	66.3	63.8	67.3	64.7	66.4	44.1	68.5
Years 1–10										
2022 (e)	%	44.3	54.4	49.5	47.6	46.7	44.1	40.6	36.5	48.2
2021	%	67.9	75.0	63.6	65.3	65.8	62.5	70.9	49.3	68.0
2019	%	73.1	72.6	69.4	69.5	70.1	69.5	67.1	47.6	71.1
2018	%	74.0	75.7	71.1	73.7	71.7	72.8	68.8	48.4	73.1
2017	%	na	76.6	73.1	73.7	71.7	73.7	72.9	49.7	73.9
2016	%	na	78.2	74.0	73.4	72.6	74.0	74.0	48.6	74.8
2015	%	na	79.3	73.0	73.9	72.7	74.1	75.3	50.9	75.0

As per the Secretary's Instruction *No 5 for Managing Absences in a State School that are Not Authorised by the Education Act 2016* (the Education Act), Principals are to ensure that their school is proactive and timely in identifying and managing unauthorised absences of students, with the aim of improving the attendance and retention of students at school. The *Attendance Policy and Process* must be followed when a student in Prep to Year 12 accrues the equivalent of five full days of unauthorised absence.

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[1] [4 School education - Report on Government Services 2023 - Productivity Commission (pc.gov.au)](https://pc.gov.au)

Through the annual School Improvement Planning process, a significant number of schools have individual attendance targets in line with their school context. School priorities are determined from the analysis of school data through a scan and assessment process and are aligned to DECYP's framework driving school improvement, *Our Approach to School Improvement* (Our Approach), and the domains of the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT). In developing these priorities, schools can set school or individual year level attendance targets.

DECYP has developed dynamic reporting systems that provide detailed daily insights into school and individual student attendance. The Attendance and Suspension tracking and reporting tools use Power BI and can be used by schools to track students and patterns, implement strategies for individual or groups of students and plan for school improvement.

The various reports accessible to DECYP staff are as follows:

- School leaders and teachers have access to their school-level Attendance and Suspension Reports, which provide:
    - Absence levels and consecutive absences
    - Trends across years and by Term and days of the week
    - Students with repeat sanctions
    - Sanctions by category and reason
    - Proportion and number of students sanctioned; number of days suspended and average length of suspension
    - Absences and suspensions by:
        - Parental education level
        - Disability
        - English as an Additional Language
        - Out of Home Care
        - First Nations Australia
        - Gender
        - Year Group.
- DECYP leaders have corporate access to all schools' Attendance and Suspension Reports which provide:
    - The ability to examine and monitor individual or groups of schools
    - Attendance and suspensions by week and ICSEA, region, year group and school type
    - Attendance rate and weekly trends across all schools.

To support children and young children to attend school, three key strategies are in place:
- Facilitating access to learning
- Increasing participation in learning
- Facilitating engagement in learning.

Facilitating access:

- Tasmanian e-School – the K-12 online and distance learning provider for all public education students in Tasmania

- Extension Schools – to assist more students to complete Year 12, all secondary and district schools now offer Years 11 and 12. This enables students to extend their senior schooling within their existing high school rather than transition to a separate secondary college.

<u>Increasing participation:</u>

- Attendance Campaign – 'Anything can happen with an education', and in February 2023, DECYP launched 'Every school day matters', highlighting the importance of regular school attendance, including benefits such as building social skills, and opening options.

- Back on Track – is an outreach approach to support young people who have not successfully transitioned from Year 10 into Years 11 and 12.

- Student attendance is a priority for the Department and is foundational to learning. As part of this work, the Student Engagement and Attendance Team are working with identified schools to pilot strategies to improve attendance and reduce suspensions.

<u>Facilitating engagement:</u>

- Trauma Funding – the Tasmanian Government supports children and young people in Tasmanian Government schools each year impacted by trauma through the provision of intensive, highly individualised support.

- Disability Funding – Since 2020 the Educational Adjustments Disability Funding Model has provided additional supports for students with disability through the provision of Support Teachers.

- Tasmania's approach is well advanced, underpinned by the Department's Child and *Student Wellbeing Strategy Wellbeing for Learning*, almost 30,000 student voices through our annual Child and Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey, and the whole-of-government priorities of the *Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy It Takes a Tasmanian Village*

Have you done any analysis work on the linkage between student attendance and student academic performance?

