



EDUCATION ACT 2016

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Education Act Implementation

1. How do I know what the Education Act changes are?

Some of the Department's policies and processes will change as a result of implementing the new Act, the *Education Act 2016*. Information about the changes is available on the Department's website at [Education Act Implementation](#).

The FAQs for parents are updated regularly answering questions about key areas of change. Updated [parent fact sheets](#) provide useful information about key processes and supports.

If you have any questions, please contact your school in the first instance.

2. What about the proposed voluntary earlier school starting age?

Based on the [Social and Economic Impacts of Implementing the Voluntary Earlier School Starting Age Report from the Secretary](#), the Government decided not to proceed with implementing the voluntary earlier school starting age, but instead to implement the *Working Together for 3 Year Olds – targeted pre-school initiative*. This initiative will provide access for young vulnerable children to Government subsidised participation in quality and accredited pre-school programs for eligible three year old children for 10 hours a week (400 hours a year).

The *Working Together for 3 Year Olds initiative* will be available for eligible children, with access being guided by a set of criteria to include children who are three years old by 1 January in any year from 2020 (i.e. the year before Kindergarten). For more information, see the [Working Together for 3 Year Olds](#) initiative.

Absences

3. What do I need to do differently when my child will be absent?

You don't need to do anything differently. If your child has to be away from school, continue to tell the school and provide the reason for your child's absence as soon as possible. You can do this by sending a note or email to the school, telephoning the school office or visiting the school.

4. What are the changes that might affect me if my child doesn't attend school?

Attending school every day has a big impact on how well your child goes at school. Because of this, the new Education Act limits the reasons for a child to be authorised to be absent from school.

5. When can my child be authorised to be absent from school?

Reasons your child can be authorised to be absent from school include:

- sickness / incapacity
- medical, legal or related appointments
- natural disaster or extreme weather preventing your child from safely attending their enrolled school
- terminal illness of an immediate family member
- bereavement of a person that your child had a close, significant or family relationship with
- having witnessed or been subjected to family violence
- participating in a recognised learning experience
- being a participant or official at a recognised State, National or International event
- an application for home education being received by the Education Registrar and provisional registration being granted.

6. What will happen if the reason I provide for my child's absence is not authorised?

An absence from school that is not for a reason in the list will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. The number of unauthorised absences is monitored and principals receive notifications advising them of the number of unauthorised absences a child has.

School staff members may contact you to let you know the number of absences your child has for the school year. The school may request a discussion with you about the unauthorised absences and will work with you to ensure that your child attends school.

7. Can I take my child out of school for a family holiday or birthday?

Yes. However, schools cannot authorise a child to be absent from school for family holidays, birthdays or other similar reasons.

Schools encourage family holidays and birthday celebrations to be planned for outside of school hours or during scheduled school holiday breaks to ensure that children make steady progress with their learning throughout the school year.

8. Can the school principal authorise a child to be absent for any reason?

The school and school principal can only authorise an absence from school when that absence is due to one of the reasons listed above in question 5.

9. How do I know how many times my child has been absent from school?

Your child's school can let you know how many absences your child has.

10. What will happen if my child has extended absences?

The principal may ask for evidence to explain an extended absence or illness. They will also want to work with you to support your child's attendance at school to maximise their learning. Schools will continue to follow up on non-attendance.

11. Can I be fined / prosecuted if my child doesn't attend school?

Instead of going directly to fines and prosecution, there is a new compulsory conciliation conference process to help resolve issues that are causing a child to not attend school. The conciliation conference is facilitated by an independent conciliator and is compulsory. The child's parents or guardian, principal, teacher, school social worker and the child (if age appropriate) may be required to attend.

If the compulsory conciliation conference cannot resolve the issues, a Compulsory Schooling Order could be made if the child is not attending school. An Order will require the child's parents or guardian to ensure the child attends school. Not complying with an Order may result in a fine or prosecution.

