Chapter 4

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

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The levels of school attendance of Aboriginal students are well below the levels of non-Aboriginal students. Poor school attendance is a key factor in the gap in academic performance between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. While improving attendance at school for Aboriginal students is only one aspect of improving academic performance, it is an important first step. This chapter describes the patterns of attendance at school of Aboriginal students and is examined in the context of the characteristics of the students, their carers, families and households and schools.

SUMMARY

Attendance at school

Compared with non-Aboriginal students, Aboriginal students miss significantly more school. The median number of days absent was 26 days for Aboriginal students. The 1993 *Western Australian Child Health Survey* (WA CHS) found that the median number of days absent for all Western Australian students was 8 days. Only 18.1 per cent of Aboriginal students had less than 8 days of absence from school.

The following factors were found to be associated with attendance at school:

◆ Students were one and a half times less likely to have been absent from school for more than 26 days if their carers had been educated beyond Year 10 to Years 11 or 12.

◆ Students assessed by their teachers to be at high risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties were almost twice as likely to have at least 26 days of absence from school.

◆ Students in families where 7 to 14 life stress events had occurred in a given year were almost twice as likely to be absent from school for 26 days or more than students from families where 2 or less life stress events had occurred.

◆ Students were more likely to miss more than 26 days of school if their main language spoken in the playground was Aboriginal English or an Aboriginal language.

◆ Students who had trouble getting enough sleep were over one and a half times more likely to be absent for at least 26 days.

◆ Students who had never attended day care were one and a half times more likely to be absent from school for 26 days or more during the school year.

◆ Students whose primary carer had needed to see the school principal about a problem students were having at school were almost twice as likely to be absent for 26 days or more.

◆ Poorer attendance at school was found in schools with a high proportion of Aboriginal students, schools that had Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEOs), and Government schools in the highest quartile of the socioeconomic index for schools (SEI).

SUMMARY *(continued)*

Unexplained absence from school

Almost half of all Aboriginal students had 10 or more unexplained days absent from school during the school year compared with only 4 per cent of all students in the 1993 WA CHS. Two thirds of the absences of Aboriginal students away for at least 26 days were unexplained.

Most of the factors found to be associated with poor school attendance were also associated with high levels of unexplained absences from schools. The following additional factors were found to be associated with students having 10 or more unexplained absences from school:

◆ Students whose primary carer had ever been arrested or charged with an offence were almost twice as likely to have 10 or more unexplained absences.

◆ Students whose primary carer had been forcibly separated from their natural family were over one and a half times as likely to have 10 or more unexplained absences.

◆ Students who lack the support of someone at home to help them with their school work were over one and a half times as likely to have 10 or more unexplained absences from school.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about school attendance – and more particularly about the circumstances associated with being absent from school. In the two years of community consultations that preceded the WAACHS, Aboriginal people regularly cited the school attendance and absence from school of their children as an important aspect to measure and report and were insistent on the survey measuring this aspect of the child's educational experience.

The Education Working Party (see *Chapter 1*) designed questions to measure school attendance and assess some of the reasons for non-attendance. Lengthy discussions took place in the Working Party about the role of attendance and the meaning of non-attendance (i.e. absences) from school. Many of these discussions focussed on the use of information about the school attendance of Aboriginal children and the interpretation of the findings. How would the findings be used and by whom? Several issues were highlighted in these discussions that are worthy of mention.

◆ The Working Party was aware that the contemporary pattern of poor attendance at school of Aboriginal children and young people is embedded in a wider history of colonisation and with the role that colonial education played as a force that destroyed Aboriginal culture and language. The experience of education, in population terms, has not been positive for Aboriginal people.

◆ In a contemporary society where education is valued for its relevance in gaining employment, Aboriginal people rightly question this value in light of the disadvantage they continue to sustain in areas where there is no meaningful access to employment. Moreover, for many families in rural and remote regions, education leads to diminishment of community capacity, the weakening of family contact and ties, and the dissolution of culture as young people who gain higher education leave their family and community of origin to improve their prospects.

◆ For all children and families (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike), contemporary media portrayals of school attendance, and particularly absenteeism, present stereotypes largely based on blame: Attending school is reduced to a simple formulae of parental and/or school system responsibility. When children do not attend, and particularly when they are truant, the blame for this is directed at children (particularly when they are older), the parent and the school. Neither existing data nor the data presented here support a view that school attendance is merely a matter of someone's responsibility.

The findings in this chapter are confronting. However, they supply evidence on which to base decisions for change. In presenting information about school attendance and absence, it is important to acknowledge the outcomes that are desired. What is desired for all children are educational experiences that:

◆ support, promote and develop their talents and interests

◆ respect and validate them

◆ challenge and develop their talents

◆ embrace their cultural heritage and the opportunities that this heritage offers

◆ empower them as life long learners with the tools of learning

◆ respond to the life experiences that children bring with them to school.

Children deserve and need school to be a positive experience and for school to be a place where they want to attend. It is in this light that attendance becomes an important (but not the only) indicator of these desired outcomes.

Aboriginal children and school attendance – Australian research

At the time of the survey, school attendance in Western Australia was compulsory through to the end of the school year in which children turned 15 years of age. Missing school means that students have reduced hours of instruction resulting in reduced levels of educational success. A consequence of this is that many young people leave school at an early age with low skill levels, putting themselves at greater risk of poor life prospects including reduced employment opportunities, poverty and welfare dependency and at greater risk of contact with the justice system.[1]

The available Australian research on the school attendance of Aboriginal children suggests that the poor rate of attendance at school among Aboriginal children is a major contributor to the lower level of educational success among Aboriginal students.[2] The underlying reasons for the high rates of absenteeism have been reported to include low socioeconomic status, low parental achievement, domestic violence, child abuse and drug and alcohol abuse.[1,2,3,4,5]

As children attend school, their experiences at school influence the decisions that they (and others) make about its relevance, importance, and their enjoyment of it. As time goes on, attendance at school becomes only one factor, albeit an important one, that links school attendance and outcomes of learning. Increasing absence may represent an outcome of disengagement arising from frustration and a lowering of self-esteem in response to poor performance. It may represent alienation from school through failure to identify with educational values and expectations.[6] It may also represent failure of the school ethos to respect and validate cultural and self identity, and to supply experiences that are relevant to life's circumstances. Theories and supporting evidence about the causes of non-attendance carry with them significant implications for responses to the problem. These beliefs, in their extreme, can lead to a unilateral focus on the student or family as the principal source of non-attendance or upon the school system as the agent of non-attendance.[7]

Gray and Beresford noted that, despite the amount of literature on the subject of non-attendance for Aboriginal students, 'there has been no consistent definition of what constitutes non-attendance for Aboriginal students and a lack of a consistent methodology for data collection' and that school records were likely to understate the extent of the problem.[8] This chapter describes how attendance and absence was measured in the WAACHS and examines family, household, community and school level influences that are associated with poor attendance.

Chapter structure

This chapter describes school attendance patterns among Aboriginal children in Western Australia and examines the factors that are associated with missing at least 26 days of school during the school year. The rationale for using the median attendance level as the basis for analysis along with prevalence levels are detailed at the beginning of the chapter.

The bulk of the chapter analyses the factors associated with being absent from school for 26 days or more. Relevant factors are discussed separately within groups — firstly, student factors, followed by carer factors, family factors and finally school-level factors.

Within each of these groups, analysis is directed toward identifying:

◆ factors significantly associated with missing 26 days or more of school

◆ factors that predict missing 26 days or more of school (independent of other factors)

◆ factors that have no association with missing 26 days or more of school.

To conclude, predictors from each of the groups – student, carer, family and school level factors – are considered collectively, in a final model, to determine the most significant independent predictors of missing 26 days or more of school.

The same format has been applied to the section on unexplained absence.

Finally, the chapter looks briefly at the impact of poor school attendance on academic performance.

MEASURING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL

School principals were asked about the attendance at school of their students. They were asked 'So far this school year, what is the total possible days of attendance for this student?' and 'how many of these days was the student absent?' Principals were asked to round up days absent to whole days.

For comparability, the number of reported days absent was converted to an estimate for the full year by standardising to a reference year of 209 days attendance at school. This allows for the possibility that the total possible number of days at school could vary between school jurisdictions and parts of the state. Standardisation was achieved by multiplying the ratio of the days absent over the days of possible attendance by 209. For a few of the children in the survey, the number of possible days of attendance was nil. This occurred because the survey had spanned two calendar years resulting in some forms being filled out prior to the commencement of the school year. Children affected by this were assumed to have 100 per cent attendance.

ATTENDANCE RATIO

An attendance ratio was constructed for each student by subtracting the days of absence from possible days of attendance and dividing the result by possible days of attendance. The survey was carried out over an extended period of time and consequently the number of possible attendance days for students varied from school to school – from nil to a maximum of 209 days. For children who, at the time of the survey, had no possible days of attendance, an attendance ratio of 100 per cent was assumed.

The median attendance ratio for Aboriginal students was 87.5 per cent (CI: 86.4%–88.4%) which translated to 183 days of attendance out of a possible 209 days. This means that half of all Aboriginal students would had missed at least 26 days (CI: 24–28) of school in the school year. In contrast, the 1993 *Western Australian Child Health Survey* (WA CHS) found that, among the total population of 4–16 year-olds, the median number of days absent from school was 8 days (CI: 6–8). Fewer than one-fifth (18.1 per cent; CI: 15.9%–20.4%) of Aboriginal students had less than 8 days absence from school (Table 4.1). The findings of the survey support previous findings that Aboriginal school children attend school on average about 84 per cent of the time.[3]

Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of days absent for Aboriginal students (from the WAACHS) and all students from the 1993 WA CHS. Notable is the cluster around the lower number of days absent for all students compared with the greater spread among Aboriginal students.

FIGURE 4.1: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL, WAACHS COMPARED WITH WA CHS
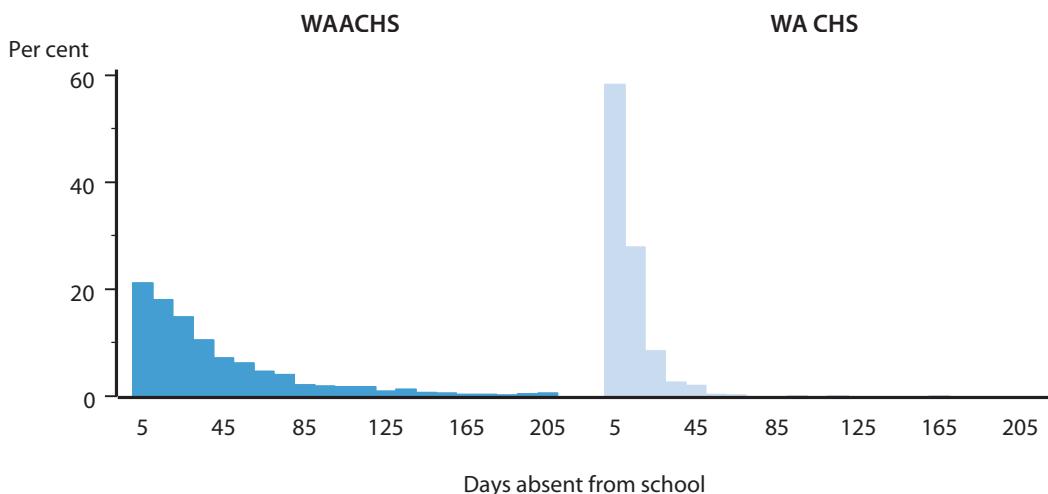
Age and sex

While there were no significant differences between males and females in the proportion who had missed at least 26 days of school, there was a significant difference between 4–11 year-olds and 12–17 year-olds. Over half (57.0 per cent; CI: 52.0%–61.7%) of all Aboriginal students aged 12–17 years were absent for 26 days or more compared with 46.5 per cent (CI: 43.0%–50.1%) of students aged 4–11 years. However, this age difference was only reflected among female students where 60.5 per cent (CI: 54.2%–66.7%) of 12–17 year-olds had missed 26 days of school compared with 43.9 per cent (CI: 39.2%–48.6%) of 4–11 year-olds (Table 4.2).

By single years of age there were no differences among males. For females, 14 year-olds had the highest proportion absent for 26 days or more (77.4 per cent; CI: 69.6%–83.7%). This difference was statistically significant for all ages with the exception of 13 year-olds, 16 year-olds and 17 year-olds (Table 4.3).

Medians were also calculated specifically for male and female students and for students in two age groups. For both males and females, the median number of days absent from school was 26 (CI: 23–29). For students aged 12–17 years the median number of days absent from school was 32 days (CI: 27–35), significantly higher than the median for students aged 4–11 years (24 days; CI: 22–26) (Table 4.4).

Year at school

As shown in Figure 4.2, the proportion of students who missed at least 26 days of school in the school year tended to decline from Year 1 to Year 6 then increase to Year 10 where the proportion who have missed 26 or more days peaked at 70.0 per cent (CI: 60.2%–78.2%). This is significantly higher than for all primary school years with the exception of Year 1. The effect of staying on at school beyond the end of compulsory schooling is reflected among Year 11 students with the proportion who have missed 26 days or more of school falling to 40.3 per cent (CI: 25.5%–59.2%).

FIGURE 4.2: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — PROPORTION ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY YEAR AT SCHOOL

Per cent

Year at school
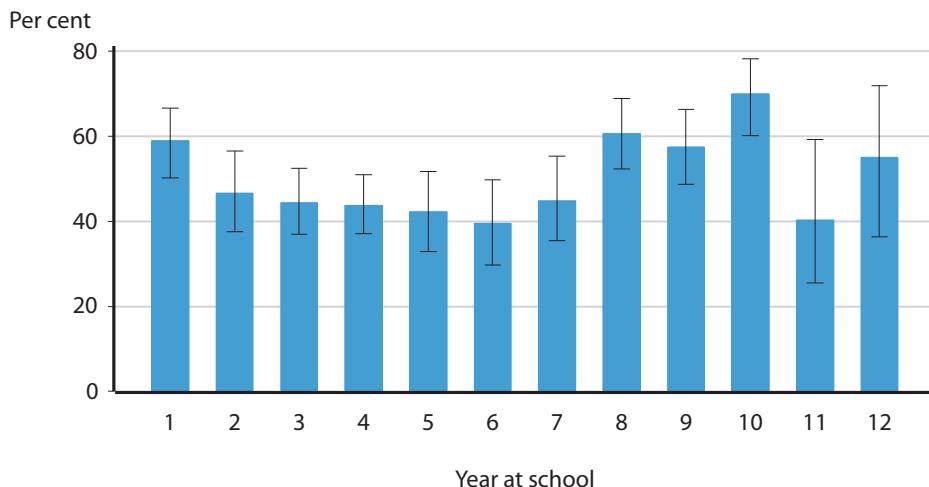
Source: Table 4.5

Median days of absence were calculated for school year groups. For Years 1–7, the median number of days absent was 23 days (CI: 21–26). This was significantly lower than the median for students in Years 8–10 (36 days; CI: 31–44) and similar to the median for Years 11–12 (21 days; CI: 16–30) (Figure 4.3).

FIGURE 4.3: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — MEDIAN NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL, BY YEAR AT SCHOOL

Per cent

Year at school
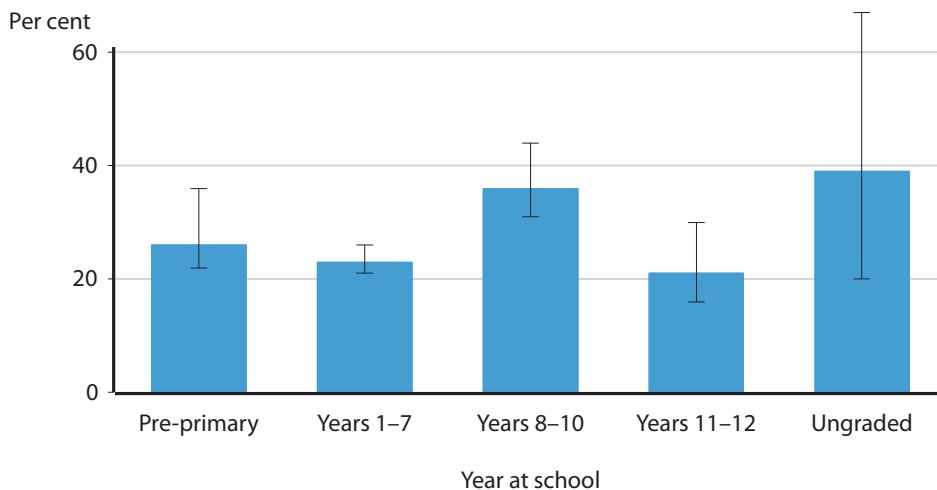
Source: Table 4.4

Level of Relative Isolation

Where students lived was related to the proportion of students who had missed at least 26 days of school. As shown in Figure 4.4, the proportion of students who had missed at least 26 days of school was significantly lower in the Perth metropolitan area and in areas of low isolation (40.3 per cent; CI: 35.3%–45.5%, and 47.4 per cent; CI: 42.1%–52.5% respectively) than in areas of moderate and high isolation (62.1 per cent; CI: 56.6%–67.6%, and 63.1 per cent; CI: 54.3%–71.6% respectively).

FIGURE 4.4: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — PROPORTION ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION

Per cent

Level of Relative Isolation
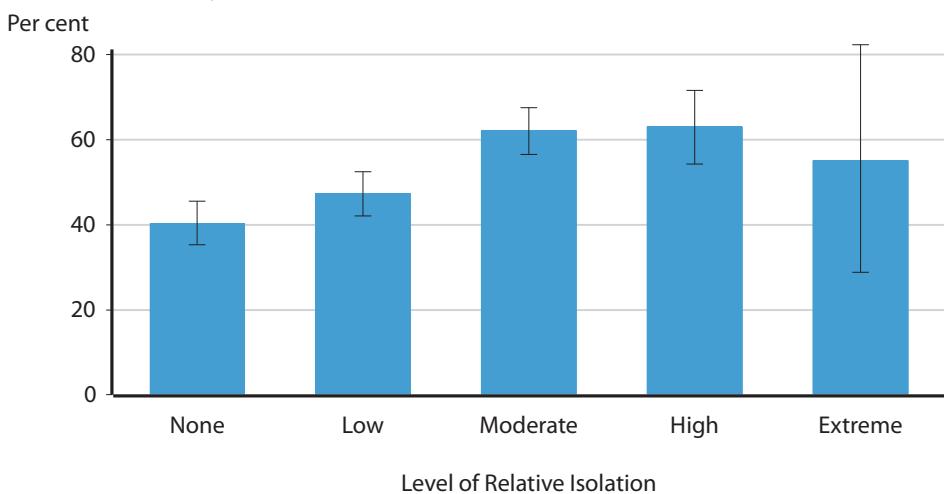
Source : Table 4.6

Median days absent were calculated for each level of relative isolation. As shown in Figure 4.5, the median number of days absent for students in the Perth metropolitan area (20 days; CI: 17–23) was significantly lower than for students in areas of moderate and high isolation (34 days; CI: 29–42, and 42 days; CI: 28–57 respectively).

FIGURE 4.5: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — MEDIAN NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL, BY LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION

Per cent

Level of Relative Isolation
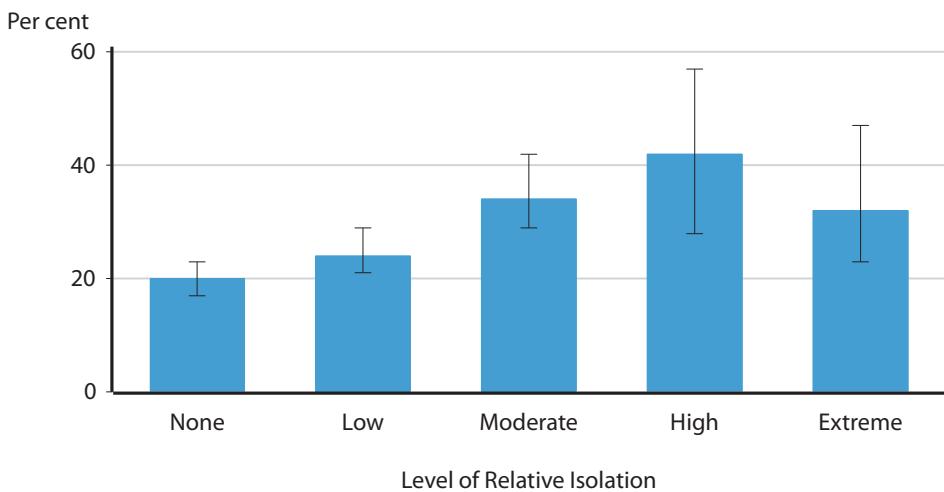
Source : Table 4.4

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Previous research with Western Australian children has shown a clear relationship between school attendance and academic performance. In the 1993 Western Australian Child Health Survey, the median number of days absent from school for all students was 8 days.[9] In the WAACHS, the median number of days absent for Aboriginal students was substantially greater at 26 days. More widely in Australia, there have been comprehensive reviews of school attendance and repeated calls for improvements in the school attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.[2,3,5,10,11]

Australia

The 1996 *National School English Literacy Survey* reported that Aboriginal students missed on average 17.9 days of school per year, compared with 6.2 days for non-Aboriginal students. The Aboriginal supplementary sample in this survey was selected from schools with at least 10 Aboriginal students in both Years 3 and 5.[12]

In an analysis of South Australian attendance data, Groom and Hamilton reported that 'the average attendance rate of Aboriginal students at primary schools was 85.5 per cent compared with 93.1 per cent for the total primary school population. This represents an average loss to each Aboriginal student of a day and a half each fortnight. The secondary school figures for the same period were 78.4 per cent compared with 89.4 per cent. This represents an average loss of over two days each fortnight.'[13] They also reported that in three unidentified states, absence rates for Aboriginal students ranged from 16 to 18 per cent compared with 5 to 8 per cent for non-Aboriginal students.[13]

New Zealand

In New Zealand, the 2002 *Survey on Attendance, Absences and Truancy* produced estimates of absences from school based on data collected from 2,195 state schools (including primary, intermediate, secondary and composite schools) out of a total of 2,540 such schools in New Zealand. The survey found that New Zealand Māori students had an average absence rate from school of 11.2 per cent compared with an average absence rate of 7.4 per cent for New Zealand students of European ancestry. The rate of explained absences was 6.3 per cent among New Zealand Māori students and 5.6 per cent among New Zealand students of European ancestry while truancy rates were 4.8 per cent and 1.8 per cent respectively. Within Māori students, no differences were reported between males and females. Figures were not separately reported by year in school.[14]

Canada

Canadian data sources are relatively silent about the measurement of attendance rates in First Nations students. Ten per cent of the 440 recommendations in the report of the 1996 Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples specifically pertained to education. The Commission received substantial evidence concerning

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NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE *(continued)*

the changes required across the education system to enable greater participation in education of Canadian First Nation Peoples. Canadian data focus primarily upon retention rates rather than attendance.[15]

There are several suggestions of poor school attendance in Canadian education literature. At the Blue Quills Native Education Centre, the implementation of an outdoor curriculum improved attendance from 'below 80 per cent' for the 1985–86 school year[16] and McCaskill reported that the Calgary Plains Indian Cultural Survival School had an average daily attendance rate of 60 to 70 per cent in the same period.[17] However, it remains the case that the empirical data on Canadian Aboriginal children's attendance rates that are available are very sparse. Attendance rates for schools selected by Bell *et al* (2004) in a review of ten case studies of Canadian Aboriginal schools which are performing well varied from 81.4 per cent at the Gift Lake school with 205 First Nations students to over 90 per cent for both the Southwest Education Centre with 140 First Nations students and the Chalo school with 130 First Nations students.[18]

United States

In 1993–94, the *Schools and Staffing Survey* (SASS), an integrated survey of American schools, school districts, principals, teachers and student records, was supplemented with an Indian and Public Schools Questionnaire sent to all 170 schools either operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) or by tribal organisations under contract from the BIA. From these data, the rate of student absence from school was estimated at 8.2 per cent (CI: 8.0%–8.4%) among Native American Indian students compared with an estimated 6.4 per cent (CI: 6.3%–6.5%) from the total student population in public schools. Among students in BIA or Tribal schools, the rate of student absence from school increased from 6.5 per cent (CI: 6.2%–6.8%) in elementary schools to 9.7 per cent (CI: 9.7%–9.7%) in secondary schools and 11.3 per cent (CI: 11.3%–11.3%) in combined schools. Among all public schools the corresponding absentee rates were 5.5 per cent (CI: 5.3%–5.7%) in elementary schools, 8.3 per cent (CI: 8.1%–8.5%) in secondary schools, and 6.3 per cent (CI: 5.9%–6.7%) in combined schools.[19]

The *National Education Longitudinal Study* of 1988 followed 24,599 students for five years, including 299 students identified as being of American Indian or Alaska Native ethnicity. In 1990, when these students were in 10th grade, 41.9 per cent of American Indian students missed 5 or more days in the first half of the school year compared with 24.8 per cent of all students. In 1992 when the students were in 12th grade, 28.6 per cent of American Indian students missed 7 or more days in the first half of the school year compared with 25.9 per cent of all students.[20] The *2005 National Indian Education Study* will provide detailed information on both attendance and academic performance of North American Indian and Alaska Native students.

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NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE *(continued)*

Comparison with Western Australian Aboriginal school children

For variables that are highly skewed, such as attendance rates, the median is a better indicator of overall averages than the population mean. For this reason the data presented in this chapter are based on medians. However, the comparative data presented here are based on mean attendance rates. Means have therefore been estimated for comparison purposes from the WAACHS data and the 1993 WA CHS data. For Aboriginal children attending school, the mean absence rate was 18.8 per cent (CI: 17.7%–20.0%) corresponding to 39 days absence from school. The mean absence rate among all Western Australian school children in the 1993 WA CHS was 4.8 per cent (CI: 4.5%–5.2%) corresponding to 10 days absence from school.

Compared with the figures for New Zealand Māori students and American Indian and Alaska Native students, the mean absence rate for Western Australian Aboriginal students is considerably higher. However, the absentee rate for all Western Australian students in 1993 was slightly better than the overall absentee rates in New Zealand or the United States.

There are important differences in the way educational services for Indigenous students are structured and administered in each country that impact on the interpretation of these figures. In Canada, approximately 60 per cent of registered Indian school children living on-reserve are enrolled in First Nations managed schools, with the remaining 40 per cent attending provincial schools. Since 1973, it has been Canadian policy for First Nations education to be controlled by First Nations at the local level. While these schools receive federal funding through the Canadian Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, only very limited data is collected at the national level. Within the provincial school systems (attended by 40 per cent of registered Indian children living on-reserve and the approximately 25 per cent of registered Indian children who live off-reserve), only British Columbia collects Aboriginal identification within school statistics. Unfortunately British Columbia does not collate figures on school attendance at the province level.[21]

In the United States, the *1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act* allowed individual tribes and Indian organisations to take over and run schools funded through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Over time, the number of schools under direct Indian control has grown. While schools are administratively controlled at the local level, the United States maintains a comprehensive programme of school and student surveys, which have included over sampling of Indian students on several occasions. While attendance and achievement of American Indian and Alaska Native school children lags behind white children, figures for black and Hispanic school children show some greater disparities.

The majority of the national and international literature on educational participation is focused upon school retention statistics rather than school attendance statistics. In Australia, school retention has typically focused upon

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NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE *(continued)*

participation in Years 11 and 12 of high school – that is, the proportion of students who participate in the post-compulsory years of school. Improving retention of all students, and particularly Aboriginal students, is regularly charted in official collections. The measurement of school retention overshadows the measurement of school attendance as a performance indicator of educational participation.