DECYP consistently monitors trends in both attendance and student achievement, and regularly analyses the interaction of these along with other factors such as socioeconomic background. Analysis indicates a clear correlation between attendance and academic achievement, that the more regularly a student attends school, the higher the likelihood of their academic success, and that this is evident across all year levels and remains true when their level of educational advantage is taken into account.

DECYP utilises a number of systems and reports to support its analysis as outlined on Page 5 in response to the question "What is your attendance target level for students? Is this consistent across all year groups?".

These analyses are consistent with what is observed in numerous studies over time (including nationally), such as the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) '[Attendance Matters](#)' report (2019) and the references therein.

How much of a gap are we seeing between the academic outcomes of children engaged in school refusal, and other students?

As noted above, DECYP does not capture data on students experiencing school refusal as a separate category of non-attendance. Such absences could be recorded as either 'authorised' and classified as a medical or other reason, or 'unauthorised' depending on the information provided by the parent.

As noted above, the data suggests that the more regularly a student attends school, the higher the likelihood of their academic success.

How many children are enrolled in a form of education, other than mainstream school, including

Home School:

In Tasmania the registration of home education is managed by the Office of the Education Registrar (OER). Under the Education Act, parents or carers may exercise educational choice to register as home educators, thereby assuming responsibility for delivering education during their children's compulsory years of schooling.

On 30 June 2022, there were 1303 registrations for children from 776 families across Tasmania.[2]

Virtual School/Distance Education:

Tasmania does not use the term 'virtual school' and 'distance education', however these forms of education provision are provided through Tasmanian eSchool.

In Tasmania, the Tasmanian eSchool [3] is the online learning provider catering for students who meet the criteria of currently being unable to attend a mainstream school. It offers educational programs and online courses for public education students from Kindergarten to Year 12.

Students access Tasmanian eSchool programs in two ways:

- Through "enrolment".
- Through "registration" by a base school.

All of the learning programs are aligned to the Australian Curriculum for Primary and Secondary students, and senior secondary students enrol in TASC accredited courses. Most programs are delivered online, however there is provision for some specialised face to face delivery, as well as activity days and social clubs.

As at Census 2, 2022 (August) there were 414 students or 315.8 FTE enrolled at the Tasmanian eSchool. Some of these students would also have an enrolment in another Government School.

For students in Years 11 and 12 Schools and colleges are working together in regions to support access to these engaging and diverse options, either at their own school, though a shared enrolment with a nearby provider or online through Virtual Learning Tasmania (VLT).

Eligibility Criteria for eSchool:

There are a number of reasons students may wish to participate in Tasmanian eSchool, some of which may relate to the criteria of 'school refusal'. For context these eligibility criteria include:

Isolation - This applies to students living at distances from the nearest appropriate school that falls within state and Commonwealth criteria. Students are considered isolated, depending on the distance of their home address from the nearest appropriate school, in combination with the distance from transport to the nearest appropriate school.

Pregnancy - This applies to a student who is pregnant, and where attendance at their local school is no longer in the student's best interests. This may also include a period of time after the birth of the student's child. This must be supported by appropriate evidence from a medical professional.

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[2] Department of Education Annual Report 2021-22 (oer.tas.gov.au)

[3] Tasmanian eSchool online and distance learning eSchool | Online & Distance Learning (education.tas.edu.au)

Medical (Psychological) - This applies to a student who has a diagnosed psychological condition, and participation at the Tasmanian eSchool is supported by a psychologist or psychiatrist. Appropriate evidence to support the enrolment must be provided. This may include evidence from appropriately qualified allied health professionals specialising in mental health, in addition to psychologists and psychiatrists.

Medical (Other) - This applies to students for whom attendance at a mainstream school is either not possible or not advisable due to medical reasons. This must be supported by evidence from a medical practitioner.

Travel - This applies to students who are travelling for a period of two Terms or more.

Other (please define categories)

Please provide student data against each category.

Other non-mainstream education categories in Tasmania are:

- Tier 4 (T4)
- Ashley School
- Approved Learning Program
- Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Tier 4 (T4)

Re-engagement provisions operate state-wide and provide highly personalised learning programs for disengaged students, with a strong focus on building relationships to support engagement. While students are engaged with T4, they remain enrolled at their base school.

Currently over 100 students are supported state-wide in Tier 4 provision at locations including Glenorchy, Launceston, Burnie and Devonport.

As of 2023, Studentworks is an annex of the Launceston Tier 4 provision, with a focus on building vocational skills within a safe and personalised environment.