12. Does the Department of Education run the compulsory conciliation conference process?

No. The compulsory conciliation process is run by the independent Education Registrar. The Education Registrar is a new statutory officer established under the Act. The Education Registrar will determine if the matter is suitable for compulsory conciliation and will appoint an independent conciliator. More information is available on the Education Registrar's website at www.oer.tas.gov.au.

Part-time Attendance

13. What are the changes to part-time attendance at school?

If you want your child to attend school part-time, parents/guardians or independent students need to complete the [updated application form for part-time attendance](#) available on the DoE website. This form needs to be signed by the school principal and emailed to the Department of Education Secretary to make a determination as to whether part-time attendance is in your child's best interests.

14. What are the reasons for a child to be able to attend school part-time?

Some of the reasons for a child to attend school on a part-time basis may include:

- The child is in their first year of compulsory education (Prep) and is not developmentally ready to attend school on a full-time basis.
- The child has an ongoing particular medical, degenerative or similar condition or is affected by medical treatment which means they are unable to attend school on a full-time basis.
- The child is at least 17 years old and plans to undertake part-time study and employment.
- Other exceptional circumstances where the child would benefit from part-time attendance.

Enrolment

15. When must a child be enrolled in school?

Every child, from the year after they turn 5 to 17 years of age, must be enrolled at and attending school, or an approved home education program. If your child is 5 years old on 1 January in any year they must be enrolled in Prep.

If your child is 4 years of age on 1 January in any year they can attend Kindergarten.

16. When do the leaving age requirements change?

From 2020, all young people must participate in education and training until they complete Year 12, attain a Certificate III, or they turn 18 years of age – whichever occurs first.

That means students in Year 11 and 12 in 2020 will participate in education and training for longer. This is because the evidence shows that students that remain in education until Year 12 or its equivalent have better life outcomes.

17. Can my child leave school at Year 10 to work?

In certain circumstances a child may be eligible for an exemption from attending school for employment. Complete the [Exemption from Attending School form](#) to make an application.

For more information about school and work, see the parent fact sheets on [Work and Tasmanian Government Schools – Senior Secondary Age Students](#) and [Work and Tasmanian Government Schools – Kindergarten to Year 10 Students](#).

18. What are the specialised enrolment arrangements that can be applied for?

In certain circumstances you may be able to apply for specialised enrolment arrangements for:

- **Students with disability:** Dual enrolment for students with disability enrolling at more than one school (both a specialised support school and another school) to provide a flexible education program to meet specialised needs. Contact the Professional Support Staff at your enrolled school. Contact the Manager Disability Programs on 61 65 5464 or email disabilityprograms@education.tas.gov.au.
- **Students wishing to enrol in Year 13:** Year 13 enrolment to support students who need an additional year of senior secondary education before moving onto further education or the workplace. Contact an extension high school offering senior secondary years or a college for more information.
- **Home educated students:** Part-time enrolment of home educated students up to two days a week at one school to support their existing home education program. Contact the Office of the Education Registrar on 61 65 6135 or email registrar@oer.tas.gov.au.

19. How do I know what school is my intake area school?

To find out which school is your intake area school, see the [school intake area maps](#).

20. Are there any changes to school intake area boundaries?

No. The existing area boundaries continue to apply.

The Department will be undertaking a review of intake area boundaries, in close consultation with schools, during 2018-19. However, no changes will be made to any intake area boundaries applying for enrolments in the 2018 to 2020 school years.

21. Can I choose which school to send my child to?

Yes, however you are encouraged to enrol your child at their intake area school.

In situations where you wish to enrol your child in a school other than your intake area school, the school's out-of-area enrolment procedure will apply and the application will be assessed. The enrolment is not guaranteed to be accepted.

22. How do schools determine acceptance of out-of-area enrolments?

Schools who have the ability to take further Kindergarten to Year 10 student enrolments from outside their intake area apply a set of standard criteria to prioritise enrolments. These criteria recognise the specific situations where parents may prefer to enrol their child in an out-of-area school.