While the focus on educational retention is understandable, attendance data also provide a critical measure of individual participation in education. Thus, these data provide valuable insight into the pathway toward later retention in the post-compulsory years. Quite apart from the issue of school retention into the post-compulsory years, these data suggest that the total level of participation in education by Aboriginal students is substantially and chronically low relative to non-Aboriginal students, and that attendance ratios should be a key performance indicator in charting educational improvements for Aboriginal children and young people.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

There are a range of factors that could affect school attendance. These include personal characteristics such as physical health and social and emotional wellbeing; family and community characteristics such as stress placed upon families, whether carers had been forcibly separated from their families when they were children, financial strain, housing and mobility; and school issues such as size and type of school, proportion of students in the school who are Aboriginal, educational curricula, and teacher training. The interaction of these factors can impact on the student's desire to go to school, their sense of belonging and the desire to do well at school.

The survey examined a number of these issues and, for the purposes of this analysis, these have been grouped into four distinct categories – student factors, carer factors, family factors and school level factors.

STUDENT FACTORS

Issues relating to the student include neonatal factors, whether they had ever been in day care and main language spoken at school, in the playground and in the classroom (see *Glossary*). A number of physical health factors were looked at as well as the social and emotional wellbeing of the student.

Alcohol consumption by birth mothers during pregnancy

Over half of students whose mother had drunk alcohol during pregnancy were absent from school for at least 26 days (57.3 per cent; CI: 51.2%–63.2%). This was significantly higher than for students whose mothers had not drunk alcohol during pregnancy (47.2 per cent; CI: 43.5%–50.9%) (Table 4.7).

Physical health of student and trouble getting enough sleep

A number of health variables were examined with respect to school attendance. These included whether the child had normal vision in both eyes, normal hearing, whether they had ever had runny ears, whether they had difficulty saying certain sounds, whether they had ever had asthma, whether they had difficulty getting enough sleep (Table 4.8), diet and nutrition, and whether they currently had holes in their teeth. Of these variables, none were found to be associated with being absent from school for 26 days or more in a school year. However modelling did show that students who had difficulty getting enough sleep were more likely to miss at least 26 days of school.

Youth risk behaviour

Tobacco smoking, alcohol drinking and marijuana use, as well as experiences of bullying at school and racism, as reported by young people aged 12–17 years were also examined against school attendance. No significant associations were found.

Day care

The survey found a strong association between school attendance and whether the student had ever been in day care. The proportion of 4–11 year-old students who had missed at least 26 days of school during the school year was significantly lower if they had been in day care at some time (35.5 per cent; CI: 29.4%–42.4%) relative to those who had never been in day care (51.8 per cent; CI: 47.5%–56.1%) (Table 4.9).

Pre-school or kindergarten

Early childhood education is valued by both Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people as providing a good start to schooling.[22] The survey found that the proportion of students who had missed at least 26 days of school was higher among students who had never been to pre-school or kindergarten (54.5 per cent; CI: 41.6%–67.9%) than among those who had been to pre-school or kindergarten (46.0 per cent; CI: 42.3%–49.7%). However this difference was not statistically significant (Table 4.10).

Helping with school work at home

The survey asked primary carers 'At home, who usually helps with school work?' (For definition of primary carer see *Glossary*). Among those students who had no-one to help them with their school work at home, the proportion with at least 26 days absence from school was significantly higher (64.4 per cent; CI: 55.9%–71.9%) than among those who had someone from their home who helped them with their school work (47.3 per cent; CI: 43.7%–50.8%) (Table 4.11).

Language spoken at school

While the majority of students spoke English in the classroom, the main classroom language for 1,960 students (CI: 1,630–2,340) was Aboriginal English. Of these students, 66.7 per cent (CI: 59.4%–73.0%) were absent for 26 days or more. Among students whose main classroom language was English, 46.2 per cent (CI: 43.0%–49.4%) were absent for 26 days or more (Table 4.12).

Similarly, the proportion of students who had missed 26 days or more of school was higher among students whose main language spoken in the playground was Aboriginal English than among students who mainly spoke English (64.9 per cent; CI: 57.7%–71.3% compared with 44.6 per cent; CI: 41.3%–47.9%) (Table 4.13).

FIGURE 4.6: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — PROPORTION ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT SCHOOL
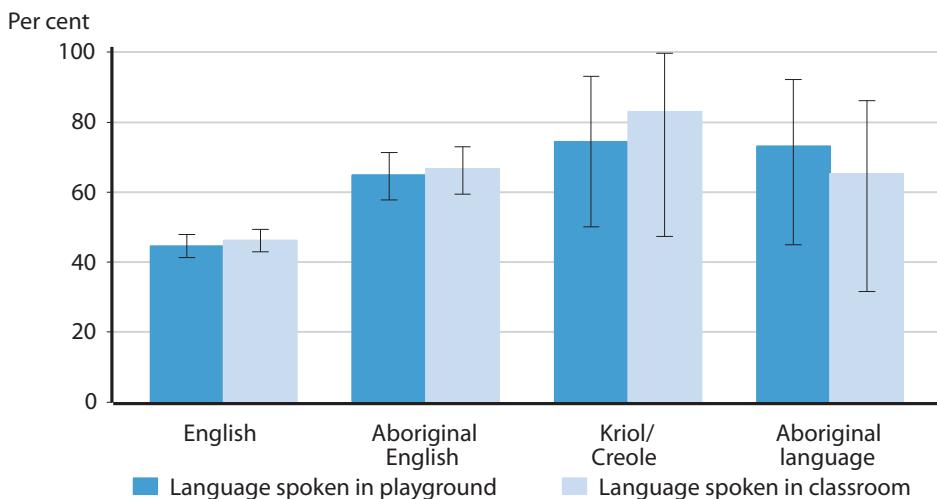
Source: Tables 4.12, 4.13

Academic performance

Teachers rated the overall academic performance of students on a five point scale, 'far below age level', 'somewhat below age level', 'at age level', 'somewhat above age level' and 'far above age level'. The first two categories were combined to become 'low academic performance' and the remaining three were combined to become 'average or above average academic performance'. See Chapter 5 for further information on measuring academic performance in the survey.

Six in ten students (58.9 per cent; CI: 55.0%–62.5%) with low academic performance were absent from school for at least 26 days in a school year compared with four in ten students (38.4 per cent; CI: 34.3%–42.7%) who had average or above average academic performance (Table 4.14).

Use of school support services

Primary carers were asked whether, in the last 6 months, they or their partner had needed to see any of the following people about problems their child may have had at school: School psychologist/counsellor; Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer (AIEO); class/form teacher; deputy principal/deputy headmaster; and the principal/headmaster. An association with absence from school for 26 days or more was found only in relation to the principal or headmaster. The proportion of students absent from school for 26 days or more was significantly higher if their carers had needed to see the school principal or headmaster in the last six months (61.6 per cent; CI: 54.3%–68.1%) than if the carer had not needed to see the school principal or headmaster (48.0 per cent; CI: 44.8%–51.2%) (Table 4.15).

Emotional or behavioural difficulties

Volume Two of the WAACHS — *The Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Aboriginal Children and Young People* reported the risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties based on primary carer responses to the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)[23] (see *Glossary*). The same SDQ questions were asked of classroom teachers. Responses have been used to produce a teacher-assessed risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Poor school attendance was not found to be associated with risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties as based on primary carer responses. However an association with poor school attendance was found with risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties based on responses from teachers. The proportion of students who had missed at least 26 days of school was significantly higher among those at moderate and high risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties (57.4 per cent; CI: 50.1%–64.3% and 66.2 per cent; CI: 60.2%–72.2% respectively) than those at low risk (44.8 per cent; CI: 41.5%–48.2%) (Table 4.16).

Medians were calculated for each level of risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties. The median number of days absent from school for students at high risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties (40 days; CI: 31–51) was significantly higher than for students at low risk (23 days; CI: 20–25). For students at moderate risk the median was 32 days (CI: 24–38) (Table 4.4).

Specific emotional or behavioural difficulties

As shown in Figure 4.7, for all five sub-scales of the SDQ the proportion of students who had missed at least 26 days of school was significantly higher among students whose teachers had assessed them to be at high risk of clinically significant difficulties than students at low risk.

FIGURE 4.7: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — PROPORTION ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY RISK OF CLINICALLY SIGNIFICANT SPECIFIC DIFFICULTIES
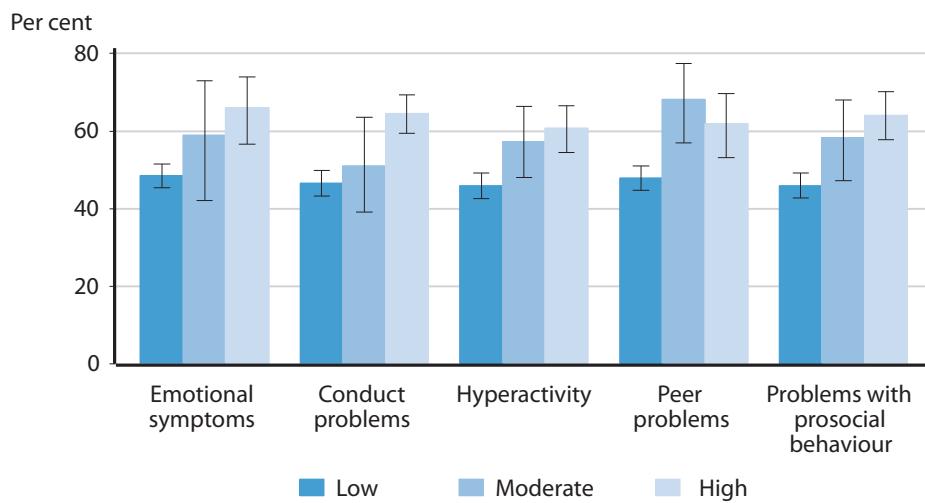
Source: Tables 4.17, 4.18, 4.19, 4.20, 4.21

Modelling the association between school attendance and student factors

EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS WITH MODELLING

The previous section has explored the relationship between levels of school attendance and a range of factors such as Level of Relative Isolation and main language spoken at school, where each factor has been examined separately. However, these factors may themselves be inter-related. The proportion of students whose attendance was below the median increased with increasing isolation. It was also higher for students who spoke Aboriginal English or an Aboriginal language. However, the proportion of students who speak Aboriginal English or Aboriginal languages increases with increasing relative isolation. It is possible that the observed relationship between poor attendance at school and main language spoken may in fact be a reflection of the relationships between the language spoken and isolation, and between isolation and attendance.

Statistical modelling can be used to assess the simultaneous impact of multiple factors and to determine the individual effects of each factor. Logistic regression models (see *Glossary*) have been used to explore a range of student, primary carer, family and school factors that may have had an affect on school attendance. The modelling techniques used account for the use of survey weights and the hierarchical structure of the data with selection of children within families, communities and schools.

Furthermore, each model adjusts for the independent effects of the other variables in the model. Thus, for example, the association between school attendance and LORI can be separated from the association with main language spoken.

The results of the models are expressed in terms of odds ratios (see *Glossary*). The odds ratios are calculated relative to a reference category for each variable. For example, in the model describing school attendance and student variables, for Level of Relative Isolation the category 'None' (Perth metropolitan area) has been used as the reference category. Where students were living in areas of moderate relative isolation, the Odds Ratio was 2.29 (CI: 1.45–3.61). This can be interpreted as saying that students in areas of moderate isolation were 2.29 times more likely to have been absent from school for 26 days or more than students living in the Perth metropolitan area. The statistical significance of an odds ratio can be judged by whether the confidence interval includes the reference value of 1.00 (see *Appendix E — Reliability of Estimates* for more information on confidence intervals).

Where an odds ratio is less than one, it indicates a reduced level of risk. For example, the age group 4–7 years was chosen as the reference category for student's age. For students aged 8–11 years the Odds Ratio was 0.56 (CI: 0.42–0.74), indicating that these students were almost half as likely to be absent from school for 26 days or more than students aged 4–7 years. Alternatively, it can be said that the students were 1.79 times less likely to be absent from school for 26 days or more. The value of 1.79 is calculated by dividing the Odds Ratio of 0.56 into 1.

A multivariate logistic regression analysis was performed to model the probability of having an attendance ratio at or below 87.5 per cent, i.e. absent from school for 26 days or more (Table 4.22). The following student-related factors were found to be independently associated with being absent from school for 26 days or more in a school year.

Language spoken in the playground. Students who spoke Aboriginal English in the playground were over twice as likely (Odds Ratio 2.06; CI: 1.39–3.06) to have been absent from school for 26 days or more than students who spoke English in the playground. Students who spoke an Aboriginal language were nearly six times more likely (Odds Ratio 5.77; CI: 2.00–16.40).

Risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties. Students assessed from teacher reports to be at high risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties were twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.98; CI: 1.42–2.76) as students at low risk of being absent from school for at least 26 days in the school year.

Ever been in day care. Students who had never been in day care were almost twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.91; CI: 1.41–2.59) to have been absent from school for at least 26 days than students who had been in day care.

Primary carer or partner needed to see school principal about problem student had at school. Students whose carers had needed to see the school principal in the past six months because of problems the student was having at school were almost twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.89; CI: 1.35–2.65) to have been absent from school for 26 days or more.

Helping with school work at home. Students who have no-one to help them with their school work were almost twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.86; CI: 1.18–2.91) to have been absent from school for at least 26 days than those who were helped with their school work by someone within their household.

Has trouble getting enough sleep. Students who have trouble getting enough sleep were almost twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.73; CI: 1.19–2.51) to be absent from school for at least 26 days in the school year than students who did not have trouble getting enough sleep.

Overall academic performance. Students with low academic performance were almost twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.76; CI: 1.37–2.24) to be absent for at least 26 days in a school year than students whose overall academic performance was average or above average.

Student level factors not independently associated with school absence of 26 days or more

A number of other student level factors were tested and found not to be independently associated with poor school attendance. These included:

◆ physical health indicators such as poor vision and hearing, speech difficulties, asthma, dental caries, dietary quality, and antenatal and postnatal indicators such as substance use during pregnancy and breast feeding

◆ use of health services such as number of times seen a doctor or been in hospital

◆ contact with other support services such as disability services, and family and children's services

◆ carer's contact with school support services including a school psychologist, AIEO, class room teacher and the deputy principal

◆ carer assessed risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties.

CARER FACTORS

Aboriginal status of primary carer

The majority of students in the survey had a primary carer who was Aboriginal. However for 15.5 per cent (CI: 13.3%–18.0%) of students, their primary carer was non-Aboriginal. For the majority (81.0 per cent; CI: 73.9%–86.7%) of these students their non-Aboriginal primary carer was also their birth mother (Table 4.23).

A strong association was found between being absent from school for 26 days or more and the Aboriginal status of the primary carer. For students with an Aboriginal primary carer, 54.3 per cent (CI: 51.0%–57.5%) were absent from school for 26 days or more during the school year. In contrast, for students whose primary carer was non-Aboriginal the proportion absent for 26 days or more was a considerably lower 27.3 per cent (CI: 21.3%–34.3%) (Table 4.24).

The median number of days absent from school for students whose primary carer was Aboriginal was 30 days (CI: 27–33). This was more than double the median number of days absent for Aboriginal students whose primary carer was not Aboriginal (14 days; CI: 11–16) (Table 4.4).

However, when the Aboriginal status of the carer was modelled against other carer related variables it was not found to be a significant predictor of being absent from school for 26 days or more.

Whether primary carer forcibly separated from natural family

Until the 1970s, Aboriginal children were subject to laws, practices and policies that enabled the forced separation of children from their natural families. This separation took three general forms: putting children into government-run or church-run institutions; adoption; and fostering of children into non-Aboriginal families. The survey found that, of the estimated 10,400 Aboriginal primary carers in Western Australia, 12.3 per cent (CI: 10.6%–14.3%) had been forcibly separated from their natural family by a mission, the government or welfare.[24]

Poor school attendance was found to be associated with a student's primary carer having been forcibly separated from their natural family as a child. For many carers, the effects of this policy have been enduring and have been passed on to future generations. For some, growing up in institutions deprived them of the opportunity to acquire good parenting skills while the education provided was in most cases basic and limited to training for menial labour.[25]

The survey found that the proportion of students who had missed at least 26 days of school was significantly higher among students whose primary carer was forcibly separated from their natural family (69.0 per cent; CI: 59.6%–77.6%) than among those whose primary carer had not been separated (52.2 per cent; CI: 48.8%–55.7%) (Table 4.25).

The median number of days absent from school for students whose primary carer had been forcibly separated from their natural family was 43 days (CI: 32–58) compared with 27 days (CI: 24–30) days for students whose primary carer had not been forcibly separated (Table 4.4).

Whether secondary carer forcibly separated from natural family

No association was found between the forced separation of the secondary carer (see *Glossary*) from their natural family and school non-attendance in their children.

Primary carer has a limiting medical condition

Children may be absent from school as a consequence of their carer's ill health. They may either have to stay at home to care for their carer, or, if very young, have no-one to help them to get to school. Primary carers were asked whether they had any medical conditions which would last for 6 months or more. If so they were asked whether they were limited in doing normal daily activities because of their medical or health problem.

The proportion of students absent from school for 26 days or more was lower among students whose primary carer did not have a medical condition (47.0 per cent; CI: 43.4%–50.7%) than among students whose primary carer was limited in normal daily activities because of their medical condition (59.8 per cent; CI: 52.1%–67.3%). Among students whose primary carer had a non-limiting medical condition, 52.7 per cent (CI: 46.8%–58.5%) were absent from school for 26 days or more in the school year (Table 4.26).

Carer education

The positive role models provided to children by parents or carers who have completed at least three years of secondary school may have some effect on school attendance. The survey found that the proportion of students who had missed at least 26 days of school was significantly higher among those students whose primary carers finished school before Year 10 (61.3 per cent; CI: 55.2%–67.1%) than among students whose primary carers had completed Year 10 (50.6 per cent; CI: 46.4%–54.8%), Years 11–12 (41.7 per cent; CI: 36.4%–47.0%) or who had gone on to post-school education (32.4 per cent; CI: 21.2%–44.2%) (Table 4.27).

Carer labour force status

The proportion of students who had missed at least 26 days of school was significantly lower among students whose primary carer was employed (42.1 per cent; CI: 37.7%–46.7%) than students whose primary carer was unemployed (56.1 per cent; CI: 46.8%–64.9%) or not in the labour force (55.6 per cent; CI: 51.5%–59.5%) (Table 4.28).

Carers ever arrested or charged with an offence

The proportion of students missing 26 days or more of school was significantly higher among students whose primary carer had ever been arrested or charged with an offence (56.1 per cent; CI: 51.4%–60.6%) than among students whose primary carer had not been arrested or charged (46.7 per cent; CI: 43.0%–50.5%) (Table 4.29). Where the primary carer was also the sole carer, the proportion absent from school for 26 days or more was 57.4 per cent (CI: 50.6%–63.9%). Where neither the primary carer or the secondary carer had been arrested or charged, the proportion of students absent from school for 26 days or more (42.2 per cent; CI: 36.8%–48.0%) was significantly lower (Table 4.30).

The median number of days absent for students whose primary carer had ever been arrested or charged, however, was not significantly different from that of students whose primary carer had never been arrested or charged (31 days; CI: 26–36 compared with 24 days; CI: 21–27) (Table 4.4).

Modelling the association between school attendance and carer factors

A multivariate logistic regression analysis was performed and it was found that, when carer factors were controlled, the following carer factors were independently associated with the student being absent from school for at least 26 days (Table 4.31).

Primary carer forcibly separated from natural family. Students whose primary carer had been forcibly separated from their natural family were over one and a half times more likely (Odds Ratio 1.75; CI: 1.19–2.56) to have been absent for at least 26 days in a school year than students whose primary carer had not been forcibly separated.

Primary carer highest level of education. Students whose carers had been educated to Years 11 or 12 were one and a half times less likely (Odds Ratio 0.65; CI: 0.49–0.87) to have been absent from school for 26 days or more than students whose carers left school after Year 10. Similarly, students whose carers had been educated for 13 years or more were over one and a half times less likely (Odds Ratio 0.57; CI: 0.34–0.96) to have been absent from school for 26 days or more.

Primary carer labour force status. Students whose primary carers were either unemployed or not in the labour force were over one and a half times more likely (Odds Ratio 1.61; CI: 1.09–2.38 and Odds Ratio 1.73; CI: 1.34–2.24 respectively) to have missed at least 26 days of school than students whose primary carers were employed.

Primary carer ever arrested. Students whose primary carer had ever been arrested or charged with an offence were one and a half times more likely (Odds Ratio 1.45; CI: 1.14–1.85) to have missed at least 26 days of school than students whose primary carers had never been arrested or charged.

Primary carer attended an Aboriginal funeral in the past 12 months. Students whose primary carers had attended an Aboriginal funeral were one and a half times more likely (Odds Ratio 1.57; CI: 1.19–2.06) to have been absent from school for 26 days or more.

Main language spoken. Students whose primary carer spoke Aboriginal English as their main language were four times more likely (Odds Ratio 4.04; CI: 1.30–12.40) to have been absent from school for 26 days or more and three times more likely (Odds Ratio 2.62; CI: 1.22–5.64) if their carer spoke an Aboriginal language.

Carer level factors not independently associated with school absence of 26 days or more

The following carer level factors were found not to be associated with attendance at school included:

◆ Aboriginal status of the primary carer

◆ primary carer's involvement in cultural activities such as festivals and Aboriginal organisations

◆ whether the primary carer had a limiting health condition.

FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD FACTORS

Family care arrangement

An association was found between poor school attendance and family care arrangement. The proportion of students who had missed at least 26 days of school was higher among those students cared for by a sole parent (54.8 per cent; CI: 50.1%–59.4%) and those cared for by aunts and uncles (70.8 per cent; CI: 54.5%–83.9%) than among those students cared for by both original parents (44.8 per cent; CI: 40.6%–49.1%) (Figure 4.8).

FIGURE 4.8: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — PROPORTION ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY FAMILY CARE ARRANGEMENTS
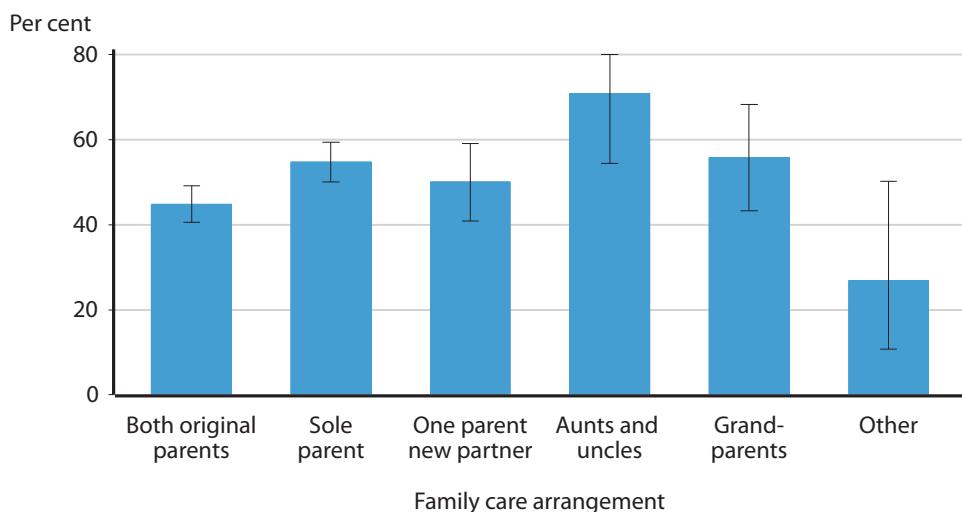
Source : Table 4.32

Family functioning

A nine-item scale was used to measure the extent to which families have established an environment of cooperation, emotional support and good communication. Ratings from scores provided by the carers were summed to produce an overall score with categories labelled 'very good', 'good', 'fair' and 'poor' family functioning (see *Glossary)*. In families with very good functioning, the proportion of students away from school for at least 26 days was slightly lower than for students in families with poor family functioning (43.9 per cent; CI: 38.9%–49.0% compared with 54.9 per cent; CI: 48.6%–61.4%). However, this difference did not reach statistical significance (Table 4.33).

Reading books with child at home

Primary carers of 4–11 year-olds were asked 'at home, how often does someone from this house look at a book with the student'. Figure 4.9 shows that the frequency of reading a book with the student at home was associated with school attendance. The proportion of 4–11 year-old students who were absent from school for 26 days or more in the school year was significantly higher among those who had hardly ever had a book read with them (54.2 per cent; CI: 46.0%–62.3%) than among those who had a book read with them once a day (38.0 per cent; CI: 32.6%–43.8%). There was no significant difference between those who were read to once a day and those who were read to several times a day.

FIGURE 4.9: STUDENTS AGED 4–11 YEARS — PROPORTION ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY HOW OFTEN SOMEONE FROM THE HOUSEHOLD LOOKS AT A BOOK WITH THE CHILD
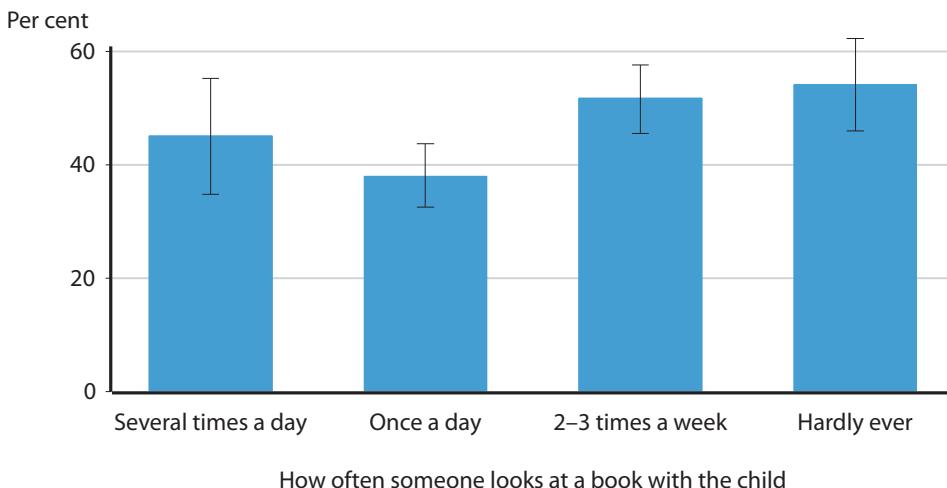
Source: Table 4.34

4

Life stress events

LIFE STRESS EVENTS

The number of stressful life events that occur in a single period can impact on a family's ability to cope. While most people are able to cope with a single stressful event, when multiple stressful or traumatic events occur simultaneously it can become more and more difficult to cope.

Primary carers were asked if any of fourteen major life stress events had occurred in the family in the preceding 12 months. These events included illness, hospitalisation or death of a close family member, family break-up, arrests, job loss and financial difficulties.

For analysis, the number of life stress events in the previous 12 months were grouped as follows: 0–2, 3–4, 5–6 and 7–14, with each category containing approximately one quarter of survey children.

Previous Western Australian research has suggested that three or more life stress events in one 12 month period may be a risk factor for a range of problems. Over 20 per cent of Aboriginal children were found to be living in families where 7–14 major life stress events had occurred over the preceding 12 months. These children were five and a half times more likely to be at high risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties than children in families where fewer than three life stress events had occurred.[23]

Details of the life stress events measured in the survey can be found in *Appendix C — Measures derived from multiple responses and scales* in Volume Two — *The Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Aboriginal Children and Young People.*

Poor school attendance increased with the number of life stress events experienced in the family (Figure 4.10). Over one in five students (22.0 per cent; CI: 19.9%–24.2%) aged 4–17 years were living in families where 7–14 major life stress events had occurred in the past 12 months. Of these students, 62.2 per cent (CI: 56.1%–68.3%) had missed at least 26 days of school compared with 43.1 per cent (CI: 38.2%–48.2%) of students in families that had experienced no more than 2 life stress events.