Ashley School:

The Ashley Youth Detention Centre provides secure care and custody for young people aged 10-17 who are detained or remanded by the courts. Ashley School provides education for students detained or in remand at Ashley Youth Detention Centre. As at June 2022 for the April-June 2022 quarter, 10.1 young people were in custody each day on average.

Approved Learning Program:

Approved Learning Programs (ALPs) are appropriate courses of education or training for youth post-Year 10. Under the Education Act young people who have completed Year 10 are required to participate full-time in an ALP of education and/or training until they complete Year 12, or a Certificate III, or are 18 years of age.

A youth is participating in an approved learning program if they are being provided with education or training at a school/college, university, registered training organisation or with an employer.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships:[4]

Apprenticeships and Traineeships are a learning pathway that combine paid employment and on-the-job training under a formal training contract. An apprentice or trainee has the opportunity to combine employment with training, working toward a nationally recognised qualification, whilst also earning money. Apprenticeships and traineeships can be undertaken full-time, part-time* or as a School-based apprenticeship/traineeship.

Support Schools

As part of the continuum of supports for students with disability, the Department has three specialist Support Schools state-wide;

- Northern Support School.

- Southern Support School.

- North West Support School (2 campuses).

The three Support Schools provide an educational option, on separate specialist sites to support students with disability whose needs are complex and require extensive educational adjustment

Is data collected on the reason a student is not attending mainstream school and why an exemption has been provided?

Please provide data by category of exemption for how many students are enrolled in alternative methods of schooling.

There are some circumstances in which a child or young person can apply for an exemption from an enrolment at a Tasmanian Government, Catholic or Independent School or Home Education. An exemption is required to leave compulsory education and training is the student meets one of the minimum leaving requirements set out in the Education Act.

Under the Education Act, certificates of exemption can be issued to vary a child or young person's enrolment on:

a) application for Exemption from Enrolment (Prep to Year 10).
b) application for Exemption from Participation in an Approved Learning Program (Years 11-12).

Applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis and granted when it is proven to be in the child or young person's best interests.

Applicants seeking an exemption based on the best interests of the child or young person are encouraged to include further information including:

a) Medical certificate, psychologist report or mental health plan.
b) Social Worker report.
c) Evidence the youth has secured ongoing employment (e.g. signed letter from employer).

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[4] [Apprenticeships and Traineeships for school-aged learners - Years 9-12 (education.tas.gov.au)](#)

Applications for exemption from participation will be considered where the youth has secured full time employment of 35 or more hours, or where exemption from participation in an Approved Learning Program is in the best interests of the youth.

Certificates of exemption were issued to 170 students in 2022. Most of these certificates were issued to students in Year 11 and 12 (112 students). Of these certificates the majority were issues under, 'Employment – Other', consistent with 2021.

A total of 399 certificates of Part-time Attendance[5] were issued to 385 students in 2022.

Is data collected on student academic performance for students enrolled in alternative forms of schooling (as above)?

Data and evidence of achievement is used by teachers supporting children and young people, but is not reported as an aggregate figure based on the alternative forms of schooling.

For example, students enrolled in Tier 4 programs are assessed against their Learning Plans.

Learning Plans identify students' current skills, priority learning goals and document adjustments to support the students' learning. They outline students' aspirations, strengths, interests and needs, embedded in relevant curriculum. They also convey important information regarding the student's learning and wellbeing. Effective planning processes invite, capture and highlight student voice in goal setting and identifying key teaching strategies.

A Learning Plan informs assessment and reporting processes and may be adjusted based on the needs of the student, with parental agreement. For example when the student is not working towards the established curriculum outcomes (it has been deemed as not in the best interest of the child or young person to receive an assessment against the Australian Curriculum), they will be assessed against their learning plan goals.

Learning Plans are documented in Word documents, then uploaded into the Student Support System. Because Learning Plans are uploaded in this format, and because each Learning Plan is individual to the student, DECYP does not hold data on achievement of Learning Plan goals.

How much of a gap are we seeing between the academic outcomes of children engaged in school refusal, and other students?

As stated above, Tasmanian school data does not specifically record school refusal (absences could be recorded as either 'authorised' and classified as a medical or other reason, or 'unauthorised' depending on the information provided by the parent).

As DECYP does not have specific data on school refusal, it is not possible to assess whether there is a gap between the outcomes of children engaged in school refusal and other students.

Do schools with higher rates of school refusal also have poorer academic performance among the rest of the student body?

Again, while DECYP does have attendance data for individual schools this does not extend to discrete data on school refusal.

