

SUSPENSION DATA AND REDUCING SUSPENSION



The ACT Education Directorate is committed to student wellbeing and works to ensure school environments are safe, respectful, motivating and promote positive connections between individuals and their community.

STUDENTS AT THE CENTRE

The Education Directorate [*Future of Education Strategy*](#) places students at the centre, with a focus on practices that prioritise and support the engagement of every student in their learning. Education is working to develop whole school approaches to enhance positive student behaviour and engagement, with the aim of improving student wellbeing, learning outcomes and minimising the use of suspension in ACT Public Schools.

SUSPENSION

The suspension process may be used if a principal decides action is required to address a situation where a student threatens the safety and wellbeing of another student attending the school, a member of the staff of the school or another member of the school community. When suspension is necessary, it is used in accordance with section 36 of the *Education Act (2004)*.

Suspension is the process of temporarily withdrawing a student from school activities and school grounds, placing them in the care of their parents/ person with parental responsibility, when the student displays behaviours described under section 36 of the Education Act 2004.

As outlined in the *Suspension, Exclusion and Transfer of Students in ACT Public Schools Policy (2020)*, suspension is used when a student's behaviour requires the need for the school to undertake one or more of the following:

- restore a safe learning and working environment for the school community
- establish or review safety risk assessments and support plans for the student, to assist a successful return to school
- communicate the significance of a behaviour and its impact
- seek or reconnect with services or supports for the student, parents/ carers and school community to address underlying reasons for the behaviour leading to the suspension, as well as necessary safety controls.

PREVENTION

ACT Public Schools use a range of prevention and early support approaches when students are demonstrating behaviour which may prevent them from positively engaging with school. Developing students' social emotional skills is an important part of promoting student wellbeing. The Australian Curriculum's *Personal and Social Capabilities* provide direction to schools to develop lessons which enhance these skills, and schools are required by the *Safe and Supportive Schools Policy* to include Social Emotional Learning (SEL) approaches in their curriculum. SEL is the process through which students acquire and

effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions; understand and show empathy for others; establish and maintain positive respectful relationships; set and achieve positive goals and make responsible decisions. Research shows that effective SEL can lead to a range of benefits, including:

- a reduction in interpersonal violence
- better academic performance
- improved attitudes and behaviours: including greater motivation to learn, deeper commitment to school, increased time devoted to schoolwork, and better classroom behaviour
- fewer negative behaviours: decreased disruptive class behaviour, noncompliance, aggression, delinquent acts, and disciplinary referrals
- reduced emotional distress: fewer reports of student depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal
- reduced drug and alcohol use and school dropout.

EARLY SUPPORT

All schools have access to school psychologists to provide support to students. High schools have youth support workers and teachers whose primary focus is student wellbeing/ pastoral care to consider personalised supports to improve students' individual wellbeing and engagement with learning.

Each school network in the ACT is also supported by the Student Engagement Allied Health team. The Allied health teams work with schools to address the impact of disability, complex behaviour and wellbeing issues on a student's engagement with learning.

MORE INFORMATION

The following policies and procedures are available from the Education Directorate website at www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policy_a-z

- [Suspension, Exclusion and Transfer of Students in ACT Public Schools Policy](#)
- [Safe and Supportive Schools Policy](#)
- [Compulsory Education Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy](#)

For further information about this factsheet, contact the Student Wellbeing section of the Learning and Wellbeing Policy and Design at the Education Directorate by emailing ETDStudentWellbeing@act.gov.au

Feedback about the application of a Directorate policy should be raised with:

- the school principal, in the first instance
- the Directorate's Feedback and Complaints Unit on (02) 6205 5429
- online via the ACT Education [Directorate contact form](#).

See also the [Complaints Policy](#) on the Directorate's website.

SUSPENSION DATA

The Directorate records and analyses suspension data to assist with planning and improvement.¹

Data Source: Analytics and Evaluation Branch, ACT Education Directorate 2023.

Year		Primary Schools	High Schools	Colleges
2018	Total Enrolments	25,762	11,062	6,524
	Suspension Incidents	818	1,291	36
	<i>Incidents per 100 Students</i>	3	12	1
	Suspension Days	1,500	2,744	133
	<i>Days per 100 Students</i>	6	25	1
	Students Suspended	419	559	10
	<i>Suspension Rate</i>	1.6 percent	5.1 percent	0.2 percent
2019	Total Enrolments	26,486	11,598	6,427
	Suspension Incidents	1,426	1,611	48
	<i>Incidents per 100 Students</i>	5	14	1
	Suspension Days	2,349	3,477	136
	<i>Days per 100 Students</i>	9	30	2
	Students Suspended	572	817	45
	<i>Suspension Rate</i>	2.2 percent	7.0 percent	0.7 percent
2020	Total Enrolments	27,212	11,844	6,656
	Suspension Incidents	1,210	1,325	52
	<i>Incidents per 100 Students</i>	4	11	1
	Suspension Days	2,150	2,719	169
	<i>Days per 100 Students</i>	8	23	3
	Students Suspended	528	768	41
	<i>Suspension Rate</i>	1.9 percent	6.5 percent	0.6 percent
2021	Total Enrolments	27,574	12,253	6,686
	Suspension Incidents	701	1,211	58
	<i>Incidents per 100 Students</i>	3	10	1
	Suspension Days	1,235	2,350	164
	<i>Days per 100 Students</i>	4	19	2
	Students Suspended	363	697	52
	<i>Suspension Rate</i>	1.3 percent	5.7 percent	0.8 percent
	Total Enrolments	27,595	12,612	6,656
	Suspension Incidents	871	1,904	46

¹ Suspension data from 2018 is sourced from the new school administration system currently being implemented in ACT public schools and are not directly comparable to data in previous years.
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2022	<i>Incidents per 100 Students</i>	3	15	1
	Suspension Days	1,517	4,013	125
	<i>Days per 100 Students</i>	5	32	2
	Students Suspended	420	896	42
	<i>Suspension Rate</i>	1.5 percent	7.1 percent	0.6 percent