23. What are the criteria schools use to prioritise enrolments from outside their intake area?

The criteria that schools use to prioritise Kindergarten to Year 10 enrolments from outside their intake area are listed below in priority order:

- a home educated student living in the intake area is seeking part-time enrolment
- a student's home is in very close proximity to the school's intake area boundary (for example, next door to or directly on the other side of a street intersected by an intake area boundary)
- a student's need to access formal or informal out-of-school-care close to the out-of-area school
- the proximity of the school to the parent's workplace
- a home educated student living outside the intake area is seeking part-time enrolment

- enrolments as agreed by the Learning Services Student Support Leader, upon application by the receiving out-of-area school principal.

24. Are any Kindergarten to Year 10 students automatically accepted for enrolment?

All Kindergarten to Year 10 students living within an intake area are entitled to enrol at the Government school in that intake area.

If a student has a sibling that already attends a school outside their intake area, then that student is considered an in-area student for that school. An exception to this provision currently applies to Woodbridge District School, which due to capacity issues is treated as a separate primary school and high school in determining the acceptance of siblings of out-of-area students.

25. How do I apply to enrol my child in a school that is not the intake area school?

To enrol your child in a school that is not the intake area school, contact the school or your Learning Service for more information. If you wish to enrol your Kindergarten to Year 10 child in a school that is not your intake area school, you will be invited to complete an *Expression of Interest* form.

You will receive a letter confirming your form has been received and when you will be notified of the enrolment outcome. The out-of-area enrolment process, detailed in the [Out-of-Area Enrolment Procedure](#), ensures a consistent, equitable and transparent approach to assessing and administering out-of-area enrolment requests across the Government school system.

26. What schools/students does the out-of-area enrolment procedure apply to?

The out-of-area enrolment procedure applies to all new requests for an out-of-area enrolment in Government schools, with the exceptions of:

- students enrolling in Years 11 and 12
- students at the Tasmanian eSchool, the Launceston Big Picture School and the three support schools.

Respectful School Environments

27. Who can volunteer and visit school premises/activities?

Schools welcome the involvement of school volunteers and visitors in their school environment; including parents and carers, and friends of the school.

Schools have processes to identify volunteers or visitors, which may include visitors having specific areas/times for visiting and sign-in processes. Schools must also ensure that adult volunteers have the appropriate approvals to work with children, such as a Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP). For information about if you need a RWVP, see the parent fact sheet on [Volunteers and Visitors in Tasmanian Government Schools](#).

28. How do I need to behave when I'm at a school or school activity?

Please behave in a safe and respectful manner and cooperate with staff instructions and school procedures when volunteering or visiting a school. Everyone on school grounds or at a school activity, including you and our students and teachers have the right to be safe and be treated fairly and respectfully.

Schools may be displaying a poster showing their behavioral expectations of volunteers and visitors and you can ask to see the school's policy for volunteer and visitor behaviour.

29. Can a parent (or other adult) be asked to leave a school or school activity?

Responses to unacceptable adult behaviour focus on ensuring that all members of the school community feel safe while at school or a school activity. When responding to unacceptable behaviour, school staff will use conflict de-escalation techniques wherever possible. However, if attempts to defuse or resolve the behaviour are unsuccessful, they may be asked to leave.

A request by a principal (or the staff member in charge as the principal's delegate) that an adult leaves the school or a school activity must be respected and complied with under the *Education Act 2016*. The principal may specify a period of time before an adult can return.

30. How can I help create a safe, positive and inclusive learning environment?

Schools work in a shared partnership with you and the school community to model and promote supportive, respectful behaviour and establish clear behavioural expectations.

The Act defines unacceptable behaviour at school and school activities to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students and staff. Each school has a Policy, developed with their School Association and student representative bodies, which outlines their approaches for encouraging positive behaviour, and the processes and consequences for unacceptable behaviour.