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[5] Part-time attendance, as per the *Education Act 2016*, is where approval is granted by the Minister for a student to attend school on a part-time basis as it is recognised it is in the best interests of the student.

What is the academic performance like of schools that are specifically geared towards reaching students who engage in school refusal? (e.g. Virtual Schools Victoria is one such school the committee is aware of).

DECYP does not provide schools that are specifically geared towards reaching students who engage in school refusal, aside from the previously mentioned Tasmanian eSchool, which provides education for students who meet the eligibility criteria (as outlined above).

Government schools are required to have effective Tier 1, 2 and 3[6] provisions to maximise student engagement, with key internal strategies outlining expectations for schools in relation to inclusive practice, wellbeing for learning, learner engagement and learner agency, including *Our Approach to School Improvement* and the *Approach to Student Engagement.*

Research clearly identifies four elements that are critical to student engagement, these are:

1. Belonging and Strong Relationships
2. School Culture
3. Quality Teaching for Learning
4. Student Voice and Agency

These key elements are the levers to improve student engagement and by focusing on the four elements DECYP endeavours to align resources, practices and strategies to engage all learners in schools, rather than in specialised schools for students experiencing school refusal.

School Support and Wellbeing Teams (SSWT) must be established in all schools, with an identified Support and Wellbeing Lead. Teams should include staff with a broad range of expertise including school leadership, professional support staff, support teachers, school health nurses, teachers, school chaplain etc. SSWTs must ensure students are safe, known, well and learning by working collaboratively to achieve support and wellbeing outcomes for all students, including those with low rates of attendance.

What academic outcomes do we see among students who have previously engaged in school refusal, but have since returned to school?

As mentioned above, as DECYP does not have specific data on school refusal it is not possible to analyse academic outcomes of children previously engaged in school refusal but have since returned to school.

What data is there on the effect of school refusal on students' employment opportunities later in life?

DECYP does not collect either discrete school refusal data or data on students' employment once they leave the Government school system.

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[6] APPROACH TO STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (sharepoint.com)

What work has been done to understand the complex factors that influence student absenteeism? / Has any work been done to identify students who may be at risk of school refusal?

What intervention strategies are in place to support these students and families?

As well as established policies and procedures that support children and young people, DECYP has introduced several new strategies designed to support our learners to be known, safe, well and learning.

These are linked to *Our Approach to School Improvement* (Our Approach), the Department framework used by schools to plan, implement, and measure their school improvement efforts. Our Approach highlights 'collecting detailed attendance information and planning individualised and culturally authentic approaches to addressing attendance' as a crucial part of its strategy and provides schools with guidance around, and links to, the suite of resources available to assist with engagement.

Our Approach recognises that wellbeing is a fundamental pillar of strong attendance and that connection and belonging enable children to engage more successfully in learning.

DECYP's response to student absenteeism includes a system focus on attendance and is supported through the Student Engagement and Attendance Team (SEAT).

DECYP has developed dynamic reporting systems that provide detailed daily insights into school and individual student attendance. The Attendance and Suspension tracking and reporting tools use Power BI and are used by schools to track students and patterns, implement strategies for individual or groups of students and plan for school improvement. These tools are being used to analyse data at a system level, to further understand the complex needs of students. Further detail on the reports available through PowerBI and data measures is outlined on Page 5 of this response.

SEAT are working with identified schools to pilot strategies to improve attendance and reduce suspensions, including collaborative inquiries on suspension and attendance.

Using an inquiry approach, SEAT's Project Officers are working strategically within these schools to provide purposeful tools and develop effective contextualised processes and develop sustainable ways of working that ensures ongoing school improvement. Practices include:

- Interrogation of suspension and attendance data using newly developed tracking and reporting tools, including the identification of key drivers to develop actions to respond to the data analysis as part of current and ongoing planning.
- Promotion of consistency in engagement practices and the implementation of consistent and system-aligned attendance processes.
- Build capabilities in teachers and leaders to address the drivers for decreasing attendance and/or increasing suspensions and make recommendations for improvement.

The annual Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey includes measures linked to key elements of engagement (e.g., School Climate; School Belonging; Emotional Engagement with Teachers; Cognitive Engagement). This data enables DECYP to monitor trends and identify areas of future work regarding student engagement and improvement targets.

Individual schools and Tier 4 sites are provided with access to their own Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey data electronically and via a PDF report, disaggregated by year level and gender to use in School Improvement Planning, which may include strategies to improve attendance.

Schools are also supported with resources and workshops to un-pack their data and are strongly encouraged to explore their data and plan actions with their students.