FIGURE 4.10: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — PROPORTION ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY NUMBER OF LIFE STRESS EVENTS EXPERIENCED BY THE FAMILY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS
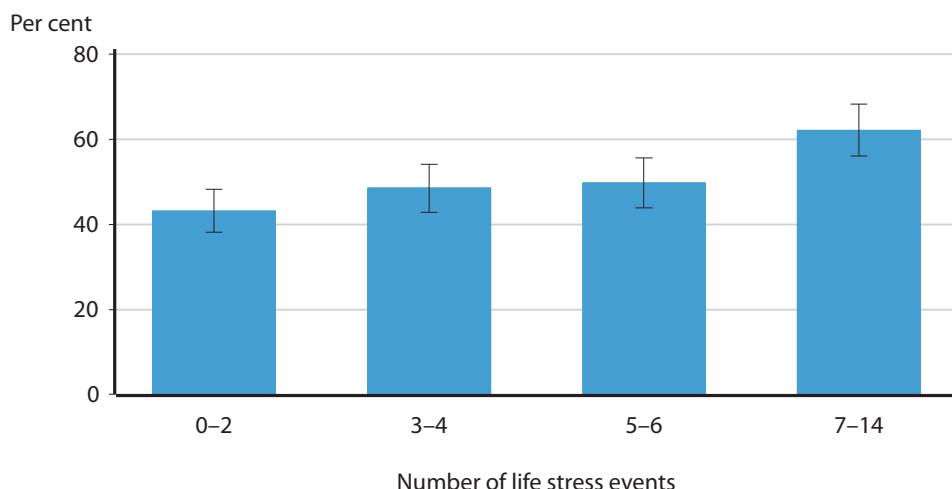
Source : Table 4.35

Financial strain

Primary carers were asked to describe their family's money situation in terms of five possible responses: 'we are spending more money than we get', 'we have just enough money to get through to next pay day', 'there is some money left over each week but we spend it', 'we can save a bit every now and again' and 'we can save a lot'. When analysed against school attendance, no association was found (Table 4.36).

Overuse of alcohol causing problems in the household

Primary carers were asked 'does overuse of alcohol cause problems in this household?' The proportion of students who had missed at least 26 days of school was higher among students living in families where overuse of alcohol caused problems in the household (59.4 per cent; CI: 50.4%–67.4%) than among students living in households without these problems (48.4 per cent; CI: 45.3%–51.5%) (Table 4.37).

Home ownership

There was a strong association with home ownership and whether students missed 26 days or more of school in the school year. The proportion of students living in rented accommodation who were absent from school for at least 26 days was almost double (55.8 per cent; CI: 52.5%–59.0%) that of students living in accommodation either owned or being paid off (31.9 per cent; CI: 25.8%–38.4%). This effect was observed only in the Perth metropolitan area and areas of low isolation (Table 4.38).

Household occupancy level

There was an association between poor school attendance and high household occupancy level. Households with a high occupancy level are those where the number of people who usually sleep at the dwelling exceeds the number of bedrooms in the dwelling plus three. For example, if a house has three bedrooms, it is considered to have high occupancy if more than six people usually sleep there (see *Glossary*). The proportion of students who had missed at least 26 days of school was significantly higher among those living in households with a high occupancy level (58.3 per cent; CI: 52.6%–63.9%) than for students in households with a low occupancy level (47.2 per cent; CI: 43.9%–50.5%) (Table 4.39).

Number of homes lived in and number of primary schools attended

The mobility of Aboriginal households is reported to be a major cause of absence from school by Aboriginal children.[2] As well as moving from one school to another more frequently than non-Aboriginal students, Aboriginal students, particularly in traditionally oriented remote communities, may necessarily be absent from their regular schools for lengthy periods of time due to cultural and social obligations.[2]

However, the survey found no difference in the proportion of students who had at least 26 days of absence from school regardless of whether they had attended one, two or three or more primary schools since starting school. Nor was there any significant difference between those who had lived in five or more homes and those who had lived in less than five homes (Table 4.40).

Modelling the association between school attendance and family and household factors

A number of family and household factors were modelled to assess whether they were independently associated with absence from school for 26 days or more in a school year. After controlling for Level of Relative Isolation, age and sex, the following factors were found to be significant (Table 4.41).

Family care arrangement. Students were more likely to have been absent from school for 26 days or more if they were cared for by aunts and uncles (Odds Ratio 2.05; CI: 1.17–3.57) or a sole parent (Odds Ratio 1.34; CI: 1.02–1.74) than if cared for by both original parents.

Home ownership. Students who lived in rented accommodation were over twice as likely (Odds Ratio 2.38; CI: 1.77–3.20) to be absent from school for 26 days or more than students who lived in accommodation that was owned outright or being paid off.

Number of life stress events. Students in families where seven or more life stress events were experienced in a year were more likely to have been absent from school for 26 days (Odds Ratio 2.25; CI: 1.61–3.16) than students in families where the number of life stress events was fewer than three.

How often someone from the household looks at a book with the student. Relative to students who were read to at home once a day, students who had a book read to them by someone in the household either 2–3 times a week or hardly ever, were more likely to be absent from school for 26 days or more (Odds Ratio 1.59; CI: 1.14–2.22 and Odds Ratio 1.87; CI: 1.27–2.74 respectively).

Family and household level factors not independently associated with school absence of 26 days or more

Family and household related factors that were modelled and found not to be associated with being absent from school for 26 days or more included:

◆ family functioning

◆ household occupancy level

◆ mobility factors such as number of schools attended and number of homes lived in since birth

◆ overuse of alcohol causing problems in the household

◆ family financial strain.

SCHOOL FACTORS

It has been suggested that high levels of school non-attendance may be an indication of a dysfunctional relationship between school and the students.[6] Examples of school factors that may influence absenteeism include the school environment, the proportion of Aboriginal students in the school, the socioeconomic status of families served by the school, level of understanding of Aboriginal culture by teachers and staff, relevance of the education environment, teacher training, staff attitudes and expectations, relationships between staff and carers and the community, school discipline policies and curriculum issues.[2]

Category of school

Although the number of Aboriginal students attending Independent schools is low, the proportion of students at these schools who were absent at least 26 days of school (22.7 per cent; CI: 10.6%–37.6%) was significantly lower than for students in Government or Catholic schools (51.0 per cent; CI: 47.8%–54.1% and 50.1 per cent; CI: 41.4%–58.6% respectively). In Aboriginal community governed schools, almost half (48.7 per cent; CI: 27.2%–72.8%) of the students had missed at 26 days or more of school in the school year (Table 4.42).

Proportion of students who are Aboriginal

Poor school attendance increased as the proportion of Aboriginal students in the school student population increased. In schools where Aboriginal students represented less than 10 per cent of the school population, 39.7 per cent (CI: 34.8%–44.9%) were absent for at least 26 days in a school year. This rose to 62.1 per cent (CI: 53.6%–69.6%) in schools where 90 per cent or more of the students were Aboriginal (Table 4.43).

Student to teacher ratio

The proportion of students who were absent from school for 26 days or more tended to increase as the ratio of students to teachers decreased. In schools where there were 20 or more students per teacher, 37.6 per cent (CI: 30.7%–45.2%) of students were absent for 26 days or more. This compares with 56.0 per cent (CI: 51.3%–60.8%) of students in schools where there were 10–15 students per teacher and 59.1 per cent (CI: 51.1%–66.4%) in schools where there were less than 10 students per teacher (Table 4.44).

Teachers new to teaching

The survey found no association between the proportion of teachers new to teaching and absence from school for 26 days or more during a school year (Table 4.45).

Professional Development and curriculum activities

School principals were asked whether their school had implemented a selection of Professional Development and curriculum activities. These included:

- *Our Story* – Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training for the Education Sector

- *FELIKS* – Fostering English Language in Kimberley Schools

- *ABC of Two Way Literacy and Learning*

- *Deadly Ways to Learn*

- *Time for Talk*

- Aboriginal Studies (across the curriculum)

- *Aboriginal Studies* (discrete unit or course)

- *Do You Hear What I Hear* – Otitis media

- Other PD or developing culturally inclusive curricula.

For further information about these activities, see Chapter 3. In all instances where these activities were implemented, the proportion of children absent for at least 26 days was lower than in schools where no such activities were implemented.

However, a statistically significant association was found between poor school attendance and only three of these programmes: *ABC of Two Way Literacy and Learning*, *Deadly Ways to Learn*, and Aboriginal Studies (across the curriculum). For example, in schools where Aboriginal Studies (across the curriculum) was implemented, 34.7 per cent (CI: 27.3%–42.4%) of students were absent for 26 days or more compared with 52.7 per cent (CI: 49.3%–56.0%) in schools where the programme was not implemented (Tables 4.46).

While only three curriculum activities had a statistically significant association with absence from school of 26 days or more, the relationships between the remaining activities and absence from school were close to being statistically significant.

When the implementation of *ABC of Two Way Literacy and Learning, Deadly Ways to Learn*, and Aboriginal Studies (across the curriculum) were modelled against other school variables, they were not found to be independent predictors of students being absent from school for 26 days or more.

Aboriginal language taught at the school

In schools where an Aboriginal language was taught, the proportion of students who were absent for 26 days or more (58.9 per cent; CI: 53.5%–64.0%) was significantly higher than in schools where an Aboriginal language was not taught (46.5 per cent; CI: 42.9%–50.0%). No association was found by Level of Relative Isolation (Table 4.47).

Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEOs)

ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER EDUCATION OFFICERS (AIEOs)

AIEOs (government schools) and ATAs (Catholic schools) are employed in schools to provide support and assistance to Aboriginal students, carers, teachers and the school community through their knowledge, understanding and sharing of Aboriginal history, language and culture. The role of the AIEO is designed to help ease the barriers to educational outcomes that Aboriginal students may encounter in the education system. As such, they can have an important influence on the behaviour and performance of Aboriginal students.

In the government school system, the allocation of AIEOs is currently based on a formula which takes account of the size of the Aboriginal student population, the year that these students are enrolled in, and the level of social disadvantage in the school community.

Previous AIEO allocation

At the time of the survey, AIEOs were funded and allocated by the then Aboriginal Education Directorate as a result of a school making a direct application for AIEO resources. This process led to a number of issues, including the perception that an inequitable distribution of resources did not allow the needs of Aboriginal students to be fully met. A new method for allocating AIEO resources has subsequently been introduced.

Current AIEO allocation formula

Allocation of AIEO staff to schools is now made using a formula-based approach. The AIEO formula used by DET in government schools takes account of:

◆ the number of Aboriginal students enrolled in a school

◆ the year at school of each Aboriginal student. Year level multipliers vary from 0.6 to 1.6, with the higher multiplier being applied to Aboriginal students enrolled in the year levels where they are considered to be most at risk

◆ social disadvantage, as measured by the Socioeconomic Index for Schools (SEI) (see *Glossary*).

At the time of the survey, most AIEOs were paid as either Level 1 or Level 2 teacher aides but, as of 2004, are now all paid as Level 3 staff. This has improved retention and recruitment of AIEOs.

The survey found that in Western Australian schools where there was an AIEO, 54.9 per cent (CI: 51.7%–58.1%) of students were absent from school for at least 26 days compared with 36.1 per cent (CI: 30.4%–42.2%) of students in schools where there was no AIEO (Table 4.48).

Current allocation practices have changed since the survey and are now based on a formula that takes into account the ratio of Aboriginal students in the school and the socioeconomic level of the school. The relationships between these factors and the

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presence of an AIEO in the school and their association with being absent from school for 26 days or more were also analysed.

Proportion of students who are Aboriginal. Regardless of the proportion of Aboriginal students in the school, the proportion absent from school for 26 days or more was higher in schools that have an AIEO. This was significant only in schools where Aboriginal students comprised less than 10 per cent of the total student population (48.2 per cent; CI: 41.3%–54.8% of students in schools with an AIEO compared with 30.8 per cent; CI: 24.2%–38.2% in schools with no AIEO) (Table 4.48).

Socioeconomic status of the school. Across all quartiles of the Socioeconomic Index for schools (SEI) (see *Glossary*), the proportion of students absent from school for 26 days or more was higher in schools where there was an AIEO. This was only significant within the third quartile where 55.7 per cent (CI: 49.1%–62.1%) of students in a school with an AIEO were absent for 26 days or more compared with 27.4 per cent (CI: 16.5%–41.6%) in schools with no AIEO (Table 4.49).

The results of these bivariate analyses were confirmed during the modelling process which showed that the likelihood of being absent from school for 26 days or more was increased in schools with both a high SEI and an AIEO (Table 4.56).

Learning, teaching and support programmes for Aboriginal students

School principals were asked a series of questions about the adequacy of the learning, teaching and support programmes for Aboriginal students. Principals rated on a scale of 1 (inadequate) to 7 (fully adequate) the adequacy of the following school activities and learning programmes, parent involvement and teacher support in their school:

◆ learning and teaching programmes for Aboriginal students

◆ teacher support arrangements for teaching Aboriginal students

◆ behaviour management programme for Aboriginal students

◆ involvement of Aboriginal parents in school activities and their children's learning

◆ school support to Aboriginal parents

◆ planning in making provision for Aboriginal education.

These factors were combined into a composite variable comprising four quartiles of an index of school principals assessment of learning, teaching and support services (see *Appendix C* and *Chapter 3*).

School-based factors such as these are potentially important influences on alienation and absence from school. Changing the atmosphere of schools has been suggested as an appropriate way of improving school attendance.[2] However the survey found no association between principals' assessments of learning, teaching and support services for Aboriginal students and school attendance (Table 4.50).

Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Committee (ASSPA)

At the time of the survey, ASSPA committees were in operation in some schools. The aim of these committees was to stimulate community involvement in schools. This initiative has since been replaced by a Whole of School Intervention Strategy, which incorporates elements such as the Parent School Partnerships Initiative (PSPI).

While the proportion of students who were absent from school for at least 26 days in a school year was higher in schools that had an ASSPA than schools with no ASSPA, the difference was not significant (51.4 per cent; CI: 48.3%–54.3% compared with 35.9 per cent; CI: 24.7%–49.6%) (Table 4.51).

Community poverty

The socioeconomic background of Aboriginal children has been considered a factor affecting school attendance.[6] School principals were asked to rate the degree that poverty affects children attending their school. This was done using a seven point scale which ranged from 1 (no poverty) to 7 (extreme poverty).

The survey found that as the degree of poverty increased, the proportion of students who had missed at least 26 days of school also increased, ranging from 38.7 per cent (CI: 15.2%–64.6%) in schools where students were not affected by poverty to 62.3 per cent (CI: 45.6%–76.4%) in schools where the effect of poverty on the students was extreme. However, none of these differences were significant (Table 4.52).

Socioeconomic status of the school

Being absent from school for 26 days or more was also analysed across quartiles of the school SEI. The only notable difference across the quartiles of SEI in levels of attendance was between the lowest and second quartiles. In the lowest quartile, 57.1 per cent (CI: 50.5%–63.3%) of students were absent for at least 26 days compared with 43.0 per cent (CI: 37.4%–49.0%) in schools in the second quartile (Table 4.53).

Carer satisfaction with the job the school is doing

Carers were asked to rate how happy they were with the job the school was doing on a scale of 1 (very unhappy) to 5 (very happy). The proportion of students who had missed 26 days or more of school was significantly higher among those whose carer was 'neither unhappy nor happy' (61.3 per cent; CI: 50.5%–71.9%) than those who were 'very happy' (47.0 per cent; CI: 43.5%–50.5%) (Table 4.54).

School suspension

The proportion of students who had been absent from school for 26 days or more during a school year was higher among students who had been suspended than among those who had not been suspended. Over two-thirds (67.9 per cent; CI: 60.4%–75.2%) of students who had been suspended during the year had at least 26 days of absence from school. Among students who had not been suspended, the corresponding proportion was less than half (48.6 per cent; CI: 45.5%–51.6%) (Table 4.55).

Modelling the association between school attendance and school factors

Data modelling of school factors showed that, after controlling for Level of Relative Isolation, age and sex, the following school factors were independently associated with being absent from school for 26 days or more (Table 4.56):

Proportion of students who are Aboriginal. In schools where Aboriginal students comprise at least 90 per cent of the student population, the likelihood of being absent from school for 26 days or more was over three times (Odds Ratio 3.10; CI: 1.45–6.59) that of students in schools where the proportion of Aboriginal students was less than

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10 per cent. In schools where the proportion of Aboriginal students was between ten and ninety per cent, students were over twice as likely (Odds Ratio 2.05; CI: 1.37–3.09) to have been absent for 26 days or more.

Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer (AIEO) at the school. Students in schools where there was no AIEO were two times less likely (Odds Ratio 0.52; CI: 0.37–0.73) to be absent from school for at least 26 days in a school year than students in schools where there was an AIEO.

Socioeconomic status of Government schools. Students attending Government schools in the highest quartile of the school Socioeconomic Index were over twice as likely (Odds Ratio 2.27; CI: 1.32–3.92) to have been absent for at least 26 days than students in the lowest quartile.

Carer satisfaction with the job the school is doing. Students whose carers were neither unhappy nor happy with the job the school was doing were over twice as likely (Odds Ratio 2.27; CI: 1.34–3.85) to have been absent from school for at least 26 days than students whose carers were very happy with the school.

School level factors not independently associated with school absence of 26 days or more

A number of other school-related factors were modelled and found not to be independently associated with absence from school of 26 days or more. These included:

◆ the implementation of Professional Development and curriculum activities i.e. *Our Story*, *FELIKS*, *ABC of Two Way Literacy and Learning*, *Deadly Ways to Learn*, *Time for Talk*, Aboriginal studies (across the curriculum or as a discrete unit) and *Do You Hear What I Hear*

◆ whether the school taught an Aboriginal language

◆ whether the school had an Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Committee (ASSPA)

◆ student to teacher ratio

◆ proportion of teachers new to teaching.

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES USED TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

The level of school attendance among Aboriginal children remains significantly lower than for the general population. This is not to say however that improvements have not been made or that no effective strategies have been implemented. Many strategies have been implemented in schools and effective results have been obtained at the local level. These strategies have generally been developed in individual schools as the following case studies show. The general principles that underpinned the most successful strategies included home visits and community liaison, emphasis on personal contact with consistent follow-up where absence occurred, personal planning and goal-setting as well as use of alternative settings that became 'home' for the students involved for part of the week.[26,27]

Continued . . . .

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES USED TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL *(continued)*

The Gumala Mirnuwarni project

The Gumala Mirnuwarni project (a partnership of the Rio Tinto mining company, governments, schools and community) is an example of students, families, schools and the community working together to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and to consequently improving employment opportunities. One positive impact has been improved school attendance rates. Before the commencement of the project, the absentee rate for Aboriginal students was about four times that of non-Aboriginal students in the same region. The drop out rate was high and very few students reached Year 12.

The key values of the project are family involvement and support as well as traditional knowledge and culture. The main targets for the project are students who have demonstrated that they want to succeed.

The project has resulted in improved school attendance rates and outcomes. After four years, at the end of 1999, the rate of absence for Project students was half that of other Aboriginal students in the region and no more than double that of non-Aboriginal students.

Strategies included Education Enrichment Centres, an Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS), assignment of school based mentors for each student, cultural awareness workshops for the school staff and family support for students. Extra curricular activities were also arranged to develop confidence and abilities including visits to industry and education facilities, cultural awareness camps and self-esteem and learning workshops. The project had a low profile and no publicity, and cooperated to achieve agreed goals.

After two years of operation, three Karratha High School students gained University entrance in 1999 compared with only one for the previous 10 years. Increased family involvement in the education of students has had a positive influence, and students, teachers and families have a more positive attitude as a result of the project.[28]

Carnarvon Primary School – Positive Incentive Program (PIP)

Concern about low school achievement, bad behaviour and low school attendance prompted Carnarvon Primary School to introduce the Positive Incentive Program (PIP). This programme was developed with staff involvement and was aimed at creating a positive school environment. Under this programme, students gained points for good behaviour, academic achievement and community or citizenship involvement. The programme resulted in an 80 per cent drop in misbehaviour at school and increased involvement of parents at school functions. Lunchtime clubs involving students and teachers were also introduced and helped to increase the self-esteem and school attendance of students.[2]

Continued . . . .

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EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES USED IN THE SCHOOL TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE *(continued)*

Badu Island State Primary School

A very high attendance rate of 95 per cent at the Badu Island State Primary School has been attributed to the school being one which provides a safe and friendly environment for the students, has an open door policy involving the community in the school activities, and adaptation of the school curricula to incorporate cultural activities and improve literacy and numeracy skills. For example, the school meets the expenses of parents if they accompany their children on school excursions.[2]

Cherbourg State School

Tackling poor attendance was one element of the 'Strong and Smart' programme implemented at the Cherbourg State School in Queensland. In the overall strategy to improve outcomes for Aboriginal students at Cherbourg, the principal set about changing the culture of the school, raising the expectations of the students, their families and teachers and encouraging involvement of the community in the school. The first step involved the school principal working closely with the community to build a strong relationship and a shared set of community values and expectations for children attending the school.

The school worked closely with the community on the issues of attendance and performance in school. Good attendance was made a matter of public record with classes reporting to the school each week and rewards given for the best attendance record. As a consequence, attendance at the school improved from 50 per cent regular attendance in 1997 to 95 per cent in 2002.[29]

Summary

These are just a few examples of programmes that have been implemented and shown to have some effect in improving Aboriginal attendance at school. The Australian government has commissioned analysis of special projects conducted under the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP), which has been published in *What Works*,[26,27] as well as promoted via the *What Works* web site.

MODELLING THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SCHOOL ABSENCE AND COMBINED DEMOGRAPHIC, STUDENT, CARER, FAMILY AND SCHOOL FACTORS

After modelling for student, carer, family and school factors separately, the outcomes for each were combined into one final model. The following factors were found to be independently associated with absence from school of 26 days or more (Table 4.57):

Age. Students aged 8–11 years were over one and a half times less likely (Odds Ratio 0.53; CI: 0.40–0.71) than 4–7 year-olds to be absent for at least 26 days.

Language spoken in the playground. Students who spoke an Aboriginal language at school were over six times more likely (Odds Ratio 6.09; CI: 2.20–16.80) than English speaking students to be absent from school for 26 days or more. Students who spoke Aboriginal English were almost twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.98; CI: 1.31–2.99) to have poor school attendance.

Ever been in day care. Students who had never been in day care were found to be one and a half times more likely (Odds Ratio 1.57; CI: 1.16–2.14) than students who had been in day care to have been absent from school for at least 26 days in a school year.

Has trouble getting enough sleep. Students who had trouble getting enough sleep were over one and a half times as likely (Odds Ratio 1.75; CI: 1.19–2.56) to have missed 26 days or more of school.

Overall academic performance. The likelihood of students being absent for 26 days or more was significantly higher if their overall academic performance was rated as low (Odds Ratio 1.63; CI: 1.27–2.09).

Risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties. Students assessed from teacher reports to be at high risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties were over one and a half times as likely (Odds Ratio 1.76; CI: 1.25–2.46) to have been absent from school for 26 days or more than students at low risk.

Primary carer or partner needed to see school principal about problem student had at school. Students whose carers had needed to see the school principal were almost twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.80; CI: 1.28–2.53) to have been absent from school for 26 days or more than students whose carers had not needed to see the school principal.

Primary carer level of education. Students whose primary carers had completed Years 11–12 were one and a half times less likely (Odds Ratio 0.71; CI: 0.53–0.95) than students who had only completed school to Year 10 to have missed 26 days or more of school during the school year.

Primary carer labour force status. Students were one and a half times more likely (Odds Ratio 1.53; CI: 1.18–1.99) to have been absent from school for 26 days or more if their primary carer was not in the labour force (i.e. was not employed and was not looking for employment).

Home ownership. Students living in rented accommodation or other accommodation were twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.95; CI: 1.45–2.64 and Odds Ratio 2.02; CI: 1.01–4.05 respectively) to have been absent for 26 days or more than students living in homes that were either owned or being paid off.

How often someone from the household looks at a book with the student. Students aged 4–11 years who had someone from their house look at a book with them less than once a day were more likely to have been absent from school for 26 days or more. Where a book was looked at 2–3 times a week, the Odds Ratio was 1.53 (CI: 1.09–2.15) and where a book was hardly ever looked at, the Odds Ratio was 1.56 (CI: 1.05–2.30).

Number of life stress events. The likelihood of 26 days or more of absence from school was almost doubled among students in families where at least 7 life stress events had been experienced during the year (Odds Ratio 1.90; CI: 1.34–2.68) compared with those in families with less than 3 life stress events.

Proportion of students who are Aboriginal. Aboriginal students in schools where the proportion of Aboriginal students ranged from 10 per cent to 90 per cent were over one and a half times as likely (Odds Ratio 1.71; CI: 1.15–2.55) to have been absent from school for 26 days or more than Aboriginal students in schools where the proportion of Aboriginal students was less than 10 per cent.

Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer (AIEO) at the school. Students attending schools that did not have an AIEO were almost two times less likely (Odds Ratio 0.55; CI: 0.39–0.78) to have been absent from school for 26 days or more than students in schools with an AIEO.

Socioeconomic status of schools. Students at schools ranked in the highest quartile of the school SEI were almost three times more likely (Odds Ratio 2.82; CI: 1.66–4.79) to have been absent from school for 26 days or more than students in schools ranked in the lowest quartile of school SEI.

THE ROLE OF THE ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER EDUCATION OFFICER (AIEO)

Since 1972 the Western Australian education system has provided support to schools with Aboriginal students in the form of AIEOs. These officers have provided a range of services under often difficult and challenging circumstances.

Empirical analysis suggests that Aboriginal student attendance does not benefit from the presence of an AIEO in the school. Indeed, Aboriginal students were more likely to miss larger numbers of days from school where schools had an AIEO. Also, as will be seen in Chapter 6, there is no association between the presence or absence of an AIEO in schools and the academic performance of Aboriginal students.

While it is generally claimed that AIEOs are made available to schools with high need or disadvantage and thus a negative association between AIEO support and attendance might be expected, these findings have been adjusted for all of the measures of disadvantage that are used in the allocation of AIEOs within state government schools. There was a negative association between the presence of AIEOs in a school and the attendance of Aboriginal students, additional to the effects of relative isolation, school Socioeconomic Index (SEI) and proportion of Aboriginal students in the school. This makes the finding of a substantial negative association between AIEO support and school performance of particular concern.

There are several reasons why poor attendance may be associated with AIEOs support. Firstly, the presence of AIEOs in a school does not necessarily imply the school has an inclusive culture. Indeed, the school may delegate responsibility for dealing with problems of attendance and performance of Aboriginal students specifically to AIEOs, where these problems would be the responsibility of all staff in schools without AIEOs. AIEOs are being required or expected to provide support to Aboriginal students in circumstances where it is unrealistic to expect benefit without the wider support of the school and education system, parents and communities. Second, the support provided by AIEOs is not principally of an educational nature – nor is it perhaps necessarily intended that it be so. This means that the benefit of AIEOs may not best be judged from the perspective of the school performance of the child. Third, the qualification and skill levels of AIEOs may require substantial improvement and staff development in order to fulfil the duties. Fourth, their role and duties generally may require greater definition and focus to produce more desirable and measured effect.

Continued . . . .

THE ROLE OF THE ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER EDUCATION OFFICER (AIEO) *(continued)*

Whatever the basis for the large negative association between student attendance and AIEO support, these findings suggest that:

◆ the presence of an AIEO in a school must be accompanied by substantial system and school changes in addressing the needs of Aboriginal students — the presence of an AIEO is not a substitute for this

◆ a significant opportunity exists to reconsider the role and duties of AIEOs and their overall professional development

◆ training and support of AIEOs to give this position an educational focus is essential.