31. What are the consequences for unacceptable behaviour by students?

In managing unacceptable behaviour, schools use practices to support the building, maintaining and restoring of relationships to allow students to learn and teachers to teach.

Your child's school will have a range of responses and strategies in place that seek to:

- develop an understanding of why the student is displaying such behaviour to resolve or address underlying issues
- consider the impact on student learning, and take effective and fair steps to respond to the unacceptable behaviour of students as required to prevent such behaviour.

Schools work with students to ensure that consequences for unacceptable behaviour are only used when necessary.

Detention may be used as an opportunity for a student to reflect on their behaviour and the impact on others. It would apply to the student/s who have demonstrated unacceptable behaviour, with use of class or group detentions or sanctions not preferred classroom management practice.

If a student is suspended from attending school the school will provide appropriate educational instruction. Schools will also arrange a re-entry process for their transition back to school, including a re-entry conference between you, your child and staff to develop an agreed plan and support strategies for their return to school.

For more information see the parent fact sheet on [Student Behaviour in Tasmanian Government Schools](#).

Uniform and Dress Code

32. Do students have to wear a school uniform?

All Prep to Year 10 students attending a Tasmanian Government school are required to wear a school uniform. Other students may be required to wear a school uniform if it is specified in the school's dress code. For more information, see the parent fact sheet on [Dress Code and Uniforms in Tasmanian Government Schools](#).

You may be eligible for financial support or assistance with the purchase of school uniforms for your child. Your child's school will be happy to talk about how they can help you and support your child.

33. Do schools need to have a dress code?

Government schools can continue to choose whether they wish to develop a dress code for their students, in addition to having the school uniform for Prep to Year 10 students.

An updated process is available to help schools to develop a dress code in consultation with their School Association and students, including being inclusive of the needs of all students from diverse backgrounds and circumstances.

Year 10 and Year 12 Statements

34. Why do students receive a Year 10 Transition Statement and Year 12 Completion Certificate?

The Education Act focuses on increasing educational attainment and retaining students in education for longer to help set them up to succeed with better employment and life outcomes.

The requirements for schools to issue a Year 10 Transition Statement and Year 12 Completion Certificate supports the increase in minimum school leaving requirements. From 2020, young people are required to participate in education and training until they complete Year 12, attain a Certificate III, or turn 18 years of age (whichever occurs first).

35. What is a Year 10 Transition Statement?

A Year 10 Transition Statement is issued to show Government and Non-Government School students has completed their education to year 10 and has submitted their plans to move into senior secondary education or other further education and training.

For Government School students, the Year 10 Transition Statement is a new line included in the end-of-year school reports of Year 10 students who have submitted a transition plan. The statement acknowledges a student's commitment to continue working to reach their education goals.

36. What does the Year 10 Transition Statement say?

The Year 10 Transition Statement for Government School students is:

“[Student Name] has submitted a Transition Plan for post-Year 10 education and is therefore issued with a Transition Statement under Section 90 of the *Education Act 2016*.”

37. What is a Year 12 Completion Certificate?

A Year 12 Completion Certificate is formal notification that a student has completed compulsory education at the end of Year 12.

Government Schools will use a letter to meet the requirements of the Year 12 Completion Certificate under the Act to prevent any misunderstanding that the notification certifies Year 12 achievement or attainment. The letter will be sent to Year 12 students after Year 12 exams are complete at the end of November.

38. What does the Year 12 Completion Certificate say?

The letter congratulates students on having completed Year 12, pursuant to Section 92 of the *Education Act 2016*. The letter also informs students of the certificates and statements of results they may receive, and what actions to take if they wish to further their education pathway.

More Questions

39. I have more questions, where do I go?

Questions about the changes should initially be referred to principals and school staff. Any other questions can be referred to the Education Act Implementation Project Team at edact@education.tas.gov.au.