Schools are supported by the School Improvement Team to identify priorities and actions, including those for attendance, and regularly measure performance as part of School Improvement Planning.

What policies do you have that support students and their families re-engage in school when experiencing school refusal?

Schools work in partnership with parents, carers and families to improve student attendance through a range of strategies. These include flexible education provision to support learner engagement and education, and training options. Approaches focus intently on those at risk of disengaging, or who have disengaged from education and training.

Unfortunately, these strategic approaches do not work in all cases and circumstances and DECYP therefore has in place special procedures for managing persistent unauthorised absences (which may include those linked to school refusal). When an absence threshold has been breached, the Principal will determine whether a letter is generated for the student's parent and or guardian(s). If this option is not taken a note to that effect must be recorded. Where a letter is used, this is generated from within the Student Support System (SSS) and logged in that system.

Ideally, the receipt of a letter relating to exceeding the threshold for permissible unauthorised absences is the catalyst for improvement. Where that is not the case, however, the school must continue to employ strategies to try to resolve the problem. Strategies to address these unauthorised absences usually include the engagement of a school Social Worker. In a highly complex case the school may work with an Intensive Student Support Coordinator (ISSC) to support the school to develop a case management plan for the student. In situations where the 15-day threshold for unauthorised absences is exceeded the Principal might elect to refer the matter to the Office of the Education Registrar (OER).

OER is responsible for managing the compulsory conciliation process for non-attendance at school. The conferences will involve everyone necessary to support a resolution to non-attendance, including parents/guardians, the child (if the child wants to), and school staff. Individual conferences are run by independent conciliators, with a report prepared providing recommendations to the Registrar. The intent of this process is to improve outcomes for Tasmanian students not currently attending school by providing those who are responsible for ensuring a child attends school with a way to participate in a process and to voice their needs to enable and support them to ensure the student returns to school.

The Back on Track Program aims to support young people to successfully transition from Year 10 to Years 11 and 12. The Program works to reconnect young people who are not currently enrolled in an Approved Learning Program, addressing their barriers to learning and assisting them to re-engage in education or training.

The Back on Track Program uses the Youth Participation Database to support disengaged students across three regional teams, with dedicated staff including Advanced Skills Teachers, Social Workers and Youth Engagement Workers.

Appendix 1: Average daily absence rates (per cent) by reason and year level in Tasmanian Government schools in 2022

Reason Category	2022												
	Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Absent - Authorised													
Explained - Sickness/Incapacity	7.4%	7.0%	6.7%	6.5%	6.8%	6.9%	7.2%	8.2%	8.8%	8.8%	8.4%	7.4%	7.4%
Explained - Other	2.5%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	3.0%	3.5%	3.8%	4.1%	3.8%	3.5%
Discipline - Suspension or Exclusion	<0.1%	<0.1%	<0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.1%	<0.1%
Total	**10.0%**	**9.4%**	**9.1%**	**8.9%**	**9.4%**	**9.4%**	**9.8%**	**11.9%**	**13.0%**	**13.2%**	**13.0%**	**11.3%**	**10.9%**
Absent - Unauthorised													
Unauthorised - Unexplained by parent/carer	2.6%	2.4%	2.4%	2.5%	2.6%	2.9%	3.2%	5.3%	7.0%	9.0%	9.6%	17.6%	17.6%
Unauthorised - Not an excusable circumstance (MI4)	1.5%	1.5%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	1.1%	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%
Unauthorised - Truant	<0.1%	<0.1%	<0.1%	<0.1%	<0.1%	<0.1%	<0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	<0.1%	0.1%
Total	**4.1%**	**3.9%**	**4.0%**	**4.0%**	**4.1%**	**4.3%**	**4.6%**	**6.5%**	**8.5%**	**10.5%**	**11.0%**	**19.0%**	**19.0%**
Absence rate TOTAL	**14.1%**	**13.4%**	**13.0%**	**12.9%**	**13.4%**	**13.8%**	**14.4%**	**18.4%**	**21.5%**	**23.7%**	**24.1%**	**30.3%**	**29.9%**
Attendance rate	**85.9%**	**86.6%**	**87.0%**	**87.1%**	**86.6%**	**86.2%**	**85.6%**	**81.6%**	**78.5%**	**76.3%**	**75.9%**	**69.7%**	**70.1%**

Notes:

Attendance rates are calculated for students in:

- Prep – Year 10 is calculated from half day attendance
- Year 11 – 12 is calculated from session minutes