IDENTIFYING A LEVEL OF ABSENCE THAT PLACES STUDENTS AT EDUCATIONAL RISK

Previous research has suggested that absence from school for one full day per week (i.e. 20 per cent or more days absent) will significantly disrupt a student's education.[30] However, analysis of the survey data did not support the use of this criterion for identifying students at risk. In fact, as is shown later in this chapter, academic performance declines systematically with any absence from school. For this reason, it was decided not to use the 20 per cent cut-off in the analysis of the survey data. So far, the median attendance at school (87.5 per cent) has been used as a cut-off point for bivariate analysis and modelling. To determine what impact this choice may have, two additional models have been fit. The first model predicts the likelihood of a student being absent from school for more than 63 days per year (i.e. in the bottom 20 per cent of school attendance with an attendance ratio of 69.7 per cent). The second model predicts the likelihood of a student being absent from school less than nine days per year (i.e. in the top 20 per cent attendance with an attendance ratio of 95.7 per cent).

Results of the first model looking at extreme levels of absence from school (absent more than 63 days) are shown in Table 4.58. Comparing these results with the model predicting below median levels of attendance at school shown in Table 4.57, it can be seen that essentially the same set of factors are associated with both below median and extreme levels of absence from school. However, there are some differences. Whether the student has problems getting enough sleep, or whether the student's carer or partner has needed to see the school principal in the past six months to discuss a problem, were not associated with extreme levels of absence from school, although they were associated with below median attendance. However, being at high risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties as reported by the teacher, or having low academic performance, were more strongly associated with extreme absence from school than they were with below median attendance at school.

The second model (Table 4.59) capturing very low levels of absence from school (absent less than nine days) indicates that, once again, essentially the same set of factors are associated with both high levels of school attendance and below median school attendance. However, there were several differences. Risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties was associated with below median attendance, but not with high levels of attendance. However, stronger relationships were observed between high levels of attendance and getting enough sleep, and between employment status of the primary carer and high levels of attendance.

UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

EXPLAINED AND UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

The most significant difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in relation to school attendance is 'the much larger proportion of Indigenous students who are absent from school for a comparatively large number of days'.[2] Furthermore, absences of Aboriginal students are much more likely to be recorded as unexplained and less likely to be followed up for an explanation.[2]

However, while the degree of absence from school among Aboriginal children is higher than that of non-Aboriginal children, the reliability of data collection undertaken by educational authorities is an issue. It is recommended that to improve information about school attendance of Aboriginal children, education providers need to be more rigorous in recording school absences. This undertaking would require improving the quality of school systems for recording absences and additional follow-up to establish why a student was absent.[2]

This suggests that teachers should be mindful of the particular difficulties facing some children. For example, some carers have poor written English language skills and are unable to write a note. Thus, these absences would subsequently be recorded as unexplained if not followed up by the teacher.

Principals were asked how many of their student's absences were explained satisfactorily, how many were explained questionably and how many were unexplained. Satisfactory explanations were calculated by dividing the number of days explained satisfactorily by number of possible attendance days and multiplying by 209. The same process was applied for questionably explained absences and unexplained absences from school. For comparability with the 1993 *Western Australian Child Health Survey* (WA CHS), the number of unexplained days absent has been analysed using three categories — 'none', '1–10' and 'more than 10'.

Almost half of all Aboriginal students (47.6 per cent; CI: 44.5%–50.6%) had more than 10 unexplained absences, 18.9 per cent (CI: 17.0%–20.9%) of students had 1–10 unexplained absences while 33.5 per cent (CI: 30.5%–36.5%) of students had no unexplained absences (Table 4.60).

Comparison with the 1993 WA CHS

The 1993 WA CHS found that among 4–16 year-olds, 4.3 per cent (CI: 3.1%–6.0%) of primary school students and 5.9 per cent (CI: 3.7%–8.4%) of high school students had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school during the school year. The corresponding proportions for 4–17 year-olds in the WAACHS were 46.3 per cent (CI: 42.6%–50.2%) and 50.5 per cent (CI: 45.4%–55.6%) respectively (Table 4.64).

Unexplained absence and attendance ratio

The proportion of students who had more than 10 unexplained absences was significantly higher among students who had been absent from school for at least 26 days in a school year (74.7 per cent; CI: 71.3%–78.0%) than those who had been absent for less than 26 days (20.3 per cent; CI: 17.3%–23.6%) (Table 4.60).

Unexplained absence and year at school

Children in Years 8–10 had the highest proportion with more than 10 unexplained absences (54.6 per cent; CI: 49.3%–59.8%) while the lowest proportion was among students in Years 11–12 (32.7 per cent; CI: 22.7%–44.4%) (Table 4.61).

By individual year at school, the proportion of students with more than 10 unexplained absences was highest among students in Year 10 (66.6 per cent; CI: 58.7%–74.4%) and lowest among students in Year 11 (26.1 per cent; CI: 15.0%–42.8%). There was little variation across the remaining years at school, with close to half in each year having more than 10 unexplained absences. Over half the students in Year 1 (53.0 per cent; CI: 44.1%–61.9%) had more than 10 unexplained absences while, for children in pre-primary school and in ungraded classes, the proportions were 47.7 per cent (CI: 38.8%–56.7%) and 43.3 per cent (CI: 17.7%–71.1%) respectively.

FIGURE 4.11: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — PROPORTION WITH MORE THAN 10 UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES IN A SCHOOL YEAR, BY YEAR AT SCHOOL

Per cent

School year
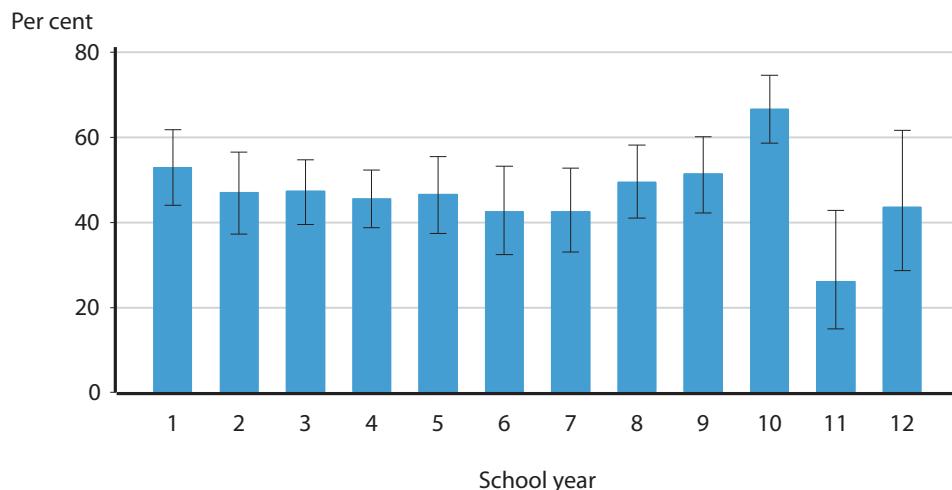
Source : Table 4.62

Unexplained absence and Level of Relative Isolation (LORI)

FIGURE 4.12: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — PROPORTION WITH MORE THAN 10 UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES, BY LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION

Per cent

Level of Relative Isolation
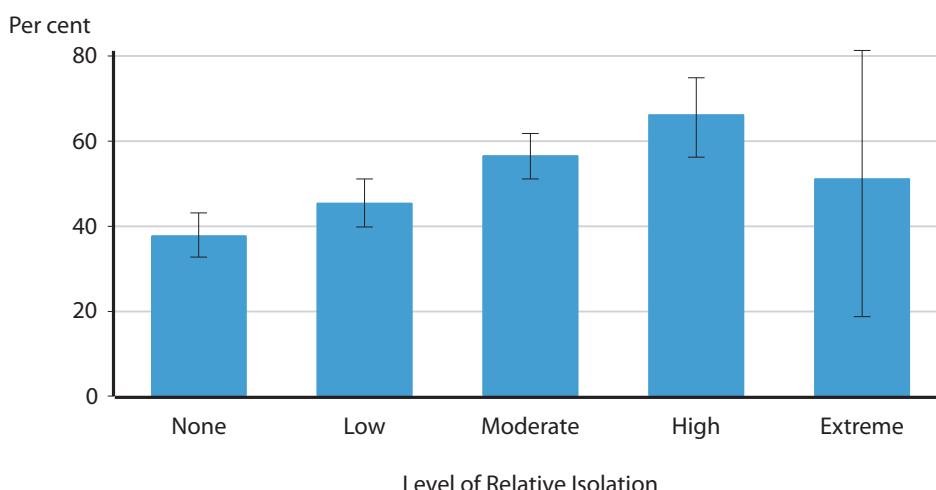
Source : Table 4.63

The frequency of more than 10 unexplained absences rose with increasing isolation. As shown in Figure 4.12, the proportion of students with more than 10 unexplained absences from school was significantly higher in areas of moderate and high isolation (56.5 per cent; CI: 51.2%–61.8%, and 66.2 per cent; CI: 56.2%–75.0% respectively) than in the Perth metropolitan area (37.7 per cent; CI: 32.7%–43.1%).

STUDENT FACTORS AND UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

Unexplained absence and whether student not wanted to go to school

Carers were asked 'taking into account the students age, in the past 6 months has he or she not wanted to go to school?'. The proportion of students with more than 10 unexplained absences was higher among those students whose carers had reported that, in the six months prior to the survey, the student had not wanted to go to school (58.6 per cent; CI: 54.0%–63.2%) than among those who had not refused to go to school (41.6 per cent; CI: 38.1%–45.3%) (Table 4.65).

Unexplained absence and emotional or behavioural difficulties (SDQ)

As shown in Figure 4.13, the proportion of students who had more than 10 days of unexplained absences increased with the increased risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties as assessed from teacher reports, ranging from 42.6 per cent (CI: 39.2%–46.1%) of students at low risk to 61.4 per cent (CI: 55.0%–67.8%) of students at high risk.

FIGURE 4.13: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — PROPORTION WITH MORE THAN 10 UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES, BY TEACHER ASSESSED RISK OF CLINICALLY SIGNIFICANT EMOTIONAL OR BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES

Risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties
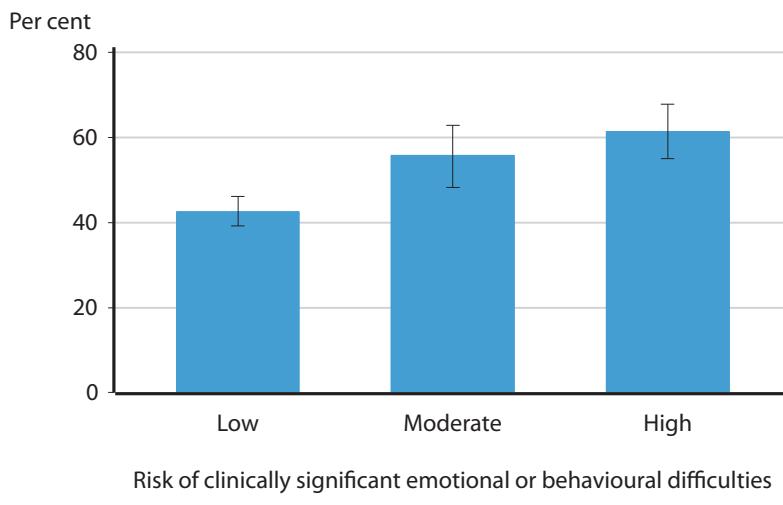
Source : Table 4.66

Unexplained absence and health risk factors

A number of health issues, including whether the student had ever had runny ears, whether they had normal vision, experienced recurring chest, gastrointestinal or ear infections, whether they had difficulty saying certain sounds, ever had asthma, holes in their teeth or trouble getting enough sleep were analysed against unexplained absences and no associations were found.

Among 12–17 year-old students, no associations were found between substance use such as smoking and alcohol consumption and more than 10 unexplained absences from school. Nor were any associations found between unexplained absences and whether students had thought about suicide or ever attempted suicide. Whether a student had been bullied at school or whether they had been treated badly because they were Aboriginal, either at school or out of school, had no association with unexplained absences from school.

Modelling the association between more than 10 unexplained absences and student factors

A multivariate logistic regression analysis was undertaken to model the probability of having more than 10 days of unexplained absences from school. The following student-related factors were found to be independently associated with having more than 10 unexplained absences per year (Table 4.67):

Language spoken in the school playground. Students who did not speak English in the playground were over twice as likely (Odds Ratio 2.27; CI: 1.54–3.34) to have had more than 10 unexplained absences.

Ever been in day care. Students aged 4–11 years who had never been in day care were almost twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.79; CI: 1.32–2.43) to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school.

Sleeping problems. Students who had trouble getting enough sleep were almost twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.79; CI: 1.22–2.63) to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school throughout the year.

Helping with school work at home. Students who had no-one to help them with their school work at home were twice as likely (Odds Ratio 2.09; CI: 1.33–3.28) to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school throughout the year than students who had someone at home to help them.

Primary carer or partner needed to see AIEO about school problem. Students whose carers had needed to see an AIEO about a school problem the student has had at school were one and a half times as likely (Odds Ratio 1.57; CI: 1.05–2.37) to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence.

Primary carer or partner needed to see class teacher about school problem. Students whose carers had needed to see the class teacher about a problem the student has had at school were over one and a half times less likely (Odds Ratio 0.56; CI: 0.41–0.76) to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence.

Primary carer or partner needed to see school principal about school problem. Students whose carers had needed to see the school principal about a problem the student has had at school were one and a half times more likely (Odds Ratio 1.53; CI: 1.07–2.20) to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence.

Overall academic performance. The likelihood of more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school was increased if the student's overall academic performance was low (Odds Ratio 2.12; CI: 1.65–2.71).

Risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties. The likelihood of more than 10 days of unexplained absences was increased where the student was assessed from teacher reports to be at high risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties. Students at high risk were over one and a half times as likely (Odds Ratio 1.63; CI: 1.18–2.27) to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school than students at low risk.

4

Student level factors not independently associated with more than 10 days of unexplained absence

Student-related factors found not to be associated with more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school included alcohol use by mother during pregnancy, whether the child had attended pre-school or kindergarten, physical health variables such as poor vision, hearing problems, speech difficulties and dietary indicators. Youth risk behaviours not associated included smoking, alcohol consumption, bullying, and perceptions of racism.

CARER FACTORS AND UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

Unexplained absence and primary carer forcibly separated from natural family

There was an association between more than 10 unexplained absences and whether the student's primary carer had been forcibly separated from their natural family. Among students whose primary carer had been separated from their natural family by a mission, the government or welfare, the proportion with more than 10 unexplained absences was 62.5 per cent (CI: 53.8%–71.1%) compared with 49.7 per cent (CI: 46.2%–53.3%) of students whose primary carer had not been taken (Table 4.68).

Carer education

As shown in Figure 4.14, there is a strong association between more than 10 unexplained absences from school and carer education (see *Glossary*). Half of all Aboriginal students whose primary carer had completed Year 10 (50.0 per cent; CI: 45.8%–54.4%) had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school compared with 37.4 per cent (CI: 31.9%–42.9%) of students whose primary carer had completed Years 11 or 12 and 26.8 per cent (CI: 18.5%–37.1%) of students whose primary carer had been educated beyond Year 12.

FIGURE 4.14: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — PROPORTION WITH MORE THAN 10 UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES, BY PRIMARY CARER LEVEL OF EDUCATION
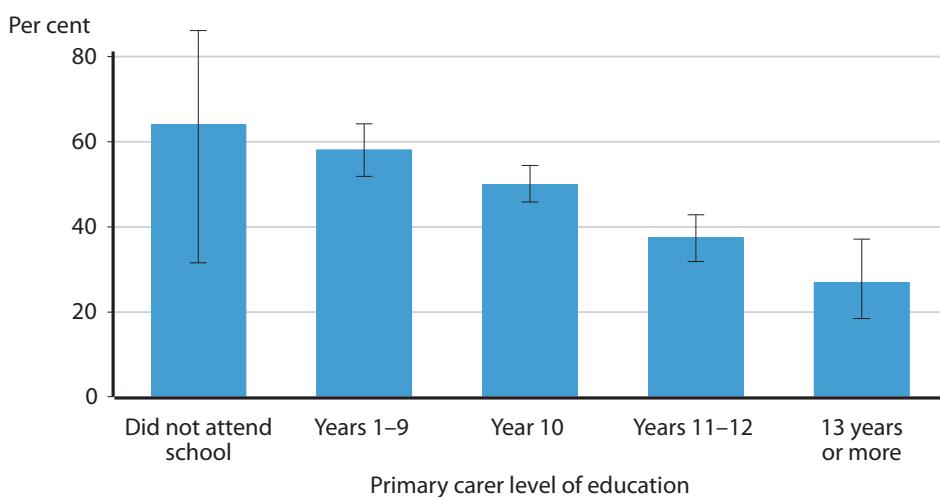
Source: Table 4.69

Carer labour force status

The labour force status of the primary carer was a factor related to more than 10 unexplained absences. Among students whose primary carers were employed, 38.5 per cent (CI: 33.8%–43.2%) had more than 10 days of unexplained absence compared with 57.4 per cent (CI: 48.5%–66.6%) of students whose primary carer was unemployed and 53.1 per cent (CI: 49.1%–56.9%) of students whose primary carer was not in the labour force (Table 4.70).

Modelling the association between more than 10 unexplained absences and carer factors

A multivariate logistic regression analysis was undertaken to model the probability of having more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school. After controlling for Level of Relative Isolation, age and sex, the following carer related factors were found to be independently associated with having more than 10 unexplained absences per year (Table 4.71).

Primary carer forcibly separated from natural family. The negative effects of past removal policies have been shown to have an affect on unexplained absences from school. Students whose primary carer had been forcibly separated from their natural family were almost twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.82; CI: 1.24–2.67) to have more than 10 unexplained absences from school.

Primary carer level of education. Students whose carers had been educated beyond Year 10 were less likely to have more than 10 days of unexplained absence. For those whose primary carer had completed either Year 11 or 12, the likelihood of more than ten days unexplained absence was half (Odds Ratio 0.64; CI: 0.47–0.86) that of students whose primary carer had completed Year 10, while for students whose carer had completed 13 years or more, the likelihood was even less (Odds Ratio 0.37; CI: 0.21–0.67).

Primary carer labour force status. Students whose primary carer was either unemployed or not in the labour force were more than twice as likely (Odds Ratio 2.39; CI: 1.60–3.58, and Odds Ratio 2.05; CI: 1.57–2.68 respectively) to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school.

Primary carer ever arrested or charged with an offence. For students whose primary carer had been arrested or charged with an offence, the likelihood of more than 10 unexplained absences was almost doubled (Odds Ratio 1.84; CI: 1.44–2.36).

Primary carer attended an Aboriginal funeral in the past 12 months. Students whose primary carer had attended at least one Aboriginal funeral in the past 12 months were one and a half times more likely (Odds Ratio 1.69; CI: 1.27–2.24) to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school.

Carer level factors not independently associated with more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school

Carer factors modelled against unexplained absence and found not to be significantly associated with unexplained absence from school included whether the primary carer was the student's birth mother, whether the primary carer was Aboriginal and whether the primary carer had a limiting health condition.

FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD FACTORS AND UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

Unexplained absence and family care arrangement

As shown in Figure 4.15, living with at least one original parent appeared to be a protective factor against having more than 10 unexplained absences in a school year. The proportion of students with more than 10 unexplained absences was significantly lower among those living with both original parents (44.0 per cent; CI: 39.7%–48.3%) than among those living with aunts and uncles (68.3 per cent; CI: 52.5%–80.1%). There was little difference in the proportion with more than 10 unexplained absences between those living with both original parents and those living with a sole parent or an original parent with a new partner.

FIGURE 4.15: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — PROPORTION WITH MORE THAN 10 UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES, BY FAMILY CARE ARRANGEMENT
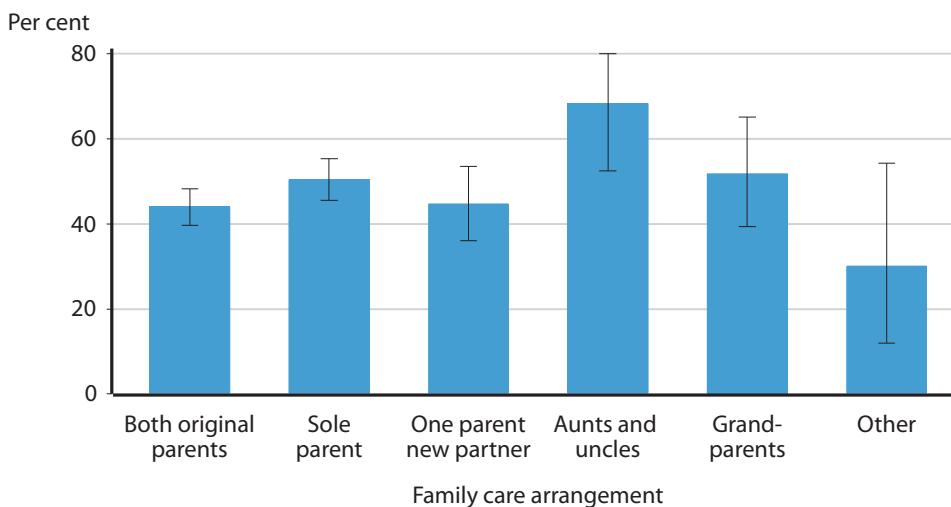
Source : Table 4.72

Unexplained absence and life stress events

There was an association between the number of unexplained absences and the number of life stress events experienced by the student's family. As shown in Figure 4.16, the proportion of students with more than 10 unexplained absences increased with the number of life stress events experienced. Among students living in families that had experienced 7–14 life stress events, 59.4 per cent (CI: 52.8%–65.6%) had more than 10 unexplained absences compared with 39.1 per cent (CI: 33.9%–44.3%) living in families with less than 3 life stress events.

FIGURE 4.16: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — PROPORTION WITH MORE THAN 10 UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES, BY NUMBER OF LIFE STRESS EVENTS EXPERIENCED BY THE FAMILY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS
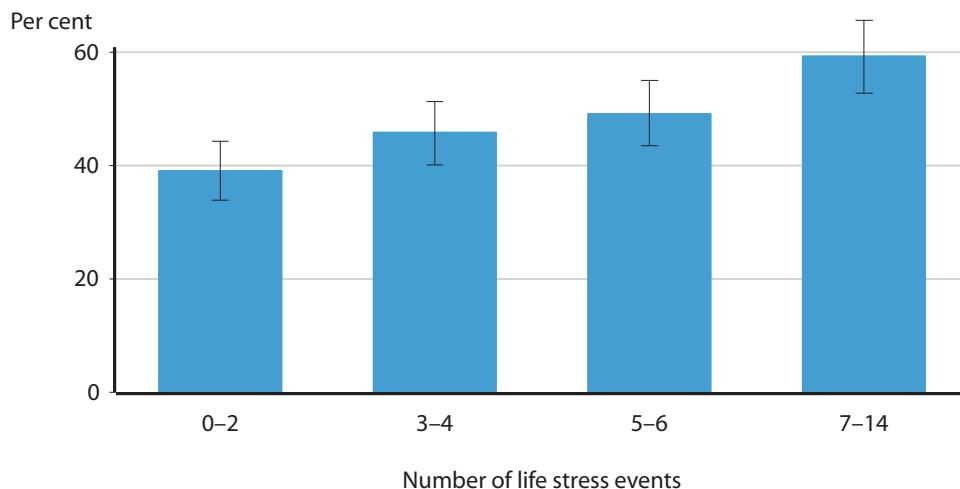
Source : Table 4.73

Unexplained absence and overuse of alcohol causing problems in the household

The proportion of students with more than 10 unexplained absences was significantly higher among those whose carers reported overuse of alcohol causes problems in the household (62.3 per cent; CI: 54.2%–70.0%) than among students living in households without such problems (44.9 per cent; CI: 41.9%–48.1%) (Table 4.74).

Unexplained absence and home ownership

The survey found a relationship between unexplained absence from school and home ownership. Across the state, 30.5 per cent (CI: 24.7%–36.7%) of students living in a home which was owned or being paid off had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school compared with 53.1 per cent (CI: 49.8%–56.4%) of students living in rented accommodation (Table 4.75).

By level of relative isolation, the association between home ownership and more than 10 days of unexplained absence was significant only in the Perth metropolitan area and in areas where the level of relative isolation was high (Table 4.75).

Unexplained absence and household occupancy level

Over half of students living in households with high household occupancy level (see *Glossary*) had more than 10 unexplained absences (58.0 per cent; CI: 52.3%–63.4%). This was significantly higher than for students living in households with low household occupancy level (43.9 per cent; CI: 40.6%–47.3%) (Table 4.76).

Modelling the association between more than 10 unexplained absences and family factors

A multivariate logistic regression analysis was undertaken to model the probability of having more than 10 days of unexplained absences from school. The following family-related factors were found to be independently associated with having had more than 10 unexplained absences per year (Table 4.77):

Family care arrangement. Students in the care of aunts and uncles were twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.89; CI: 1.10–3.26) as students cared for by both original parents to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school.

Number of life stress events. Students living in families that had experienced 7–14 life stress events in the last 12 months were almost two and a half times as likely (Odds Ratio 2.41; CI: 1.72–3.40) to have had more than 10 unexplained absences from school than students living in families who had experienced less than 3 life stress events. Students were one and a half times more likely (Odds Ratio 1.56; CI: 1.13–2.15) to have more than 10 unexplained absences if their families had experienced five or six life stress events and one and a half times more likely (Odds Ratio 1.42; CI: 1.03–1.95) if they experienced three or four life stress events.

Home ownership. Students living in homes which were rented were over twice as likely (Odds Ratio 2.43; CI: 1.79–3.29) than students living in homes that were either owned or being paid off to have had more than 10 unexplained absences during the school year.

Number of homes lived in since birth. Mobility is often cited as a major factor associated with absence from school and truancy. However, the survey found that students who had lived in five or more houses since birth were one and a half times less likely (Odds Ratio 0.64; CI: 0.50–0.83) to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school.

Family level factors not independently associated with more than 10 days of unexplained absence

As well as those factors outlined above, other variables were also modelled and found not to be independently associated with unexplained absences. They included:

◆   family functioning

◆   looking at a book with a child at home

◆   family financial strain

◆   overuse of alcohol causing problems in the household

◆   household occupancy level.

SCHOOL FACTORS AND UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

School principals were asked to provide information about their school. For detailed analysis of these findings see Chapter 3. It has been suggested that schools are a contributing factor to students being absent from school, particularly in relation to unexplained absences. Some of the issues examined include: the category of school; the composition of teachers and student to teacher ratios; school principals' assessments of learning, teaching and support programmes; and the presence of Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEOs) in the school. For 12–17 year-olds, issues of racism and bullying at school have also been examined.

Category of school

Approximately half of students in Government schools (48.6 per cent; CI: 45.4%–51.8%) and Catholic schools (47.0 per cent; CI: 37.5%–56.0%) had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school in the school year compared with one in five students (22.0 per cent; CI: 9.9%–42.3%) in Independent schools (Table 4.78).

Proportion of students who are Aboriginal

The proportion of Aboriginal students with more than 10 unexplained absences increased with the increasing proportion of Aboriginal students at the school. In schools where Aboriginal students represented less than 10 per cent of the school population, 35.9 per cent (CI: 30.9%–41.1%) of students had more than 10 unexplained absences. Where Aboriginal students represented more than 90 per cent of the school population, the proportion with more than 10 unexplained absences was significantly higher (61.7 per cent; CI: 52.6%–70.4%) (Table 4.79).

Teachers new to teaching

No association was found between the proportion of teachers new to teaching in the school and the proportion of students with more than 10 unexplained absences.

Student to teacher ratio

No association was found between unexplained absences and the number of students per teacher in the school.

Learning, teaching and support programmes for Aboriginal students

An index of learning, teaching and support programmes for Aboriginal students was constructed and presented as quartiles (see *Appendix C*). No significant difference was found in the proportion of students with more than 10 unexplained absences from school across all four quartiles.

Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Committee (ASSPA)

Throughout the state, the proportion of students with more than 10 unexplained absences was significantly lower if they attended schools that did not have an Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Committee (ASSPA) (23.7 per cent; CI: 14.5%–36.4%) than if they had attended schools with an ASSPA (49.6 per cent; CI: 46.4%–52.7%) (Table 4.80).

Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer (AIEO)

Over half (52.4 per cent; CI: 49.1%–55.7%) of the students in schools that had an AIEO had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school compared with one third (33.3 per cent; CI: 27.0%–40.1%) of students in schools with no AIEO (Table 4.81).

Modelling the association between more than 10 unexplained absences and school factors

A multivariate logistic regression analysis was undertaken to model the probability of having more than ten days of unexplained absences from school using school-related factors, When controlling for Level of Relative Isolation, age and sex the following school related factors were found to be independently associated with having more than 10 unexplained absences per year (Table 4.82).

Category of school. Students who attended Catholic schools were two times less likely (Odds Ratio 0.47; CI: 0.27–0.80) than students in Government schools to have had more than 10 unexplained absences.

Proportion of students who are Aboriginal. Compared with students in schools where Aboriginal students represented less than 10 per cent of the school population, students in schools where Aboriginal students comprised 90 per cent or more of the school population were three times more likely (Odds Ratio 3.02; CI: 1.38–6.59) to have had more than 10 unexplained absences from school, while students in schools where the proportion of students who were Aboriginal ranged from 10 per cent to 90 per cent were over one and a half times as likely (Odds Ratio 1.67; CI: 1.10–2.52).

Implementation of *Do You Hear What I Hear* – Otitis media. The likelihood of more than 10 unexplained absences is increased (Odds Ratio 1.67; CI: 1.10–2.54) in schools where *Do You Hear What I Hear* has not been implemented.

Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer (AIEO) at the school. In schools where there was no AIEO, students were almost two times less likely (Odds Ratio 0.53; CI: 0.36–0.78) to have had more than 10 unexplained absences.

Removal of student from formal instruction due to misbehaviour. The likelihood of more than 10 unexplained absences was increased where students had been removed from class either rarely or sometimes (Odds Ratio 1.73; CI: 1.23–2.44 and Odds Ratio 1.71; CI: 1.14–2.55 respectively).

Student suspended from school. Whether the student has been suspended from school during the year was found to be an indicator of unexplained absence. Students who had been suspended were almost twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.78; CI: 1.09–2.92) to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school in one year.

School level factors not independently associated with more than 10 days of unexplained absence

School level factors found not to be associated with more than 10 unexplained absences from school included:

◆ Socioeconomic Index for schools (SEI)

◆ student to teacher ratio

◆ proportion of teachers new to teaching

◆ school principals' assessments of learning, teaching and support programmes

◆ Professional Development and curriculum activities.

Modelling the association between more than 10 unexplained absences and the combination of student, carer, family and school factors

Factors found to be associated with unexplained absence from school in the individual models for student, carer, family and school factors were combined to model the overall levels of association. The following factors were independently associated with having more than 10 unexplained absences from school (Table 4.83):

Language spoken in the playground. Compared with students who spoke English in the playground, students who spoke an Aboriginal language were three and a half times more likely (Odds Ratio 3.42; CI: 1.29–9.06) to have had more than 10 unexplained absences, while those who spoke Aboriginal English were almost twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.95; CI: 1.31–2.91).

Trouble getting enough sleep. The likelihood of more than 10 days unexplained absence from school was doubled if the student had trouble getting enough sleep (Odds Ratio 2.13; CI: 1.43–3.18).

Helping with school work at home. Students who had no-one to help them with their school work at home were over one and a half times as likely (Odds Ratio 1.66; CI: 1.04–2.64) to have had more than 10 days unexplained absence from school than students who had someone at home to help them.

Overall academic achievement. Students whose overall academic achievement was low were twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.81; CI: 1.41–2.33) than students whose academic achievement was average or above average to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school.

Primary carer forced separation from natural family. Students whose primary carer had been forcibly separated from their natural family were over one and a half times more likely (Odds Ratio 1.64; CI: 1.11–2.42) to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence from school than students whose primary carer had not been forcibly separated.

Primary carer level of education. Students whose primary carer had continued their education beyond Year 10 were less likely to have more than 10 days of absence from school. Students whose primary carer had completed Years 11 and 12 and students whose primary carer had 13 years or more of education were one and a half times less likely (Odds Ratio 0.64; CI: 0.48–0.87 and Odds Ratio 0.41; CI: 0.22–0.74 respectively) to have had more than 10 unexplained absences than students whose primary carer had been educated to Year 10.

Primary carer labour force status. The labour force status of the primary carer was a predictor of unexplained absence from school. Students whose primary carer was unemployed or not in the labour force were twice as likely (Odds Ratio 1.96; CI: 1.30–2.96 and Odds Ratio 1.82; CI: 1.39–2.39 respectively) to have had more than 10 days of unexplained absence than students whose primary carer was employed.

Primary carer ever arrested or charged with an offence. Having a primary carer who had ever been arrested or charged with an offence almost doubled (Odds Ratio 1.73; CI: 1.34–2.23) the likelihood of more than 10 unexplained absences.

Primary carer attended an Aboriginal funeral in the past 12 months. Students whose primary carers had attended Aboriginal funerals in the 12 months prior to the survey were almost one and a half times as likely (Odds Ratio 1.37; CI: 1.02–1.84) to have had more than 10 unexplained absences from school.

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Number of life stress events. The number of life stress events experienced by the family in the last 12 months was found to be associated with unexplained absence from school. Students living in families where 7–14 life stress events had occurred in the last 12 months were over one and a half times more likely (Odds Ratio 1.61; CI: 1.12–2.32) to have had more than 10 unexplained absences from school compared with students living in families where less than 3 life stress events had occurred.

Home ownership. Students who lived in rented accommodation were over one and a half times as likely (Odds Ratio 1.68; CI: 1.23–2.30) to have had more than 10 unexplained absences from school than students who were living in homes that were owned or being paid off.

Number of homes lived in since birth. Students who had lived in five or more homes since birth were almost one and a half times less likely (Odds Ratio 0.70; CI: 0.53–0.92) to have had more than 10 unexplained absences from school.

How often someone from the household looks at a book with the student. Students aged 4–11 years who had someone look at a book with them less than once a day were more likely to have had more than 10 unexplained absences from school. Students who hardly ever had a book looked at with them and those for whom the frequency was two or three times a week were one and a half times more likely (Odds Ratio 1.65; CI: 1.10–2.48 and Odds Ratio 1.47; CI: 1.04–2.08 respectively) to have had more than 10 unexplained absences.

Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer (AIEO) at the school. In schools where there was no AIEO, students were over one and a half times less likely (Odds Ratio 0.57; CI: 0.41–0.78) to have had more than 10 unexplained absences from school.

IMPACT OF LOW LEVELS OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Attendance and academic performance

Ongoing exposure of a student to positive educational experiences within schools increases the potential for academic achievement. When students are not able to receive this, their academic performance is significantly limited.

In the survey, teachers were asked 'compared to all students of the same age how would you describe this student's overall academic performance?' They were asked to rate the students on the following five-point scale: far below age, somewhat below age, at age level, somewhat above age, far above age. For the purposes of this analysis the five levels have been reduced to two. Students who were rated by their teachers at far below age and somewhat below age were classified as having low academic performance. Students rated by their teacher as at age level, somewhat above age, or far above age were classified as having an academic performance of average or above average. For more information on academic performance see Chapter 5.

Of those students who had missed at least 26 days of a school year, over two-thirds (67.5 per cent; CI: 63.7%–71.2%) had low academic performance. For students who had missed less than 26 days of school, the proportion with low academic performance was significantly lower (47.5 per cent; CI: 43.7%–51.3%) (Table 4.84).

The impact of school attendance on academic performance for both Aboriginal students as measured in the WAACHS, and all students as measured in the 1993 WA CHS, is shown in the top panel in Figure 4.17. As shown in the middle panel of Figure 4.17, very few of all students (as measured in the 1993 WA CHS) were away from school for more than 50 days and it was therefore not possible to estimate the impact on performance for all students with absences beyond 50 days.

As the number of days absent from school increases, the proportion of students with average or above average academic performance decreases for both Aboriginal and all students. Nonetheless there is a considerable gap between Aboriginal and all students in the proportion with average or above academic performance. This would suggest that school attendance, while critical, is not the sole factor influencing academic performance. After accounting for days absent from school, the proportion of Aboriginal students with average or above average academic performance is still approximately 25 percentage points lower than for all students with the same level of absences from school (top panel in Figure 4.17). When absence from school is not taken into account, overall the proportion of Aboriginal students with average or above average academic performance is approximately 38 percentage points lower than for all students (see *Chapter 5*).

While the higher degree of absenteeism among Aboriginal students accounts for part of the gap in performance between Aboriginal and all students, there are other contributing factors. These will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

The curves shown in Figure 4.17 also challenge the notion that there is a proportion of days schooling that students can miss before academic performance is affected. For Aboriginal students, not only does the proportion of students at average or above average performance decline as soon as any days schooling are missed, the slope of the decline is steepest for the first few days of school missed. A similar pattern is seen for all students. This suggests that students who miss days of schooling may need support to help them catch up on school work missed while they are absent from school.

FIGURE 4.17: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — PROPORTION WITH AVERAGE OR ABOVE AVERAGE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, BY NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL IN A SCHOOL YEAR , COMPARISON OF WAACHS AND 1993 WA CHS
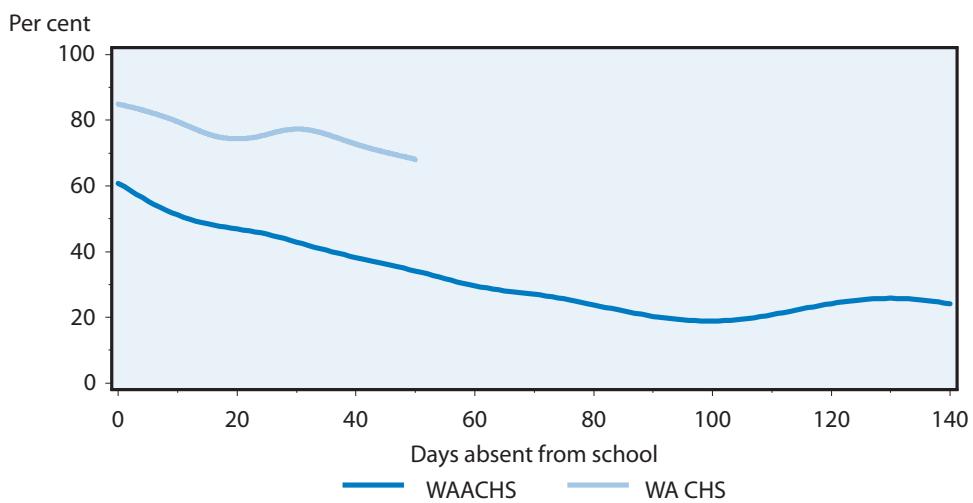
DISTRIBUTION OF ALL STUDENTS BY DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL — 1993 WA CHS
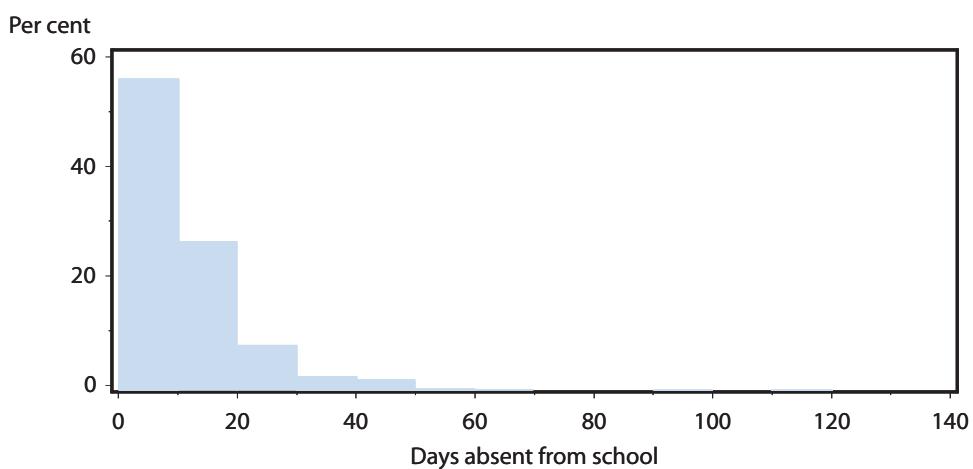
DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS BY DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL — WAACHS
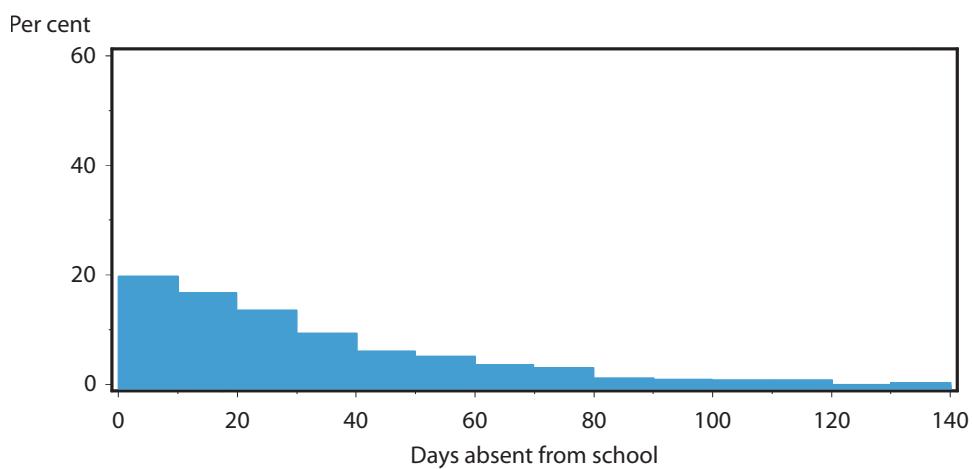
Attendance, academic performance and Level of Relative Isolation

There is a strong relationship between attendance at school and Level of Relative Isolation. Academic performance is also associated with Level of Relative Isolation. In Figure 4.18, the proportion of students with average or above average academic performance is shown against both the number of days absent and ARIA++. The relationship between ARIA++ and levels of relative isolation is described in Chapter 1.

The figure shows that across all levels of relative isolation, overall academic performance declines sharply with the number of absences from school. At the same time, academic performance can be seen to decline with increasing isolation independently of number of days absent from school. The three dimensional surface shows that in areas of low relative isolation (low values of ARIA++) a small number of days absent from school has a substantially lesser impact on level of performance than the same degree of absence in more isolated areas (higher values of ARIA++).

This suggests that Aboriginal students in less isolated areas may have more resources or opportunities to catch up when a small amount of school is missed than students in more isolated areas.

FIGURE 4.18: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS —PROPORTION WITH AVERAGE OR ABOVE AVERAGE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, BY NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL IN A SCHOOL YEAR AND ARIA++
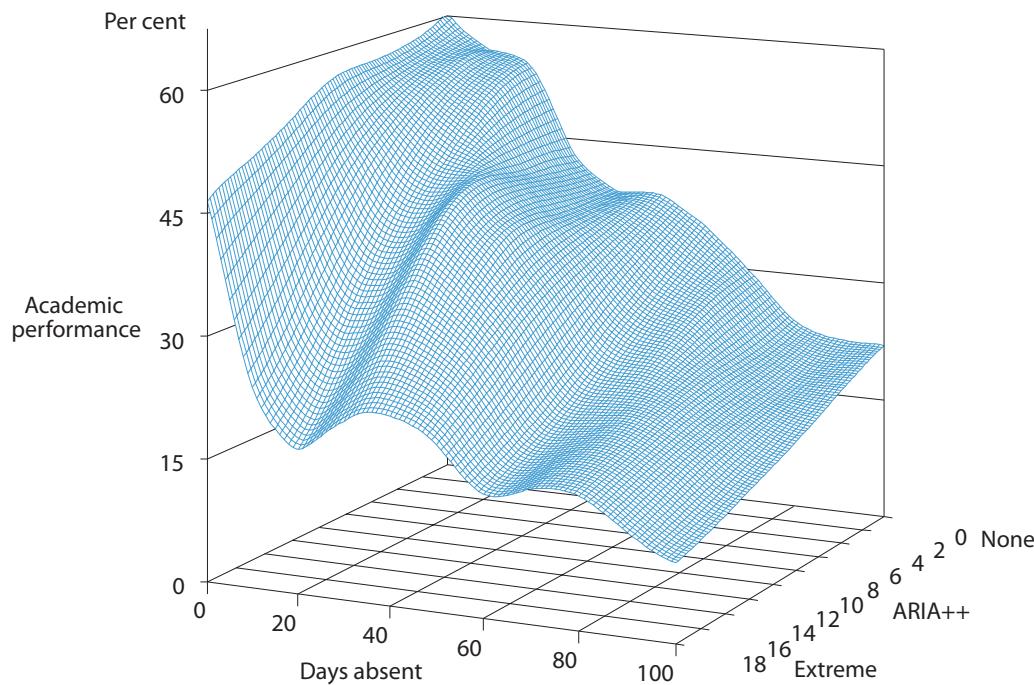
IMPROVING ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

The findings from this chapter show the large disparity in levels of school attendance between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children. Non-Aboriginal children are absent from school, on average, about 8 days per school year. Only 15 per cent of Aboriginal children achieve this level of school attendance, with half of Aboriginal children missing at least 26 days of school per year. There is ample evidence to suggest that this level of absence has been documented for at least a decade, and has not changed appreciably during that time.

A singular focus on going to school, as presented in this chapter, runs the risk of ignoring the more important aspects of the experience of school. The survey findings show that while there is a clear relationship between attendance at school and academic performance, the disparity in attendance rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children accounts for only a proportion of the gap in levels of academic performance between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children. Improving the levels of school attendance of Aboriginal children should remain an important national priority. However, this is not the only issue that needs to be addressed to close the gap in performance at school between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children. This issue will be discussed further in later chapters in this volume.

General community attitudes toward school attendance reflect expectations that families have the main responsibility to see that their children attend school. This has the consequence of placing the major burden of blame on families when children fail to attend regularly. However, school systems also have a responsibility to monitor school attendance and seek to address problems that arise for those children who fail to attend regularly and to understand the contributions that schools and communities make in achieving high levels of attendance.

Many of the associations documented in this chapter suggest that the causes of poor attendance in Aboriginal children are deep-seated and reflect a long history of marginalisation and disadvantage. The questionable relevance of the educational experience in the eyes of many carers of Aboriginal children, perhaps the product of their own negative experiences of school, will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 7.

In approaching a response to these findings, education authorities are encouraged to be mindful of several features of the findings:

◆ Use of day care at some point in development is significantly associated with better attendance. This association was stronger than the association between attending pre-school and kindergarten and later attendance patterns. Early developmental enrichment through good quality day care is an important mechanism in improving educational opportunities for Aboriginal children.

Continued . . . .

IMPROVING ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL *(continued)*

◆ There was a strong association between attendance at school and teacher assessed risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties. Given the higher proportions of Aboriginal children at high risk of emotional or behavioural difficulties, programmes at school that provide support and treatment – particularly early in the school experience – may buffer children from later higher risks of absence.

◆ There is a clear relationship between increasing levels of absence from school and lower levels of academic performance. Attending school matters. While it may be argued that the quality of the school experience is the key factor to educational participation, there is an inevitable point where the lack of attendance at school becomes the critical factor.

◆ Higher levels of carer education were associated with better attendance in their children. The theme of carers' perceptions of school and its impact on the education of their children will be discussed further in later chapters. However, this finding supports the theory that acting to redress past disadvantage and negative experiences in education for Aboriginal people through changing community attitudes towards the value of education is an important part of improving educational outcomes for current and future generations of Aboriginal children.

◆ Speaking a language other than English was associated with school attendance. While only a small proportion of Aboriginal students speak languages other than English, English literacy is an issue of concern for these students. This effect is adjusted for the Level of Relative Isolation — in other words, this association is not a proxy measure of isolation. English remains the principal language of instruction in Western Australian schools. This does not suggest that Aboriginal languages should not be taught or preserved. Indeed, quite the opposite is needed. However, if access to education is through the predominate medium of the English language, then improving English language proficiency for Aboriginal children is likely to reap benefits. Western education has been a principal force in the demise of Aboriginal cultural traditions and languages. Aboriginal communities need to participate in decisions about the preservation of Aboriginal languages in addition to appreciating the role that English language plays in access to and participation in education.

◆ Owning or purchasing a home was associated with lower rates of absence from school. This effect is relatively large and it should be kept in mind that this is in addition to the association with carer education. Home ownership and the stability it provides may impart protection from the risks of non-attendance. However, the majority of families with Aboriginal children live in rented accommodation.

IMPROVING ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL *(continued)*

One issue of great concern is the striking lack of systematic studies into interventions that are effective in improving the attendance rates of Aboriginal children. What is available in the literature is ad hoc, uncoordinated and not sustained in its focus, and there appears to be a widespread and often tacit assumption that this problem is intractable. Most of the programmes aimed at improving school attendance for Aboriginal children have been implemented in small-scale trials, often limited to single schools. The trials are often so specific to local circumstances that generalisation of the results is difficult due, in part, to the small numbers of children involved. The result is inconclusive trial results.

There are many ideas that can be taken from past trials. However, what is now required is a systematic approach to developing and evaluating strategies on a broader scale. What is needed is a global programme with resources and materials that enable it to be adapted to the specific needs of individual communities and schools.

ENDNOTES

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DETAILED TABLES

MEASURING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

TABLE 4.1: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL, BY SEX

Days absent	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Males		
8 days or more	8 250	(7 760 - 8 760)	81.8	(79.0 - 84.4)
Less than 8 days	1 830	(1 560 - 2 120)	18.2	(15.6 - 21.0)
Total	**10 100**	**(9 600 - 10 600)**	**100.0**	
		Females		
8 days or more	7 790	(7 300 - 8 290)	82.0	(78.6 - 85.2)
Less than 8 days	1 710	(1 410 - 2 070)	18.0	(14.8 - 21.4)
Total	**9 500**	**(9 010 - 9 990)**	**100.0**	
		Total		
8 days or more	16 000	(15 600 - 16 500)	81.9	(79.6 - 84.1)
Less than 8 days	3 540	(3 120 - 4 000)	18.1	(15.9 - 20.4)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.2: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL, BY AGE GROUP AND SEX

Age group	Days absent	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
			Males		
4–11 years	26 days or more	3 380	(2 970 - 3 800)	48.7	(44.0 - 53.5)
	Less than 26 days	3 550	(3 160 - 3 950)	51.3	(46.5 - 56.0)
	Total	**6 930**	**(6 450 - 7 410)**	**100.0**	
12–17 years	26 days or more	1 670	(1 390 - 2 010)	53.0	(45.8 - 60.3)
	Less than 26 days	1 480	(1 190 - 1 810)	47.0	(39.7 - 54.2)
	Total	**3 160**	**(2 750 - 3 590)**	**100.0**	
Total	26 days or more	5 050	(4 590 - 5 530)	50.1	(46.0 - 54.0)
	Less than 26 days	5 040	(4 580 - 5 520)	49.9	(46.0 - 54.0)
	Total	**10 100**	**(9 600 - 10 600)**	**100.0**	
			Females		
4–11 years	26 days or more	2 560	(2 230 - 2 930)	43.9	(39.2 - 48.6)
	Less than 26 days	3 280	(2 920 - 3 650)	56.1	(51.4 - 60.8)
	Total	**5 840**	**(5 380 - 6 310)**	**100.0**	
12–17 years	26 days or more	2 210	(1 940 - 2 510)	60.5	(54.2 - 66.7)
	Less than 26 days	1 450	(1 160 - 1 770)	39.5	(33.3 - 45.8)
	Total	**3 660**	**(3 280 - 4 060)**	**100.0**	
Total	26 days or more	4 780	(4 370 - 5 210)	50.3	(46.5 - 54.0)
	Less than 26 days	4 720	(4 290 - 5 180)	49.7	(46.0 - 53.5)
	Total	**9 500**	**(9 010 - 9 990)**	**100.0**	
			Total		
4–11 years	26 days or more	5 940	(5 420 - 6 480)	46.5	(43.0 - 50.1)
	Less than 26 days	6 830	(6 320 - 7 350)	53.5	(49.9 - 57.0)
	Total	**12 800**	**(12 200 - 13 300)**	**100.0**	
12–17 years	26 days or more	3 890	(3 500 - 4 300)	57.0	(52.0 - 61.7)
	Less than 26 days	2 930	(2 520 - 3 390)	43.0	(38.3 - 48.0)
	Total	**6 820**	**(6 300 - 7 340)**	**100.0**	
Total	26 days or more	9 830	(9 200 - 10 400)	50.2	(47.2 - 53.1)
	Less than 26 days	9 760	(9 200 - 10 300)	49.8	(46.9 - 52.8)
	Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.3: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY AGE AND SEX

Student's age (years)	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Males		
4	330	(210 - 470)	55.0	(37.2 - 69.9)
5	500	(340 - 730)	54.8	(40.8 - 67.3)
6	430	(330 - 550)	50.1	(39.3 - 61.9)
7	510	(360 - 700)	54.4	(41.0 - 66.3)
8	350	(240 - 470)	37.6	(28.5 - 47.7)
9	320	(210 - 490)	40.0	(27.0 - 53.4)
10	480	(340 - 660)	52.1	(38.0 - 65.3)
11	460	(310 - 660)	47.1	(35.1 - 59.4)
12	450	(280 - 680)	53.5	(38.5 - 67.1)
13	350	(190 - 560)	51.0	(31.9 - 68.1)
14	440	(330 - 570)	62.1	(46.5 - 76.2)
15	240	(150 - 370)	48.6	(32.9 - 63.1)
16	180	(100 - 270)	48.5	(29.4 - 67.5)
17	20	(0 - 90)	30.7	(0.6 - 80.6)
Total	**5 050**	**(4 590 - 5 530)**	**50.1**	**(46.0 - 54.0)**
		Females		
4	180	(100 - 280)	34.3	(20.4 - 48.4)
5	370	(230 - 570)	50.6	(34.6 - 65.4)
6	420	(330 - 520)	54.2	(44.4 - 63.1)
7	340	(220 - 510)	48.3	(33.7 - 64.2)
8	370	(290 - 450)	48.0	(38.3 - 58.0)
9	340	(210 - 520)	40.2	(27.6 - 55.0)
10	280	(180 - 420)	35.0	(22.9 - 47.3)
11	260	(160 - 410)	38.4	(25.5 - 51.6)
12	420	(280 - 600)	48.2	(34.3 - 62.2)
13	630	(490 - 800)	65.0	(54.1 - 74.6)
14	650	(520 - 820)	77.4	(69.6 - 83.7)
15	270	(190 - 360)	51.2	(37.5 - 64.1)
16	120	(70 - 190)	47.6	(9.9 - 81.6)
17	130	(60 - 230)	60.4	(35.4 - 84.8)
Total	**4 780**	**(4 370 - 5 210)**	**50.3**	**(46.5 - 54.0)**
		Total		
4	500	(370 - 680)	45.3	(35.0 - 55.8)
5	880	(650 - 1 150)	53.0	(42.8 - 62.9)
6	850	(710 - 1 000)	52.1	(44.9 - 58.8)
7	850	(660 - 1 080)	51.7	(41.7 - 61.0)
8	710	(590 - 850)	42.3	(36.0 - 49.1)
9	660	(480 - 890)	40.1	(30.7 - 49.2)
10	760	(590 - 970)	44.1	(35.4 - 53.5)
11	730	(530 - 960)	43.5	(34.3 - 52.7)
12	860	(640 - 1 140)	50.8	(40.1 - 60.9)
13	980	(770 - 1 230)	59.2	(49.3 - 68.4)
14	1 090	(910 - 1 280)	70.4	(62.2 - 78.2)
15	510	(390 - 660)	49.9	(40.1 - 59.9)
16	300	(200 - 410)	48.1	(29.4 - 67.5)
17	150	(80 - 260)	52.7	(30.6 - 73.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

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TABLE 4.4: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — MEDIAN NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL IN ONE YEAR BY SELECTED VARIABLES

		Median	*95% CI*
Males	4–11 years	23	(20 - 26)
	12–17 years	35	(29 - 41)
	Total	26	(23 - 29)
Females	4–11 years	25	(20 - 28)
	12–17 years	29	(21 - 34)
	Total	26	(23 - 29)
Age group	4–11 years	24	(22 - 26)
	12–17 years	32	(27 - 35)
School year	Pre-primary	26	(22 - 36)
	Years 1–7	23	(21 - 26)
	Years 8–10	36	(31 - 44)
	Years 11–12	21	(16 - 30)
	Ungraded class	39	(20 - 67)
Level of Relative Isolation	None	20	(17 - 23)
	Low	24	(21 - 29)
	Moderate	34	(29 - 42)
	High	42	(28 - 57)
	Extreme	32	(23 - 47)
Risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties	Low	23	(20 - 25)
	Moderate	32	(24 - 38)
	High	40	(31 - 51)
Overall academic performance	Low	33	(30 - 36)
	Average or above average	20	(17 - 22)
Primary carer forcibly separated from natural family by a mission, the government or welfare	No	27	(24 - 30)
	Yes	43	(32 - 58)
Primary carer ever arrested or charged with an offence	No	24	(21 - 27)
	Yes	31	(26 - 36)
Aboriginal status of primary carer	Aboriginal	30	(27 - 33)
	Non-Aboriginal	14	(11 - 16)
Primary carer Aboriginal	Primary carer is birth mother	29	(24 - 32)
	Primary carer is not birth mother	31	(26 - 37)
Primary carer non-Aboriginal	Primary carer is birth mother	14	(11 - 19)
	Primary carer is not birth mother	12	(8 - 19)

TABLE 4.5: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY YEAR AT SCHOOL

Current year at school	*Number*	*95% CI*	*%*	*95% CI*
Pre-primary	970	(750 - 1 240)	50.3	(41.5 - 59.3)
1	980	(800 - 1 180)	59.0	(50.2 - 66.7)
2	800	(610 - 1 010)	46.6	(37.6 - 56.5)
3	690	(530 - 870)	44.4	(36.9 - 52.5)
4	780	(640 - 940)	43.8	(37.1 - 51.0)
5	690	(500 - 910)	42.2	(32.9 - 51.7)
6	670	(490 - 910)	39.6	(29.7 - 49.7)
7	740	(520 - 1 010)	44.8	(35.4 - 55.3)
8	1 030	(830 - 1 270)	60.7	(52.3 - 68.9)
9	960	(770 - 1 180)	57.5	(48.7 - 66.3)
10	830	(670 - 1 000)	70.0	(60.2 - 78.2)
11	270	(170 - 380)	40.3	(25.5 - 59.2)
12	220	(140 - 320)	55.0	(36.4 - 71.9)
Ungraded class	220	(100 - 380)	56.6	(33.5 - 79.7)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

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TABLE 4.6: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL, BY LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION (LORI)

Days absent	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		LORI — None		
26 days or more	2 840	(2 490 - 3 220)	40.3	(35.3 - 45.5)
Less than 26 days	4 210	(3 850 - 4 590)	59.7	(54.5 - 64.7)
Total	**7 050**	**(6 900 - 7 200)**	**100.0**	
		LORI — Low		
26 days or more	2 460	(2 130 - 2 820)	47.4	(42.1 - 52.5)
Less than 26 days	2 740	(2 400 - 3 100)	52.6	(47.5 - 57.9)
Total	**5 200**	**(4 770 - 5 660)**	**100.0**	
		LORI — Moderate		
26 days or more	2 870	(2 410 - 3 380)	62.1	(56.6 - 67.6)
Less than 26 days	1 750	(1 430 - 2 140)	37.9	(32.4 - 43.4)
Total	**4 620**	**(3 980 - 5 300)**	**100.0**	
		LORI — High		
26 days or more	1 260	(910 - 1 700)	63.1	(54.3 - 71.6)
Less than 26 days	740	(490 - 1 030)	36.9	(28.4 - 45.7)
Total	**2 000**	**(1 490 - 2 610)**	**100.0**	
		LORI — Extreme		
26 days or more	400	(150 - 890)	55.0	(28.9 - 82.3)
Less than 26 days	330	(60 - 830)	45.0	(17.7 - 71.1)
Total	**720**	**(260 - 1 510)**	**100.0**	
		Western Australia		
26 days or more	9 830	(9 200 - 10 400)	50.2	(47.2 - 53.1)
Less than 26 days	9 760	(9 200 - 10 300)	49.8	(46.9 - 52.8)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

FACTORS INFLUENCING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

TABLE 4.7: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHETHER MOTHER DRANK ALCOHOL DURING PREGNANCY

Alcohol use during pregnancy	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
No	5 780	(5 280 - 6 300)	47.2	(43.5 - 50.9)
Yes	2 110	(1 780 - 2 500)	57.3	(51.2 - 63.2)
Primary carer not birth mother	1 940	(1 620 - 2 310)	52.8	(46.1 - 59.7)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.8: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHETHER HAS TROUBLE GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP

Has trouble getting enough sleep	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
No	8 670	(8 120 - 9 230)	49.5	(46.5 - 52.6)
Yes	1 160	(850 - 1 500)	55.9	(46.1 - 65.1)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.9: STUDENTS AGED 4–11 YEARS — DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL, BY WHETHER EVER BEEN IN DAY CARE

Days absent	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Never been in day care		
26 days or more	4 420	(3 960 - 4 900)	51.8	(47.5 - 56.1)
Less than 26 days	4 120	(3 690 - 4 560)	48.2	(43.9 - 52.5)
Total	**8 540**	**(8 000 - 9 090)**	**100.0**	
		Been in day care		
26 days or more	1 450	(1 140 - 1 800)	35.5	(29.4 - 42.4)
Less than 26 days	2 640	(2 280 - 3 050)	64.5	(57.6 - 70.6)
Total	**4 100**	**(3 620 - 4 590)**	**100.0**	
		Not stated		
26 days or more	70	(30 - 140)	49.5	(23.0 - 77.0)
Less than 26 days	70	(30 - 130)	50.5	(23.0 - 77.0)
Total	**140**	**(80 - 220)**	**100.0**	
		Total		
26 days or more	5 940	(5 420 - 6 480)	46.5	(43.0 - 50.1)
Less than 26 days	6 830	(6 320 - 7 350)	53.5	(49.9 - 57.0)
Total	**12 800**	**(12 200 - 13 300)**	**100.0**	

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TABLE 4.10: STUDENTS AGED 4–11 YEARS — DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL, BY WHETHER BEEN IN PRE-SCHOOL OR KINDERGARTEN

Days absent	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Never been in pre-school or kindergarten		
26 days or more	410	(290 - 570)	54.5	(41.6 - 67.9)
Less than 26 days	340	(220 - 490)	45.5	(32.1 - 58.4)
Total	**750**	**(580 - 950)**	**100.0**	
		Been in pre-school or kindergarten		
26 days or more	5 460	(4 970 - 5 990)	46.0	(42.3 - 49.7)
Less than 26 days	6 420	(5 910 - 6 930)	54.0	(50.3 - 57.7)
Total	**11 900**	**(11 300 - 12 400)**	**100.0**	
		Not stated		
26 days or more	70	(30 - 140)	49.5	(23.0 - 77.0)
Less than 26 days	70	(30 - 130)	50.5	(23.0 - 77.0)
Total	**140**	**(80 - 220)**	**100.0**	
		Total		
26 days or more	5 940	(5 420 - 6 480)	46.5	(43.0 - 50.1)
Less than 26 days	6 830	(6 320 - 7 350)	53.5	(49.9 - 57.0)
Total	**12 800**	**(12 200 - 13 300)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.11: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHO USUALLY HELPS WITH SCHOOL WORK AT HOME

Who usually helps with school work at home?	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
No-one	1 070	(850 - 1 320)	64.4	(55.9 - 71.9)
No homework given	1 700	(1 390 - 2 070)	53.4	(46.1 - 60.2)
Someone from this house	6 520	(5 970 - 7 080)	47.3	(43.7 - 50.8)
Another person	400	(270 - 560)	51.8	(38.9 - 64.0)
Not stated	130	(90 - 200)	79.1	(63.5 - 90.7)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.12: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY MAIN LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN THE CLASSROOM

Main language spoken in the classroom	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
English	7 400	(6 840 - 7 960)	46.2	(43.0 - 49.4)
Aboriginal English	1 960	(1 630 - 2 340)	66.7	(59.4 - 73.0)
Kriol/Creole	290	(180 - 430)	83.0	(47.3 - 99.7)
Aboriginal language	150	(40 - 390)	65.3	(31.6 - 86.1)
Other	30	(20 - 60)	45.5	(0.0 - 97.5)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.13: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY MAIN LANGUAGE SPOKEN IN THE PLAYGROUND

Main language spoken in the playground	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
English	6 520	(5 970 - 7 080)	44.6	(41.3 - 47.9)
Aboriginal English	2 480	(2 130 - 2 880)	64.9	(57.7 - 71.3)
Kriol/Creole	470	(290 - 690)	74.5	(50.1 - 93.2)
Aboriginal language	340	(130 - 680)	73.1	(44.9 - 92.2)
Other	20	(10 - 40)	38.7	(0.0 - 97.5)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.14: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY OVERALL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION (LORI)

Academic performance	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		LORI — None		
Low	1 780	(1 490 - 2 110)	49.1	(42.5 - 55.8)
Average or above average	1 060	(820 - 1 350)	31.0	(24.3 - 38.5)
Total	**2 840**	**(2 490 - 3 220)**	**40.3**	**(35.3 - 45.5)**
		LORI — Low		
Low	1 640	(1 370 - 1 950)	57.7	(51.2 - 63.7)
Average or above average	830	(620 - 1 080)	35.0	(27.8 - 43.3)
Total	**2 460**	**(2 130 - 2 820)**	**47.4**	**(42.1 - 52.5)**
		LORI — Moderate		
Low	1 930	(1 570 - 2 360)	69.5	(62.7 - 75.4)
Average or above average	940	(730 - 1 170)	50.9	(42.5 - 59.6)
Total	**2 870**	**(2 410 - 3 380)**	**62.1**	**(56.6 - 67.6)**
		LORI — High		
Low	960	(670 - 1 360)	66.1	(54.0 - 77.0)
Average or above average	300	(190 - 480)	54.9	(44.1 - 65.6)
Total	**1 260**	**(910 - 1 700)**	**63.1**	**(54.3 - 71.6)**
		LORI — Extreme		
Low	320	(100 - 710)	56.6	(23.4 - 83.3)
Average or above average	70	(10 - 220)	49.0	(0.8 - 90.6)
Total	**400**	**(150 - 890)**	**55.0**	**(28.9 - 82.3)**
		Western Australia		
Low	6 630	(6 080 - 7 180)	58.9	(55.0 - 62.5)
Average or above average	3 200	(2 800 - 3 620)	38.4	(34.3 - 42.7)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.15: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHETHER CARER OR PARTNER NEEDED TO SEE THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL ABOUT A PROBLEM THE STUDENT MAY HAVE HAD AT SCHOOL IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS

Carer has seen school principal	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
No	7 980	(7 420 - 8 530)	48.0	(44.8 - 51.2)
Yes	1 720	(1 430 - 2 030)	61.6	(54.3 - 68.1)
Not stated	130	(90 - 200)	79.1	(63.5 - 90.7)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.16: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY TEACHER ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT'S RISK OF CLINICALLY SIGNIFICANT EMOTIONAL OR BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES

Risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Low	6 080	(5 590 - 6 560)	44.8	(41.5 - 48.2)
Moderate	1 570	(1 300 - 1 880)	57.4	(50.1 - 64.3)
High	2 180	(1 850 - 2 530)	66.2	(60.2 - 72.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.17: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY TEACHER ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT'S RISK OF CLINICALLY SIGNIFICANT EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS

Risk of clinically significant emotional symptoms	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Low	8 400	(7 850 - 8 980)	48.5	(45.4 - 51.6)
Moderate	550	(400 - 750)	58.9	(42.1 - 73.0)
High	870	(650 - 1 160)	66.0	(56.6 - 73.9)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.18: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY TEACHER ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT'S RISK OF CLINICALLY SIGNIFICANT CONDUCT PROBLEMS

Risk of clinically significant conduct problems	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Low	6 800	(6 290 - 7 320)	46.5	(43.2 - 49.9)
Moderate	680	(450 - 980)	51.1	(39.2 - 63.6)
High	2 340	(2 030 - 2 680)	64.6	(59.5 - 69.3)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.19: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY TEACHER ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT'S RISK OF CLINICALLY SIGNIFICANT HYPERACTIVITY

Risk of clinically significant hyperactivity	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Low	6 230	(5 740 - 6 730)	45.9	(42.6 - 49.2)
Moderate	960	(770 - 1 170)	57.3	(48.1 - 66.3)
High	2 650	(2 250 - 3 090)	60.7	(54.5 - 66.6)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.20: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY TEACHER ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT'S RISK OF CLINICALLY SIGNIFICANT PEER PROBLEMS

Risk of clinically significant peer problems	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Low	8 070	(7 530 - 8 620)	47.9	(44.7 - 51.0)
Moderate	700	(490 - 950)	68.2	(56.9 - 77.4)
High	1 060	(850 - 1 300)	62.0	(53.2 - 69.6)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.21: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY TEACHER ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT'S RISK OF CLINICALLY SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS WITH PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Risk of clinically significant problems with prosocial behaviour	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Low	6 620	(6 120 - 7 130)	45.9	(42.7 - 49.2)
Moderate	1 060	(830 - 1 330)	58.3	(47.3 - 68.0)
High	2 150	(1 830 - 2 490)	64.1	(57.8 - 70.1)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.22: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF BEING ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC AND STUDENT LEVEL FACTORS

	Absent from school for 26 days or more		
Parameter	Significance (p value)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Sex			
Male		1.00	
Female	0.053	1.25	(1.00 - 1.58)
Age group			
4–7 years		1.00	
8–11 years	< 0.001	0.56	(0.42 - 0.74)
12–14 years	0.885	1.05	(0.54 - 2.03)
15–17 years	0.796	0.90	(0.41 - 1.97)
Level of Relative Isolation			
None		1.00	
Low	0.100	1.33	(0.95 - 1.87)
Moderate	< 0.001	2.29	(1.45 - 3.61)
High	0.072	1.79	(0.95 - 3.36)
Extreme	0.340	0.66	(0.28 - 1.55)
Main language spoken in the playground			
English		1.00	
Aboriginal English	< 0.001	2.06	(1.39 - 3.06)
Kriol/Creole	0.067	2.59	(0.94 - 7.14)
Aboriginal language	0.001	5.77	(2.00 - 16.40)
Other	0.452	0.43	(0.05 - 3.87)
Teacher assessed risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties			
Low		1.00	
Moderate	0.090	1.33	(0.96 - 1.84)
High	< 0.001	1.98	(1.42 - 2.76)
Ever been in day care (children aged 4–11 years only)			
No	< 0.001	1.91	(1.41 - 2.59)
Yes		1.00	
Not applicable	0.560	1.23	(0.62 - 2.44)

Continued . . . .

TABLE 4.22 (continued): STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF BEING ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC AND STUDENT LEVEL FACTORS

Absent from school for 26 days or more			
Parameter	Significance (p value)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Carer or partner has needed to see school principal in the last 6 months			
No		1.00	
Yes	< 0.001	1.89	(1.35 - 2.65)
Not stated	0.058	2.31	(0.97 - 5.48)
Who usually helps with school work at home			
No-one	0.007	1.86	(1.18 - 2.91)
No homework given	0.945	0.99	(0.71 - 1.38)
Someone from this house		1.00	
Another person	0.272	0.71	(0.39 - 1.31)
Not stated	0.058	2.31	(0.97 - 5.48)
Has trouble getting enough sleep			
No		1.00	
Yes	0.004	1.73	(1.19 - 2.51)
Overall academic performance			
Low	< 0.001	1.76	(1.37 - 2.24)
Average or above average		1.00	

TABLE 4.23: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — BIRTH MOTHER STATUS AND ABORIGINAL STATUS OF PRIMARY CARER

Primary carer is birth mother	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Primary carer is Aboriginal				
No	3 090	(2 670 - 3 570)	18.8	(16.3 - 21.7)
Yes	13 300	(12 700 - 13 900)	81.2	(78.3 - 83.7)
Total	**16 400**	**(15 900 - 16 900)**	**100.0**	
Primary carer is not Aboriginal				
No	580	(390 - 830)	19.0	(13.3 - 26.1)
Yes	2 460	(2 070 - 2 910)	81.0	(73.9 - 86.7)
Total	**3 030**	**(2 600 - 3 530)**	**100.0**	
Not stated				
No	10	(0 - 40)	8.5	(0.1 - 28.7)
Yes	130	(40 - 280)	91.5	(71.3 - 99.9)
Total	**140**	**(50 - 300)**	**100.0**	
Total				
No	3 680	(3 210 - 4 170)	18.8	(16.4 - 21.3)
Yes	15 900	(15 400 - 16 400)	81.2	(78.7 - 83.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.24: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL, BY ABORIGINAL STATUS OF PRIMARY CARER

Days absent from school	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
	Aboriginal			
26 days or more	8 910	(8 330 - 9 500)	54.3	(51.0 - 57.5)
Less than 26 days	7 500	(6 950 - 8 090)	45.7	(42.5 - 49.0)
Total	**16 400**	**(15 900 - 16 900)**	**100.0**	
	Not Aboriginal			
26 days or more	830	(620 - 1 080)	27.3	(21.3 - 34.3)
Less than 26 days	2 210	(1 840 - 2 630)	72.7	(65.7 - 78.7)
Total	**3 030**	**(2 600 - 3 530)**	**100.0**	
	Not stated			
26 days or more	90	(50 - 170)	65.1	(22.3 - 95.7)
Less than 26 days	50	(10 - 220)	34.9	(4.3 - 77.7)
Total	**140**	**(50 - 300)**	**100.0**	
	Total			
26 days or more	9 830	(9 200 - 10 400)	50.2	(47.2 - 53.1)
Less than 26 days	9 760	(9 200 - 10 300)	49.8	(46.9 - 52.8)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.25: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHETHER STUDENT'S PRIMARY CARER WAS FORCIBLY SEPARATED FROM THEIR NATURAL FAMILY BY A MISSION, THE GOVERNMENT OR WELFARE

Primary carer forcibly separated from natural family by a mission, the government or welfare	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Not separated	6 980	(6 430 - 7 570)	52.2	(48.8 - 55.7)
Separated	1 500	(1 200 - 1 860)	69.0	(59.6 - 77.6)
Not known	520	(310 - 780)	52.2	(35.1 - 70.2)
Not applicable	830	(620 - 1 080)	27.1	(21.0 - 33.8)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.26: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHETHER STUDENT'S PRIMARY CARER HAD ANY MEDICAL CONDITIONS LASTING SIX MONTHS OR MORE

Whether primary carer had any medical conditions lasting six months or more	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
No medical condition	5 850	(5 350 - 6 380)	47.0	(43.4 - 50.7)
Medical condition - not limiting	2 230	(1 890 - 2 600)	52.7	(46.8 - 58.5)
Medical condition - limiting	1 600	(1 280 - 1 940)	59.8	(52.1 - 67.3)
Not stated	150	(90 - 230)	61.5	(6.8 - 93.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.27: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY PRIMARY CARER'S LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Primary carer level of education	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Did not attend school	370	(230 - 570)	71.5	(34.8 - 93.3)
1–9 years education	2 480	(2 100 - 2 890)	61.3	(55.2 - 67.1)
10 years education	4 410	(3 930 - 4 920)	50.6	(46.4 - 54.8)
11–12 years education	2 040	(1 710 - 2 390)	41.7	(36.4 - 47.0)
13+ years education	380	(250 - 570)	32.4	(21.2 - 44.2)
Not stated	150	(90 - 230)	61.5	(6.8 - 93.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.28: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY LABOUR FORCE STATUS OF PRIMARY CARER

Primary carer labour force status	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Unemployed	1 200	(920 - 1 540)	56.1	(46.8 - 64.9)
Employed	3 400	(2 980 - 3 860)	42.1	(37.7 - 46.7)
Not in labour force	5 080	(4 580 - 5 610)	55.6	(51.5 - 59.5)
Not stated	150	(90 - 230)	61.5	(6.8 - 93.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.29: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHETHER PRIMARY CARER HAS EVER BEEN ARRESTED OR CHARGED WITH AN OFFENCE

Whether primary carer has ever been arrested or charged with an offence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
No	5 820	(5 300 - 6 370)	46.7	(43.0 - 50.5)
Yes	3 860	(3 410 - 4 340)	56.1	(51.4 - 60.6)
Not stated	150	(90 - 230)	61.5	(6.8 - 93.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.30: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHETHER PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CARERS HAVE EVER BEEN ARRESTED OR CHARGED WITH AN OFFENCE

Whether primary and/or secondary carer have ever been arrested or charged with an offence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Neither carer has been arrested	2 090	(1 730 - 2 480)	42.2	(36.8 - 48.0)
Primary carer only has been arrested	490	(360 - 650)	54.9	(40.1 - 69.8)
Secondary carer only has been arrested	1 780	(1 470 - 2 150)	47.4	(40.6 - 54.3)
Both primary and secondary carer have been arrested	1 530	(1 240 - 1 870)	55.0	(47.8 - 61.7)
Sole carer has been arrested	1 830	(1 520 - 2 190)	57.4	(50.6 - 63.9)
Sole carer has not been arrested	1 960	(1 620 - 2 330)	51.8	(45.1 - 58.2)
Not stated	150	(90 - 230)	61.5	(6.8 - 93.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.31: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF BEING ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC AND CARER LEVEL FACTORS

Parameter	Absent from school for 26 days or more		
	Significance (p value)	*Odds Ratio*	*95% CI*
Sex			
Male		1.00	
Female	0.947	0.99	(0.79 - 1.24)
Age group			
4–7 years		1.00	
8–11 years	0.001	0.64	(0.49 - 0.84)
12–14 years	0.586	1.09	(0.79 - 1.52)
15–17 years	0.160	0.73	(0.46 - 1.13)
Level of Relative Isolation			
None		1.00	
Low	0.102	1.33	(0.95 - 1.86)
Moderate	< 0.001	2.45	(1.57 - 3.83)
High	< 0.001	2.74	(1.53 - 4.91)
Extreme	0.979	0.99	(0.43 - 2.27)
Primary carer forcibly separated from natural family			
Not separated		1.00	
Separated	0.004	1.75	(1.19 - 2.56)
Not known	0.041	0.52	(0.27 - 0.97)
Not Aboriginal	< 0.001	0.45	(0.32 - 0.65)
Primary carer level of education			
Did not attend school	0.526	1.32	(0.56 - 3.07)
1–9 years education	0.122	1.28	(0.94 - 1.75)
10 years education		1.00	
11–12 years education	0.003	0.65	(0.49 - 0.87)
13+ years education	0.033	0.57	(0.34 - 0.96)
Not stated	0.016	1.37	(1.06 - 1.76)
Primary carer labour force status			
Unemployed	0.016	1.61	(1.09 - 2.38)
Employed		1.00	
Not in labour force	< 0.001	1.73	(1.34 - 2.24)
Not stated	0.016	1.37	(1.06 - 1.76)
Primary carer ever arrested or charged with an offence			
No		1.00	
Yes	0.003	1.45	(1.14 - 1.85)
Not stated	0.016	1.37	(1.06 - 1.76)
Primary carer attended an Aboriginal funeral in the last 12 months			
No		1.00	
Yes	0.001	1.57	(1.19 - 2.06)
Not stated	0.016	1.37	(1.06 - 1.76)
Primary carer main language spoken			
English		1.00	
Broken English	0.174	2.47	(0.67 - 9.05)
Aboriginal English	0.015	4.04	(1.30 - 12.4)
Creole	0.684	1.38	(0.29 - 6.63)
Aboriginal language	0.014	2.62	(1.22 - 5.64)
Other	0.809	0.74	(0.06 - 8.93)
Not stated	0.016	1.37	(1.06 - 1.76)

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TABLE 4.32: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY FAMILY CARE ARRANGEMENT

Family care arrangement	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Both original parents	3 950	(3 530 - 4 420)	44.8	(40.6 - 49.1)
Sole parent	3 660	(3 200 - 4 140)	54.8	(50.1 - 59.4)
One original parent and new partner	910	(710 - 1 150)	50.1	(40.9 - 59.1)
Aunts and uncles	750	(550 - 1 010)	70.8	(54.5 - 83.9)
Grandparents	440	(310 - 620)	55.8	(43.3 - 68.3)
Other	110	(40 - 230)	26.9	(10.7 - 50.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.33: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY FAMILY FUNCTIONING QUARTILES

Family functioning quartiles	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Poor	2 210	(1 820 - 2 630)	54.9	(48.6 - 61.4)
Fair	2 580	(2 220 - 3 000)	50.8	(45.3 - 56.2)
Good	2 450	(2 080 - 2 870)	52.3	(46.7 - 58.0)
Very good	2 450	(2 110 - 2 810)	43.9	(38.9 - 49.0)
Not stated	150	(90 - 230)	61.5	(6.8 - 93.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.34: STUDENTS AGED 4–11 YEARS — DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL, BY HOW OFTEN SOMEONE FROM THE HOUSE LOOKS AT A BOOK WITH THE STUDENT

Days absent	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Several times a day		
26 days or more	610	(430 - 830)	45.1	(34.8 - 55.3)
Less than 26 days	740	(540 - 980)	54.9	(44.7 - 65.2)
Total	**1 350**	**(1 060 - 1 680)**	**100.0**	
		Once a day		
26 days or more	1 780	(1 480 - 2 120)	38.0	(32.6 - 43.8)
Less than 26 days	2 900	(2 520 - 3 320)	62.0	(56.2 - 67.4)
Total	**4 670**	**(4 190 - 5 180)**	**100.0**	
		2–3 times a week		
26 days or more	2 060	(1 730 - 2 410)	51.8	(45.6 - 57.7)
Less than 26 days	1 920	(1 600 - 2 260)	48.2	(42.3 - 54.4)
Total	**3 980**	**(3 520 - 4 460)**	**100.0**	
		Hardly ever		
26 days or more	1 430	(1 100 - 1 790)	54.2	(46.0 - 62.3)
Less than 26 days	1 210	(970 - 1 480)	45.8	(37.7 - 54.0)
Total	**2 640**	**(2 240 - 3 090)**	**100.0**	
		Not stated		
26 days or more	70	(30 - 140)	49.5	(23.0 - 77.0)
Less than 26 days	70	(30 - 130)	50.5	(23.0 - 77.0)
Total	**140**	**(80 - 220)**	**100.0**	
		Total		
26 days or more	5 940	(5 420 - 6 480)	46.5	(43.0 - 50.1)
Less than 26 days	6 830	(6 320 - 7 350)	53.5	(49.9 - 57.0)
Total	**12 800**	**(12 200 - 13 300)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.35: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY NUMBER OF LIFE STRESS EVENTS EXPERIENCED BY THE FAMILY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

Number of life stress events	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
0–2	2 480	(2 120 - 2 870)	43.1	(38.2 - 48.2)
3–4	2 320	(1 990 - 2 680)	48.5	(42.8 - 54.1)
5–6	2 410	(2 040 - 2 840)	49.8	(43.9 - 55.7)
7–14	2 470	(2 060 - 2 930)	62.2	(56.1 - 68.3)
Not stated	150	(90 - 230)	61.5	(6.8 - 93.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.36: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY FAMILY FINANCIAL STRAIN

Family financial strain	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Spending more money than we get	1 020	(770 - 1 330)	57.2	(46.7 - 67.1)
Just enough money to get through to the next pay day	4 550	(4 070 - 5 040)	51.0	(47.0 - 55.0)
Some money left over each week, but we just spend it	1 220	(940 - 1 560)	48.0	(38.9 - 57.2)
Save a bit every now and again	2 580	(2 230 - 2 960)	48.4	(43.5 - 53.7)
Save a lot	300	(190 - 460)	40.0	(25.6 - 56.7)
Not stated	150	(90 - 230)	61.5	(6.8 - 93.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

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TABLE 4.37: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHETHER OVERUSE OF ALCOHOL CAUSES PROBLEMS IN THE HOUSEHOLD

Whether overuse of alcohol causes problems in the household	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
No	8 000	(7 440 - 8 570)	48.4	(45.3 - 51.5)
Yes	1 680	(1 310 - 2 100)	59.4	(50.4 - 67.4)
Not stated	150	(90 - 230)	61.5	(6.8 - 93.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.38: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY HOME OWNERSHIP AND LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION (LORI)

Home ownership	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		LORI — None		
Owned or being paid off	560	(370 - 830)	24.1	(16.4 - 33.7)
Rented	2 210	(1 880 - 2 580)	48.5	(42.3 - 54.9)
Other	40	(10 - 110)	35.8	(5.3 - 85.3)
Not stated	20	(10 - 60)	68.7	(0.0 - 100.0)
Total	**2 840**	**(2 490 - 3 220)**	**40.3**	**(35.3 - 45.5)**
		LORI — Low		
Owned or being paid off	300	(150 - 500)	25.6	(14.3 - 39.6)
Rented	2 090	(1 790 - 2 420)	53.4	(47.8 - 58.7)
Other	60	(40 - 100)	57.4	(44.1 - 71.3)
Not stated	20	(10 - 50)	61.3	(40.6 - 81.2)
Total	**2 460**	**(2 130 - 2 820)**	**47.4**	**(42.1 - 52.5)**
		LORI — Moderate		
Owned or being paid off	580	(390 - 840)	56.4	(45.3 - 68.1)
Rented	2 110	(1 710 - 2 540)	63.8	(57.0 - 70.1)
Other	80	(20 - 220)	53.9	(15.7 - 84.3)
Not stated	90	(50 - 160)	74.1	(44.9 - 92.2)
Total	**2 870**	**(2 410 - 3 380)**	**62.1**	**(56.6 - 67.6)**
		LORI — High		
Owned or being paid off	20	(0 - 120)	22.8	(0.0 - 84.2)
Rented	1 160	(830 - 1 570)	65.4	(58.2 - 71.7)
Other	70	(10 - 170)	60.0	(2.5 - 100.0)
Not stated	10	(0 - 150)	46.8	(0.0 - 100.0)
Total	**1 260**	**(910 - 1 700)**	**63.1**	**(54.3 - 71.6)**
		LORI — Extreme		
Owned or being paid off	20	(0 - 190)	91.0	(0.0 - 100.0)
Rented	290	(100 - 680)	53.5	(25.1 - 80.8)
Other	90	(20 - 260)	65.2	(9.4 - 99.2)
Not stated	0	(0 - 60)	0.0	(0.0 - 84.2)
Total	**400**	**(150 - 890)**	**55.0**	**(28.9 - 82.3)**
		Western Australia		
Owned or being paid off	1 480	(1 150 - 1 880)	31.9	(25.8 - 38.4)
Rented	7 850	(7 280 - 8 430)	55.8	(52.5 - 59.0)
Other	340	(210 - 540)	54.7	(33.4 - 73.4)
Not stated	150	(90 - 230)	61.5	(6.8 - 93.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.39: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY HOUSEHOLD OCCUPANCY LEVEL

Household occupancy level	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Low	6 810	(6 270 - 7 380)	47.2	(43.9 - 50.5)
High	2 870	(2 450 - 3 340)	58.3	(52.6 - 63.9)
Not stated	150	(90 - 230)	61.5	(6.8 - 93.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.40: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY NUMBER OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS STUDENT HAS ATTENDED AND NUMBER OF HOMES LIVED IN SINCE BIRTH

Number of primary schools attended	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		1–4 homes		
1	4 460	(4 000 - 4 940)	49.3	(44.9 - 53.5)
2	1 630	(1 330 - 1 990)	49.9	(43.5 - 56.5)
3 or more	990	(760 - 1 250)	65.0	(53.9 - 74.2)
Total	**7 070**	**(6 520 - 7 630)**	**51.1**	**(47.7 - 54.7)**
		5 or more homes		
1	690	(530 - 880)	44.3	(35.6 - 53.9)
2	670	(530 - 840)	47.6	(39.4 - 56.0)
3 or more	1 390	(1 110 - 1 740)	49.9	(42.2 - 57.8)
Total	**2 750**	**(2 400 - 3 150)**	**47.8**	**(42.9 - 52.8)**
		Total		
1	5 150	(4 680 - 5 640)	48.5	(44.7 - 52.5)
2	2 300	(1 970 - 2 670)	49.2	(43.9 - 54.5)
3 or more	2 380	(2 020 - 2 770)	55.2	(49.2 - 61.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

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TABLE 4.41: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF BEING ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC AND FAMILY LEVEL FACTORS

	Absent from school for 26 days or more		
Parameter	Significance (p value)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Sex			
Male		1.00	
Female	0.966	1.00	(0.80 - 1.24)
Age group			
4–7 years		1.00	
8–11 years	< 0.001	0.57	(0.44 - 0.76)
12–14 years	0.897	1.04	(0.54 - 2.02)
15–17 years	0.704	0.86	(0.39 - 1.88)
Level of Relative Isolation			
None		1.00	
Low	0.091	1.35	(0.95 - 1.92)
Moderate	< 0.001	2.78	(1.75 - 4.40)
High	< 0.001	2.78	(1.53 - 5.06)
Extreme	0.036	2.06	(1.05 - 4.05)
Family care arrangement			
Both original parents		1.00	
Sole parent	0.034	1.34	(1.02 - 1.74)
One original parent and new partner	0.916	1.02	(0.67 - 1.56)
Aunts and uncles	0.012	2.05	(1.17 - 3.57)
Grandparents	0.927	0.98	(0.56 - 1.69)
Other	0.007	0.30	(0.13 - 0.72)
Home ownership			
Owned or being paid off		1.00	
Rented	< 0.001	2.38	(1.77 - 3.20)
Other	0.048	2.04	(1.01 - 4.14)
Not stated	0.038	1.79	(1.03 - 3.11)
Number of life stress events experienced by family in the last 12 months			
0–2		1.00	
3–4	0.078	1.33	(0.97 - 1.82)
5–6	0.316	1.18	(0.86 - 1.61)
7–14	< 0.001	2.25	(1.61 - 3.16)
Not stated	0.038	1.79	(1.03 - 3.11)
How often someone looks at a book with the child (children aged 4–11 years only)			
Several times a day	0.434	1.21	(0.76 - 1.92)
Once a day		1.00	
2–3 times a week	0.006	1.59	(1.14 - 2.22)
Hardly ever	0.001	1.87	(1.27 - 2.74)
Not applicable	0.553	1.23	(0.62 - 2.44)

TABLE 4.42: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY CATEGORY OF SCHOOL

Category of school	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Government school	8 330	(7 720 - 8 940)	51.0	(47.8 - 54.1)
Catholic school	1 220	(950 - 1 550)	50.1	(41.4 - 58.6)
Independent school	100	(50 - 180)	22.7	(10.6 - 37.6)
Aboriginal community governed school	180	(80 - 320)	48.7	(27.2 - 72.8)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.43: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY PROPORTION OF STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL WHO ARE ABORIGINAL

Proportion of students who are Aboriginal	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Less than 10%	2 930	(2 520 - 3 360)	39.7	(34.8 - 44.9)
10%–90%	5 100	(4 550 - 5 690)	54.8	(50.8 - 58.7)
90% or more	1 800	(1 390 - 2 250)	62.1	(53.6 - 69.6)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.44: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY STUDENT TO TEACHER RATIO

Number of students per teacher	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Less than 10	1 660	(1 280 - 2 070)	59.1	(51.1 - 66.4)
10–15	4 370	(3 880 - 4 880)	56.0	(51.3 - 60.8)
15–20	2 410	(1 990 - 2 860)	45.7	(40.0 - 51.2)
20 or more	1 390	(1 060 - 1 770)	37.6	(30.7 - 45.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.45: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY PROPORTION OF TEACHERS IN THE SCHOOL WHO ARE NEW TO TEACHING

Proportion of teachers in school who are new to teaching	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Less than 10%	7 460	(6 850 - 8 070)	48.7	(45.4 - 52.0)
10% or more	2 370	(1 930 - 2 840)	55.5	(49.3 - 61.6)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.46: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHETHER THE SCHOOL HAS IMPLEMENTED ANY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES IN ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

Whether Professional Development and curriculum activities implemented in school	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Our Story				
No	6 570	(6 000 - 7 180)	52.7	(49.2 - 56.2)
Yes	2 370	(1 930 - 2 850)	43.7	(37.6 - 49.9)
Not stated	890	(630 - 1 210)	52.5	(42.2 - 62.7)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**
FELIKS – Fostering English Language in Kimberley Schools				
No	2 120	(1 750 - 2 530)	59.2	(50.6 - 67.3)
Yes	6 590	(6 020 - 7 150)	48.2	(44.8 - 51.6)
Not stated	1 130	(830 - 1 490)	47.7	(39.0 - 56.6)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**
ABC of Two Way Literacy and Learning				
No	2 870	(2 440 - 3 350)	58.9	(53.0 - 64.5)
Yes	4 900	(4 360 - 5 460)	45.4	(41.5 - 49.6)
Not stated	2 060	(1 680 - 2 480)	52.4	(46.2 - 58.8)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**
Deadly Ways to Learn				
No	4 000	(3 490 - 4 550)	56.5	(51.2 - 61.6)
Yes	4 550	(4 050 - 5 090)	46.6	(42.5 - 50.7)
Not stated	1 280	(970 - 1 660)	46.4	(38.9 - 54.6)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**
Time for Talk				
No	1 860	(1 490 - 2 290)	50.9	(44.4 - 57.8)
Yes	5 680	(5 120 - 6 270)	49.1	(45.4 - 52.9)
Not stated	2 290	(1 880 - 2 770)	52.3	(45.4 - 59.1)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**
Aboriginal Studies (across the curriculum)				
No	7 700	(7 140 - 8 290)	52.7	(49.3 - 56.0)
Yes	1 170	(870 - 1 550)	34.7	(27.3 - 42.4)
Not stated	950	(700 - 1 260)	60.2	(49.9 - 70.3)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**
Aboriginal Studies (discrete unit or course)				
No	3 950	(3 500 - 4 440)	54.1	(49.5 - 58.7)
Yes	3 900	(3 380 - 4 480)	45.8	(41.3 - 50.5)
Not stated	1 970	(1 530 - 2 480)	52.3	(44.6 - 59.8)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**
Do You Hear What I Hear – Otitis media				
No	3 460	(2 980 - 3 980)	54.4	(49.4 - 59.5)
Yes	4 330	(3 830 - 4 880)	46.8	(42.6 - 51.2)
Not stated	2 040	(1 650 - 2 480)	51.2	(44.4 - 57.7)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**
Other				
No	5 090	(4 550 - 5 670)	53.3	(49.1 - 57.4)
Yes	2 370	(1 980 - 2 840)	45.3	(39.4 - 51.2)
Not stated	2 360	(1 950 - 2 820)	49.2	(43.1 - 55.4)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.47: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHETHER SCHOOL TEACHES AN ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION (LORI)

Does school teach an Aboriginal language?	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		LORI — None		
Yes	390	(210 - 630)	39.0	(24.5 - 53.6)
No	2 450	(2 110 - 2 830)	40.5	(35.0 - 46.0)
Total	**2 840**	**(2 490 - 3 220)**	**40.3**	**(35.3 - 45.5)**
		LORI — Low		
Yes	650	(470 - 870)	51.5	(42.9 - 59.8)
No	1 820	(1 510 - 2 170)	46.1	(39.6 - 52.4)
Total	**2 460**	**(2 130 - 2 820)**	**47.4**	**(42.1 - 52.5)**
		LORI — Moderate		
Yes	1 530	(1 160 - 1 970)	69.6	(62.6 - 75.9)
No	1 340	(1 040 - 1 690)	55.3	(46.7 - 63.4)
Total	**2 870**	**(2 410 - 3 380)**	**62.1**	**(56.6 - 67.6)**
		LORI — High		
Yes	640	(380 - 1 030)	72.2	(63.1 - 80.4)
No	620	(410 - 900)	55.7	(42.4 - 68.8)
Total	**1 260**	**(910 - 1 700)**	**63.1**	**(54.3 - 71.6)**
		LORI — Extreme		
Yes	230	(40 - 600)	46.4	(21.1 - 78.9)
No	170	(40 - 550)	74.1	(1.3 - 98.7)
Total	**400**	**(150 - 890)**	**55.0**	**(28.9 - 82.3)**
		Western Australia		
Yes	3 440	(2 930 - 3 970)	58.9	(53.5 - 64.0)
No	6 390	(5 830 - 6 990)	46.5	(42.9 - 50.0)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.48: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHETHER SCHOOL HAS AN ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER EDUCATION OFFICER (AIEO) AND PROPORTION OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL

Does the school have an AIEO?	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Less than 10%		
Yes	1 820	(1 490 - 2 200)	48.2	(41.3 - 54.8)
No	1 110	(850 - 1 430)	30.8	(24.2 - 38.2)
Total	**2 930**	**(2 520 - 3 360)**	**39.7**	**(34.8 - 44.9)**
		10%–90%		
Yes	4 620	(4 080 - 5 180)	55.1	(51.0 - 59.4)
No	480	(340 - 640)	51.4	(40.5 - 63.1)
Total	**5 100**	**(4 550 - 5 690)**	**54.8**	**(50.8 - 58.7)**
		90% or more		
Yes	1 620	(1 230 - 2 060)	64.1	(55.9 - 71.2)
No	180	(70 - 410)	48.4	(16.7 - 76.6)
Total	**1 800**	**(1 390 - 2 250)**	**62.1**	**(53.6 - 69.6)**
		Total		
Yes	8 060	(7 480 - 8 660)	54.9	(51.7 - 58.1)
No	1 770	(1 450 - 2 140)	36.1	(30.4 - 42.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.49: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHETHER SCHOOL HAS AN ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER EDUCATION OFFICER (AIEO) AND QUARTILES OF SCHOOL SOCIOECONOMIC INDEX (SEI)

Does the school have an AIEO?	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Lowest quartile				
Yes	2 210	(1 750 - 2 720)	57.9	(51.2 - 64.6)
No	170	(80 - 320)	48.6	(26.8 - 69.4)
Total	**2 370**	**(1 920 - 2 890)**	**57.1**	**(50.5 - 63.3)**
Second				
Yes	1 580	(1 270 - 1 950)	45.5	(39.4 - 52.2)
No	210	(120 - 370)	30.4	(18.7 - 46.3)
Total	**1 790**	**(1 460 - 2 160)**	**43.0**	**(37.4 - 49.0)**
Third				
Yes	1 790	(1 460 - 2 160)	55.7	(49.1 - 62.1)
No	260	(150 - 440)	27.4	(16.5 - 41.6)
Total	**2 050**	**(1 700 - 2 440)**	**49.3**	**(43.3 - 55.6)**
Highest quartile				
Yes	1 430	(1 070 - 1 870)	61.1	(52.3 - 69.3)
No	790	(560 - 1 080)	45.9	(35.0 - 57.8)
Total	**2 210**	**(1 780 - 2 720)**	**54.7**	**(47.3 - 61.6)**
Non-government schools				
Yes	1 050	(810 - 1 360)	57.0	(47.5 - 66.9)
No	340	(200 - 560)	28.6	(17.1 - 40.8)
Total	**1 400**	**(1 110 - 1 730)**	**45.8**	**(37.9 - 53.4)**
Total				
Yes	8 060	(7 480 - 8 660)	54.9	(51.7 - 58.1)
No	1 770	(1 450 - 2 140)	36.1	(30.4 - 42.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.50: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY PRINCIPAL'S ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING, TEACHING AND SUPPORT PROGRAMMES FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

Principal's assessment of learning, teaching and support programmes for Aboriginal students – Quartiles	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Lowest quartile	2 320	(1 910 - 2 800)	45.9	(40.5 - 51.5)
Second	3 500	(3 010 - 4 040)	50.2	(44.9 - 55.4)
Third	2 810	(2 370 - 3 320)	54.9	(49.0 - 60.5)
Highest quartile	1 190	(900 - 1 580)	48.9	(40.5 - 58.0)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.51: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHETHER SCHOOL HAS AN ABORIGINAL STUDENT SUPPORT AND PARENT AWARENESS COMMITTEE (ASSPA)

Does the school have an ASSPA?	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
No	540	(360 - 810)	35.9	(24.7 - 49.6)
Yes	9 290	(8 710 - 9 860)	51.4	(48.3 - 54.3)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.52: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY THE DEGREE THAT POVERTY AFFECTS STUDENTS ATTENDING THE SCHOOL

Degree that poverty affects students attending the school	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
None	250	(90 - 630)	38.7	(15.2 - 64.6)
2	1 940	(1 550 - 2 360)	45.6	(39.0 - 52.5)
3	1 850	(1 520 - 2 230)	46.8	(39.9 - 53.4)
4	1 930	(1 580 - 2 310)	52.5	(46.7 - 58.5)
5	2 150	(1 750 - 2 620)	54.0	(47.9 - 60.2)
6	1 190	(850 - 1 570)	53.0	(43.6 - 61.9)
Extreme	530	(310 - 850)	62.3	(45.6 - 76.4)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.53: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY QUARTILES OF SCHOOL SOCIOECONOMIC INDEX (SEI)

SEI quartiles	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Lowest quartile	2 370	(1 920 - 2 890)	57.1	(50.5 - 63.3)
Second	1 790	(1 460 - 2 160)	43.0	(37.4 - 49.0)
Third	2 050	(1 700 - 2 440)	49.3	(43.3 - 55.6)
Highest quartile	2 210	(1 780 - 2 720)	54.7	(47.3 - 61.6)
Non-government schools	1 400	(1 110 - 1 730)	45.8	(37.9 - 53.4)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.54: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY PRIMARY CARER'S SATISFACTION WITH THE JOB THAT THE SCHOOL IS DOING

Overall level of satisfaction	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Very unhappy	770	(540 - 1 090)	56.8	(44.0 - 69.5
A little bit unhappy	730	(540 - 980)	58.8	(45.6 - 70.6)
Neither unhappy nor happy	590	(430 - 800)	61.3	(50.5 - 71.9)
A little bit happy	1 780	(1 460 - 2 130)	51.3	(44.1 - 58.3)
Very happy	5 820	(5 330 - 6 350)	47.0	(43.5 - 50.5)
Not stated	130	(90 - 200)	79.1	(63.5 - 90.7)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.55: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, BY WHETHER STUDENT SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL DURING THE YEAR

Suspended this year?	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
No	8 710	(8 150 - 9 280)	48.6	(45.5 - 51.6)
Yes	1 110	(900 - 1 380)	67.9	(60.4 - 75.2)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**50.2**	**(47.2 - 53.1)**

TABLE 4.56: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF STUDENTS BEING ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC AND SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Parameter	Absent from school for 26 days or more		
	Significance (p value)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Sex			
Male		1.00	
Female	0.870	1.02	(0.82 - 1.27)
Age group			
4–7 years		1.00	
8–11 years	0.001	0.65	(0.50 - 0.85)
12–14 years	0.643	1.08	(0.78 - 1.49)
15–17 years	0.744	0.93	(0.59 - 1.45)
Level of Relative Isolation			
None		1.00	
Low	0.990	1.00	(0.71 - 1.40)
Moderate	0.015	1.78	(1.12 - 2.84)
High	0.144	1.66	(0.84 - 3.28)
Extreme	0.480	1.35	(0.59 - 3.10)
Ratio of Aboriginal students in student population			
Less than 10%		1.00	
10%–90%	< 0.001	2.05	(1.37 - 3.09)
90% or more	0.004	3.10	(1.45 - 6.59)
Does the school have an AIEO?			
Yes		1.00	
No	< 0.001	0.52	(0.37 - 0.73)
Quartiles of Socioeconomic Index for schools (Government schools only)			
Lowest quartile		1.00	
Second	0.678	0.89	(0.52 - 1.53)
Third	0.315	1.33	(0.76 - 2.33)
Highest quartile	0.003	2.27	(1.32 - 3.92)
Non-government schools	0.133	0.67	(0.39 - 1.13)
Primary carer's overall satisfaction with the job that the school is doing			
Very unhappy	0.206	1.35	(0.85 - 2.14)
A little bit unhappy	0.208	1.36	(0.84 - 2.20)
Neither unhappy nor happy	0.002	2.27	(1.34 - 3.85)
A little bit happy	0.270	1.19	(0.88 - 1.61)
Very happy		1.00	
Not stated	0.045	5.08	(1.00 - 24.80)

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TABLE 4.57: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF BEING ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, ASSOCIATED WITH COMBINED DEMOGRAPHIC, STUDENT, CARER, FAMILY AND SCHOOL LEVEL FACTORS

	Absent from school for 26 days or more		
Parameter	*Significance (p value)*	*Odds Ratio*	*95% CI*
Sex			
Male		1.00	
Female	0.082	1.23	(0.97 - 1.56)
Age group			
4–7 years		1.00	
8–11 years	< 0.001	0.53	(0.40 - 0.71)
12–14 years	0.645	1.17	(0.59 - 2.33)
15–17 years	0.721	1.16	(0.51 - 2.61)
Level of Relative Isolation			
None		1.00	
Low	0.620	0.92	(0.66 - 1.29)
Moderate	0.144	1.41	(0.89 - 2.25)
High	0.940	1.03	(0.52 - 2.05)
Extreme	0.076	0.43	(0.17 - 1.09)
Main language spoken in the playground			
English		1.00	
Aboriginal English	0.001	1.98	(1.31 - 2.99)
Kriol/Creole	0.056	2.61	(0.98 - 6.95)
Aboriginal language	< 0.001	6.09	(2.20 - 16.80)
Other	0.772	0.73	(0.08 - 6.32)
Teacher assessed risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties			
Low		1.00	
Moderate	0.068	1.36	(0.98 - 1.90)
High	0.001	1.76	(1.25 - 2.46)
Ever been in day care (children aged 4–11 years only)			
No	0.004	1.57	(1.16 - 2.14)
Yes		1.00	
Not applicable	0.287	1.22	(0.84 - 1.77)
Carer or partner needed to see school principal in the last 6 months			
No		1.00	
Yes	< 0.001	1.80	(1.28 - 2.53)
Has trouble getting enough sleep			
No		1.00	
Yes	0.004	1.75	(1.19 - 2.56)
Overall academic performance			
Low	< 0.001	1.63	(1.27 - 2.09)
Average or above average		1.00	
Primary carer level of education			
Did not attend school	0.416	1.41	(0.61 - 3.27)
1–9 years education	0.248	1.20	(0.88 - 1.64)
10 years education		1.00	
11–12 years education	0.020	0.71	(0.53 - 0.95)
13+ years education	0.492	0.83	(0.49 - 1.41)
Not stated	0.051	1.33	(1.00 - 1.76)
Primary carer labour force status			
Unemployed	0.260	1.26	(0.84 - 1.87)
Employed		1.00	
Not in labour force	0.001	1.53	(1.18 - 1.99)
Not stated	0.051	1.33	(1.00 - 1.76)

Continued . . . .

4

TABLE 4.57 *(continued)*: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF BEING ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR 26 DAYS OR MORE, ASSOCIATED WITH COMBINED DEMOGRAPHIC, STUDENT, CARER, FAMILY AND SCHOOL LEVEL FACTORS

Parameter	Absent from school for 26 days or more		
	Significance (p value)	*Odds Ratio*	*95% CI*
Home ownership			
Owned or being paid off		1.00	
Rented	< 0.001	1.95	(1.45 - 2.64)
Other	0.048	2.02	(1.01 - 4.05)
Not stated	0.051	1.33	(1.00 - 1.76)
Number of life stress events experienced by family in the last 12 months			
0–2		1.00	
3–4	0.315	1.18	(0.86 - 1.61)
5–6	0.525	1.11	(0.81 - 1.53)
7–14	< 0.001	1.90	(1.34 - 2.68)
Not stated	0.051	1.33	(1.00 - 1.76)
How often someone looks at a book with the child (children aged 4–11 years only)			
Several times a day	0.343	1.26	(0.78 - 2.05)
Once a day		1.00	
2–3 times a week	0.013	1.53	(1.09 - 2.15)
Hardly ever	0.027	1.56	(1.05 - 2.30)
Not applicable	0.287	1.22	(0.84 - 1.77)
Ratio of Aboriginal students in student population			
Less than 10%		1.00	
10%–90%	0.009	1.71	(1.15 - 2.55)
90% or more	0.159	1.72	(0.81 - 3.65)
Does the school have an AIEO?			
Yes		1.00	
No	< 0.001	0.55	(0.39 - 0.78)
Quartiles of Socioeconomic Index for schools (Government schools only)			
Lowest quartile		1.00	
Second	0.984	1.00	(0.60 - 1.66)
Third	0.110	1.55	(0.91 - 2.64)
Highest quartile	< 0.001	2.82	(1.66 - 4.79)
Non-government schools	0.641	0.88	(0.53 - 1.48)

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TABLE 4.58: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATIO BEING IN LOWEST 20%, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC, STUDENT, CARER, FAMILY AND SCHOOL LEVEL FACTORS

	Absent from school for more than 63 days		
Parameter	Significance (p value)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Sex			
Male		1.00	
Female	0.096	1.28	(0.96 - 1.71)
Age group			
4–7 years		1.00	
8–11 years	0.002	0.57	(0.39 - 0.82)
12–14 years	0.033	0.39	(0.17 - 0.93)
15–17 years	0.064	0.39	(0.14 - 1.06)
Level of Relative Isolation			
None		1.00	
Low	0.945	1.01	(0.67 - 1.54)
Moderate	0.192	1.41	(0.84 - 2.36)
High	0.204	1.55	(0.79 - 3.04)
Extreme	0.254	0.57	(0.22 - 1.49)
Main language spoken in the playground			
English		1.00	
Aboriginal English	< 0.001	2.34	(1.53 - 3.57)
Kriol/Creole	0.013	3.04	(1.26 - 7.30)
Aboriginal language	< 0.001	5.57	(2.20 - 14.40)
Other	0.177	4.14	(0.50 - 32.60)
Teacher assessed risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties			
Low		1.00	
Moderate	0.040	1.50	(1.02 - 2.22)
High	< 0.001	1.92	(1.32 - 2.80)
Ever been in day care (children aged 4–11 years only)			
No	0.007	1.85	(1.18 - 2.89)
Yes		1.00	
Not applicable	< 0.001	3.14	(1.93 - 5.12)
Carer or partner needed to see school principal in the last 6 months			
No		1.00	
Yes	0.102	1.38	(0.94 - 2.02)
Has trouble getting enough sleep			
No		1.00	
Yes	0.301	1.27	(0.81 - 2.01)
Overall academic performance			
Low	< 0.001	2.15	(1.54 - 3.01)
Average or above average		1.00	
Primary carer level of education			
Did not attend school	0.651	0.82	(0.35 - 1.94)
1–9 years	0.442	0.87	(0.60 - 1.25)
10 years		1.00	
11–12 years	0.119	0.74	(0.50 - 1.08)
13+ years	0.151	0.53	(0.22 - 1.26)
Not stated	0.002	1.59	(1.19 - 2.13)
Primary carer labour force status			
Unemployed	0.124	1.46	(0.90 - 2.37)
Employed		1.00	
Not in labour force	0.052	1.39	(1.00 - 1.94)
Not stated	0.002	1.59	(1.19 - 2.13)

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TABLE 4.58 *(continued)*: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATIO BEING IN LOWER 20%, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC, STUDENT, CARER, FAMILY AND SCHOOL LEVEL FACTORS

Parameter	Significance (p value)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Absent from school for more than 63 days			
Home ownership			
Owned or being paid off		1.00	
Rented	0.033	1.59	(1.04 - 2.42)
Other	0.288	1.54	(0.69 - 3.42)
Not stated	0.002	1.59	(1.19 - 2.13)
Number of life stress events experienced by family in the last 12 months			
0–2		1.00	
3–4	0.235	1.29	(0.85 - 1.95)
5–6	0.051	1.50	(1.00 - 2.25)
7–14	0.003	1.89	(1.25 - 2.86)
Not stated	0.002	1.59	(1.19 - 2.13)
How often someone looks at a book with the child (children aged 4–11 years only)			
Several times a day	0.008	2.37	(1.25 - 4.47)
Once a day		1.00	
2–3 times a week	< 0.001	2.32	(1.46 - 3.71)
Hardly ever	< 0.001	2.47	(1.49 - 4.11)
Not applicable	< 0.001	3.14	(1.93 - 5.12)
Category of school			
Government school		1.00	
Catholic school	0.068	0.31	(0.09 - 1.09)
Independent school	0.042	0.19	(0.04 - 0.94)
Aboriginal community governed school	0.402	0.65	(0.23 - 1.80)
Ratio of Aboriginal students in student population			
Less than 10%		1.00	
10%–90%	0.201	1.35	(0.85 - 2.13)
90% or more	0.472	1.33	(0.61 - 2.87)
Does the school have an AIEO?			
Yes		1.00	
No	0.012	0.59	(0.39 - 0.89)
Quartiles of Socioeconomic Index for schools (Government schools only)			
Lowest quartile		1.00	
Second	0.639	0.88	(0.51 - 1.51)
Third	0.512	1.21	(0.68 - 2.15)
Highest quartile	0.006	2.18	(1.25 - 3.81)
Non-government schools	0.078	2.99	(0.90 - 10.10)

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TABLE 4.59: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATIO BEING IN UPPER 20%, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC, STUDENT, CARER, FAMILY AND SCHOOL LEVEL FACTORS

Parameter	Significance (p value)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Absent from school for less than 9 days			
Sex			
Male		1.00	
Female	0.367	0.88	(0.67 - 1.16)
Age group			
4–7 years		1.00	
8–11 years	0.042	1.41	(1.01 - 1.95)
12–14 years	0.074	1.97	(0.94 - 4.16)
15–17 years	0.020	2.90	(1.18 - 7.11)
Level of Relative Isolation			
None		1.00	
Low	0.238	0.80	(0.56 - 1.16)
Moderate	0.068	0.60	(0.35 - 1.04)
High	0.195	0.54	(0.22 - 1.37)
Extreme	0.859	1.11	(0.36 - 3.46)
Main language spoken in the playground			
English		1.00	
Aboriginal English	0.008	0.47	(0.27 - 0.82)
Kriol/Creole	0.055	0.23	(0.05 - 1.03)
Aboriginal language	0.004	0.12	(0.03 - 0.50)
Other	0.571	1.78	(0.20 - 12.90)
Teacher assessed risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties			
Low		1.00	
Moderate	0.446	0.85	(0.57 - 1.28)
High	0.277	0.79	(0.51 - 1.21)
Ever been in day care (children aged 4–11 years only)			
No	0.262	0.83	(0.59 - 1.15)
Yes		1.00	
Not applicable	< 0.001	0.50	(0.33 - 0.74)
Carer or partner needed to see school principal in the last 6 months			
No		1.00	
Yes	0.003	0.50	(0.31 - 0.79)
Has trouble getting enough sleep			
No		1.00	
Yes	0.001	0.40	(0.23 - 0.70)
Overall academic performance			
Low	0.002	0.64	(0.48 - 0.85)
Average or above average		1.00	
Primary carer level of education			
Did not attend school	0.291	0.54	(0.17 - 1.70)
1–9 years	0.168	0.76	(0.51 - 1.12)
10 years		1.00	
11–12 years	0.415	0.87	(0.62 - 1.22)
13+ years	0.407	1.25	(0.74 - 2.10)
Not stated	0.285	0.84	(0.61 - 1.16)
Primary carer labour force status			
Unemployed	0.004	0.47	(0.28 - 0.79)
Employed		1.00	
Not in labour force	0.002	0.62	(0.46 - 0.84)
Not stated	0.285	0.84	(0.61 - 1.16)

Continued . . . .

TABLE 4.59 *(continued)*: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATIO BEING IN UPPER 20%, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC, STUDENT, CARER, FAMILY AND SCHOOL LEVEL FACTORS

Parameter	Significance (p value)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Absent from school for less than 9 days			
Home ownership			
Owned or being paid off		1.00	
Rented	0.003	0.62	(0.45 - 0.85)
Other	0.976	0.99	(0.45 - 2.17)
Not stated	0.285	0.84	(0.61 - 1.16)
Number of life stress events experienced by family in the last 12 months			
0–2		1.00	
3–4	0.184	1.27	(0.89 - 1.80)
5–6	0.318	1.20	(0.84 - 1.74)
7–14	0.024	0.60	(0.39 - 0.94)
Not stated	0.285	0.84	(0.61 - 1.16)
How often someone looks at a book with the child (children aged 4–11 years only)			
Several times a day	0.134	0.65	(0.37 - 1.14)
Once a day		1.00	
2–3 times a week	0.005	0.57	(0.39 - 0.84)
Hardly ever	0.379	0.82	(0.53 - 1.27)
Not applicable	< 0.001	0.50	(0.33 - 0.74)
Category of school			
Government school		1.00	
Catholic school	0.792	0.83	(0.20 - 3.38)
Independent school	0.870	1.13	(0.26 - 4.90)
Aboriginal community governed school	0.995	1.00	(0.31 - 3.23)
Ratio of Aboriginal students in student population			
Less than 10%		1.00	
10%–90%	0.754	0.93	(0.59 - 1.46)
90% or more	0.332	1.61	(0.61 - 4.24)
Does the school have an AIEO?			
Yes		1.00	
No	0.025	1.55	(1.06 - 2.28)
Quartiles of Socioeconomic Index for schools (Government schools only)			
Lowest quartile		1.00	
Second	0.533	1.20	(0.67 - 2.14)
Third	0.800	0.92	(0.50 - 1.71)
Highest quartile	0.052	0.54	(0.29 - 1.00)
Non-government schools	0.450	1.70	(0.43 - 6.67)

UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

TABLE 4.60: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
26 days or more				
None	1 620	(1 330 - 1 940)	16.5	(13.6 - 19.6)
1–10	870	(710 - 1 040)	8.8	(7.2 - 10.6)
More than 10	7 340	(6 780 - 7 920)	74.7	(71.3 - 78.0)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**100.0**	
Less than 26 days				
None	4 940	(4 420 - 5 510)	50.6	(46.3 - 54.8)
1–10	2 840	(2 510 - 3 200)	29.1	(26.0 - 32.5)
More than 10	1 980	(1 680 - 2 320)	20.3	(17.3 - 23.6)
Total	**9 760**	**(9 200 - 10 300)**	**100.0**	
Total				
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.61: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY YEAR AT SCHOOL

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Pre-primary				
None	810	(620 - 1 060)	42.2	(33.1 - 51.1)
1–10	190	(130 - 290)	10.1	(6.5 - 15.0)
More than 10	920	(710 - 1 170)	47.7	(38.8 - 56.7)
Total	**1 920**	**(1 640 - 2 260)**	**100.0**	
Years 1–7				
None	3 850	(3 400 - 4 310)	32.9	(29.3 - 36.6)
1–10	2 420	(2 120 - 2 760)	20.7	(18.2 - 23.5)
More than 10	5 420	(4 910 - 5 960)	46.3	(42.6 - 50.2)
Total	**11 700**	**(11 200 - 12 200)**	**100.0**	
Years 8–10				
None	1 230	(990 - 1 520)	27.1	(22.2 - 32.4)
1–10	830	(670 - 1 010)	18.3	(15.0 - 22.0)
More than 10	2 480	(2 150 - 2 830)	54.6	(49.3 - 59.8)
Total	**4 540**	**(4 130 - 4 960)**	**100.0**	
Years 11–12				
None	480	(290 - 740)	46.0	(32.6 - 60.4)
1–10	220	(130 - 360)	21.3	(12.3 - 32.4)
More than 10	340	(250 - 470)	32.7	(22.7 - 44.4)
Total	**1 050**	**(810 - 1 340)**	**100.0**	
Ungraded class				
None	180	(50 - 450)	48.1	(21.1 - 78.9)
1–10	30	(0 - 190)	8.6	(0.2 - 41.3)
More than 10	160	(80 - 310)	43.3	(17.7 - 71.1)
Total	**380**	**(190 - 690)**	**100.0**	
Total				
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.62: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY YEAR AT SCHOOL

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Pre-primary		
None	810	(620 - 1 060)	42.2	(33.1 - 51.1)
1–2	10	(0 - 40)	0.7	(0.1 - 2.3)
3–5	40	(10 - 110)	2.1	(0.4 - 5.1)
6–10	140	(80 - 220)	7.3	(4.3 - 11.4)
More than 10	920	(710 - 1 170)	47.7	(38.8 - 56.7)
Total	**1 920**	**(1 640 - 2 260)**	**100.0**	
		Year 1		
None	470	(310 - 660)	28.2	(19.9 - 37.0)
1–2	70	(40 - 110)	4.0	(2.3 - 6.8)
3–5	80	(20 - 210)	5.1	(1.6 - 14.0)
6–10	160	(100 - 250)	9.7	(5.9 - 14.6)
More than 10	880	(720 - 1 070)	53.0	(44.1 - 61.9)
Total	**1 660**	**(1 400 - 1 940)**	**100.0**	
		Year 2		
None	590	(430 - 780)	34.3	(26.1 - 44.2)
1–2	60	(20 - 140)	3.7	(1.5 - 8.4)
3–5	120	(80 - 180)	7.0	(4.6 - 10.2)
6–10	130	(50 - 280)	7.9	(2.8 - 15.4)
More than 10	800	(600 - 1 070)	47.0	(37.3 - 56.6)
Total	**1 710**	**(1 420 - 2 030)**	**100.0**	
		Year 3		
None	470	(340 - 630)	30.1	(23.2 - 38.0)
1–2	50	(20 - 100)	3.2	(1.3 - 6.4)
3–5	140	(100 - 190)	9.1	(6.4 - 12.4)
6–10	160	(100 - 230)	10.3	(6.7 - 15.0)
More than 10	740	(600 - 910)	47.3	(39.5 - 54.8)
Total	**1 560**	**(1 360 - 1 790)**	**100.0**	
		Year 4		
None	570	(430 - 750)	32.1	(25.5 - 39.9)
1–2	120	(70 - 210)	7.0	(3.8 - 11.8)
3–5	110	(60 - 180)	6.2	(3.4 - 10.2)
6–10	160	(80 - 300)	9.2	(4.4 - 15.8)
More than 10	810	(690 - 950)	45.5	(38.7 - 52.3)
Total	**1 790**	**(1 570 - 2 030)**	**100.0**	
		Year 5		
None	540	(370 - 750)	32.9	(24.3 - 42.7)
1–2	60	(40 - 90)	3.7	(2.2 - 5.8)
3–5	120	(70 - 200)	7.6	(4.5 - 12.3)
6–10	150	(90 - 230)	9.2	(5.4 - 14.2)
More than 10	760	(580 - 980)	46.6	(37.4 - 55.5)
Total	**1 630**	**(1 370 - 1 920)**	**100.0**	
		Year 6		
None	620	(460 - 810)	36.7	(27.7 - 46.2)
1–2	90	(40 - 190)	5.4	(2.4 - 11.6)
3–5	120	(70 - 190)	7.1	(3.8 - 11.2)
6–10	140	(90 - 210)	8.2	(5.2 - 12.9)
More than 10	720	(490 - 990)	42.5	(32.4 - 53.2)
Total	**1 690**	**(1 400 - 2 000)**	**100.0**	

Continued . . . .

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TABLE 4.62 *(continued)*: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY YEAR AT SCHOOL

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Year 7		
None	590	(440 - 780)	35.9	(27.0 - 44.8)
1–2	100	(50 - 170)	5.9	(3.1 - 10.6)
3–5	100	(70 - 140)	5.9	(3.8 - 8.6)
6–10	160	(100 - 260)	9.9	(5.9 - 15.8)
More than 10	700	(500 - 970)	42.5	(33.0 - 52.8)
Total	**1 650**	**(1 390 - 1 970)**	**100.0**	
		Year 8		
None	480	(330 - 680)	28.4	(20.6 - 37.9)
1–2	60	(20 - 150)	3.3	(0.9 - 8.6)
3–5	150	(90 - 220)	8.7	(5.3 - 12.9)
6–10	170	(110 - 260)	10.3	(6.6 - 15.6)
More than 10	840	(650 - 1 060)	49.4	(41.1 - 58.2)
Total	**1 690**	**(1 430 - 2 000)**	**100.0**	
		Year 9		
None	500	(350 - 700)	30.2	(22.2 - 39.7)
1–2	20	(10 - 50)	1.2	(0.3 - 3.1)
3–5	150	(90 - 240)	8.7	(4.9 - 13.5)
6–10	140	(80 - 230)	8.4	(4.8 - 14.0)
More than 10	860	(670 - 1 080)	51.4	(42.2 - 60.1)
Total	**1 670**	**(1 410 - 1 960)**	**100.0**	
		Year 10		
None	250	(170 - 340)	20.9	(14.8 - 28.2)
1–2	30	(20 - 60)	2.7	(1.4 - 5.2)
3–5	40	(10 - 120)	3.8	(0.7 - 9.6)
6–10	70	(40 - 110)	6.0	(3.6 - 9.0)
More than 10	790	(620 - 980)	66.6	(58.7 - 74.4)
Total	**1 180**	**(990 - 1 390)**	**100.0**	
		Year 11		
None	320	(160 - 560)	47.9	(29.4 - 67.5)
1–2	30	(10 - 70)	5.1	(1.5 - 10.6)
3–5	40	(0 - 170)	6.2	(0.1 - 23.8)
6–10	100	(40 - 200)	14.6	(5.2 - 27.4)
More than 10	170	(100 - 290)	26.1	(15.0 - 42.8)
Total	**660**	**(450 - 920)**	**100.0**	
		Year 12		
None	170	(80 - 300)	42.9	(25.5 - 62.6)
1–2	20	(10 - 40)	5.8	(2.2 - 12.5)
3–5	30	(10 - 90)	7.7	(1.5 - 19.5)
6–10	0	(0 - 60)	0.0	(0.0 - 13.2)
More than 10	170	(110 - 250)	43.6	(28.6 - 61.7)
Total	**400**	**(280 - 540)**	**100.0**	
		Ungraded class		
None	180	(50 - 450)	48.1	(21.1 - 78.9)
1–2	10	(0 - 30)	2.0	(0.3 - 7.4)
3–5	10	(0 - 260)	3.7	(0.0 - 52.2)
6–10	10	(0 - 40)	2.9	(0.4 - 11.7)
More than 10	160	(80 - 310)	43.3	(17.7 - 71.1)
Total	**380**	**(190 - 690)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.62 _(continued)_: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY YEAR AT SCHOOL

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Total		
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–2	740	(590 - 930)	3.8	(3.0 - 4.7)
3–5	1 260	(1 050 - 1 490)	6.4	(5.4 - 7.6)
6–10	1 710	(1 450 - 1 990)	8.7	(7.4 – 10.1)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.63: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION (LORI)

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		LORI — None		
None	2 800	(2 440 - 3 170)	39.7	(34.5 - 44.8)
1–10	1 600	(1 350 - 1 860)	22.7	(19.1 - 26.4)
More than 10	2 660	(2 310 - 3 040)	37.7	(32.7 - 43.1)
Total	**7 050**	**(6 900 - 7 200)**	**100.0**	
		LORI — Low		
None	1 720	(1 430 - 2 030)	33.0	(28.0 - 38.4)
1–10	1 120	(900 - 1 370)	21.5	(17.5 - 25.8)
More than 10	2 360	(2 020 - 2 740)	45.4	(39.9 - 51.1)
Total	**5 200**	**(4 770 - 5 660)**	**100.0**	
		LORI — Moderate		
None	1 260	(1 000 - 1 560)	27.3	(22.7 - 32.1)
1–10	750	(590 - 920)	16.1	(13.2 - 19.3)
More than 10	2 610	(2 170 - 3 100)	56.5	(51.2 - 61.8)
Total	**4 620**	**(3 980 - 5 300)**	**100.0**	
		LORI — High		
None	460	(270 - 720)	23.1	(15.2 - 32.1)
1–10	210	(130 - 340)	10.7	(6.8 - 15.3)
More than 10	1 320	(960 - 1 750)	66.2	(56.2 - 75.0)
Total	**2 000**	**(1 490 - 2 610)**	**100.0**	
		LORI — Extreme		
None	320	(60 - 900)	44.7	(13.7 - 78.8)
1–10	30	(0 - 210)	4.1	(0.1 - 24.9)
More than 10	370	(130 - 910)	51.2	(18.7 - 81.3)
Total	**720**	**(260 - 1 510)**	**100.0**	
		Western Australia		
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

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TABLE 4.64: STUDENTS IN PRIMARY AND HIGH SCHOOL — PROPORTION WITH MORE THAN 10 UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL DURING THE YEAR – COMPARISON OF WAACHS AND 1993 WA CHS

Survey	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Years 1–7		
WAACHS	5 420	(4 910 - 5 960)	46.3	(42.6 - 50.2)
1993 WA CHS	8 190	(5 700 - 11 100)	4.3	(3.1 - 6.0)
		Years 8–12		
WAACHS	2820	(2 480 - 3 190)	50.5	(45.4 - 55.6)
1993 WA CHS	4 890	(3 120 - 7 070)	5.9	(3.7 - 8.4)
		Total (a)		
WAACHS	**8 240**	**(7 660 - 8 820)**	**47.7**	**(44.5 - 50.8)**
1993 WA CHS	**13 100**	**(10 000 - 17 000)**	**4.8**	**(3.7 - 6.2)**

(a)   Excludes students in pre-primary or in ungraded classes.

TABLE 4.65: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY WHETHER STUDENT HAD NOT WANTED TO GO TO SCHOOL IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Wanted to go to school		
None	4 670	(4 170 - 5 220)	36.8	(33.3 - 40.6)
1–10	2 730	(2 420 - 3 060)	21.5	(19.2 - 24.0)
More than 10	5 280	(4 800 - 5 770)	41.6	(38.1 - 45.3)
Total	**12 700**	**(12 100 - 13 200)**	**100.0**	
		Not wanted to go to school		
None	1 840	(1 540 - 2 160)	27.0	(22.8 - 31.3)
1–10	980	(780 - 1 220)	14.4	(11.4 - 17.6)
More than 10	3 980	(3 530 - 4 460)	58.6	(54.0 - 63.2)
Total	**6 790**	**(6 270 - 7 330)**	**100.0**	
		Not stated		
None	50	(20 - 90)	46.1	(26.4 - 64.3)
1–10	0	(0 - 60)	0.0	(0.0 - 36.9)
More than 10	60	(40 - 90)	53.9	(35.7 - 73.6)
Total	**120**	**(80 - 160)**	**100.0**	
		Total		
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

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TABLE 4.66: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY TEACHER ASSESSED RISK OF CLINICALLY SIGNIFICANT EMOTIONAL OR BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Low				
None	5 060	(4 540 - 5 600)	37.3	(33.8 - 40.8)
1–10	2 730	(2 410 - 3 080)	20.1	(17.8 - 22.6)
More than 10	5 770	(5 280 - 6 290)	42.6	(39.2 - 46.1)
Total	**13 600**	**(13 000 - 14 100)**	**100.0**	
Moderate				
None	770	(550 - 1 040)	28.2	(21.0 - 35.7)
1–10	440	(340 - 560)	16.0	(12.2 - 20.3)
More than 10	1 530	(1 260 - 1 830)	55.8	(48.2 - 62.9)
Total	**2 740**	**(2 390 - 3 130)**	**100.0**	
High				
None	730	(550 - 970)	22.3	(16.8 - 28.2)
1–10	540	(420 - 690)	16.3	(12.5 - 20.7)
More than 10	2 020	(1 690 - 2 390)	61.4	(55.0 - 67.8)
Total	**3 290**	**(2 890 - 3 720)**	**100.0**	
Total				
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.67: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF HAVING MORE THAN 10 DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC AND STUDENT LEVEL FACTORS

Parameter	More than 10 days of unexplained absence		
	Significance (p value)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Sex			
Male		1.00	
Female	0.107	1.21	(0.96 - 1.53)
Age group			
4–7 years		1.00	
8–11 years	0.068	0.77	(0.58 - 1.02)
12–14 years	0.060	0.52	(0.27 - 1.03)
15–17 years	0.158	0.57	(0.26 - 1.25)
Level of Relative Isolation			
None		1.00	
Low	0.242	1.24	(0.87 - 1.76)
Moderate	0.013	1.81	(1.14 - 2.89)
High	0.282	1.42	(0.75 - 2.69)
Extreme	0.301	0.67	(0.32 - 1.43)
Main language spoken in the playground			
English		1.00	
Language other than English	< 0.001	2.27	(1.54 - 3.34)
Teacher assessed risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties			
Low		1.00	
Moderate	0.347	1.17	(0.84 - 1.62)
High	0.003	1.63	(1.18 - 2.27)
Ever been in day care (children aged 4–11 years only)			
No	< 0.001	1.79	(1.32 - 2.43)
Yes		1.00	
Not applicable	0.015	2.39	(1.19 - 4.82)
Carer or partner has needed to see school principal in the last 6 months			
No		1.00	
Yes	0.020	1.53	(1.07 - 2.20)
Carer or partner has needed to see AIEO in the last 6 months			
No		1.00	
Yes	0.029	1.57	(1.05 - 2.37)
Not stated	0.976	0.99	(0.64 - 1.55)
Needed to see class teacher about problem			
No		1.00	
Yes	< 0.001	0.56	(0.41 - 0.76)
Not stated	0.976	0.99	(0.64 - 1.55)
Who usually helps with school work at home			
No-one	0.001	2.09	(1.33 - 3.28)
No homework given	0.091	1.34	(0.95 - 1.87)
Someone from this house		1.00	
Another person	0.523	0.82	(0.44 - 1.52)
Not stated	0.976	0.99	(0.64 - 1.55)
Has trouble getting enough sleep			
No		1.00	
Yes	0.003	1.79	(1.22 - 2.63)
Overall academic performance			
Low	< 0.001	2.12	(1.65 - 2.71)
Average or above average		1.00	

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TABLE 4.68: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY WHETHER THE PRIMARY CARER WAS FORCIBLY SEPARATED FROM THEIR NATURAL FAMILY BY A MISSION, THE GOVERNMENT OR WELFARE

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Not separated		
None	4 210	(3 720 - 4 720)	31.5	(28.2 - 34.9)
1–10	2 510	(2 220 - 2 820)	18.8	(16.7 - 21.1)
More than 10	6 650	(6 080 - 7 230)	49.7	(46.2 - 53.3)
Total	**13 400**	**(12 700 - 14 000)**	**100.0**	
		Separated		
None	440	(290 - 640)	20.3	(14.0 - 27.8)
1–10	380	(230 - 600)	17.3	(10.5 - 25.2)
More than 10	1 360	(1 070 - 1 680)	62.5	(53.8 - 71.1)
Total	**2 170**	**(1 790 - 2 620)**	**100.0**	
		Not known		
None	230	(60 - 540)	22.8	(7.8 - 45.4)
1–10	160	(90 - 250)	16.1	(9.2 - 26.8)
More than 10	610	(370 - 920)	61.1	(43.7 - 78.9)
Total	**1 000**	**(680 - 1 440)**	**100.0**	
		Not applicable		
None	1 680	(1 350 - 2 080)	55.1	(47.7 - 62.8)
1–10	660	(500 - 860)	21.5	(16.7 - 27.0)
More than 10	710	(510 - 950)	23.3	(17.3 - 30.0)
Total	**3 050**	**(2 610 - 3 550)**	**100.0**	
		Total		
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.69: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF PRIMARY CARER

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Did not attend school		
None	160	(50 - 450)	30.4	(9.9 - 65.1)
1–10	30	(0 - 200)	5.5	(0.2 - 36.0)
More than 10	330	(170 - 610)	64.1	(31.6 - 86.1)
Total	**510**	**(280 - 850)**	**100.0**	
		1–9 years education		
None	1 010	(760 - 1 280)	24.8	(19.5 - 30.5)
1–10	690	(520 - 890)	17.1	(13.1 - 21.5)
More than 10	2 350	(1 990 - 2 750)	58.1	(51.9 - 64.3)
Total	**4 050**	**(3 560 - 4 560)**	**100.0**	
		10 years education		
None	2 800	(2 420 - 3 200)	32.1	(28.3 - 36.0)
1–10	1 560	(1 320 - 1 820)	17.9	(15.2 - 20.6)
More than 10	4 360	(3 870 - 4 880)	50.0	(45.8 - 54.4)
Total	**8 720**	**(8 110 - 9 340)**	**100.0**	

Continued . . . .

TABLE 4.69 (continued): STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF PRIMARY CARER

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		11–12 years education		
None	1 940	(1 620 - 2 320)	39.8	(34.3 - 45.2)
1–10	1 120	(930 - 1 330)	22.8	(19.2 - 26.8)
More than 10	1 830	(1 520 - 2 190)	37.4	(31.9 - 42.9)
Total	**4 890**	**(4 380 - 5 430)**	**100.0**	
		13+ years education		
None	580	(330 - 900)	48.9	(34.3 - 62.2)
1–10	290	(160 - 450)	24.3	(14.5 - 37.3)
More than 10	320	(220 - 450)	26.8	(18.5 - 37.1)
Total	**1 180**	**(860 - 1 570)**	**100.0**	
		Not stated		
None	80	(0 - 490)	32.8	(0.8 - 90.6)
1–10	30	(10 - 60)	10.9	(2.5 - 31.2)
More than 10	140	(80 - 200)	56.3	(14.7 - 94.7)
Total	**240**	**(90 - 480)**	**100.0**	
		Total		
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.70: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY PRIMARY CARER LABOUR FORCE STATUS

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Unemployed		
None	490	(310 - 720)	22.9	(15.4 - 32.0)
1–10	420	(290 - 570)	19.6	(14.0 - 26.1)
More than 10	1 230	(950 - 1 570)	57.4	(48.5 - 66.6)
Total	**2 140**	**(1 760 - 2 560)**	**100.0**	
		Employed		
None	3 330	(2 880 - 3 830)	41.2	(36.6 - 46.2)
1–10	1 640	(1 360 - 1 950)	20.3	(17.0 - 23.7)
More than 10	3 110	(2 680 - 3 580)	38.5	(33.8 - 43.2)
Total	**8 070**	**(7 440 - 8 710)**	**100.0**	
		Not in labour force		
None	2 660	(2 290 - 3 060)	29.1	(25.5 - 32.8)
1–10	1 630	(1 390 - 1 880)	17.8	(15.4 - 20.4)
More than 10	4 850	(4 370 - 5 370)	53.1	(49.1 - 56.9)
Total	**9 140**	**(8 510 - 9 760)**	**100.0**	
		Not stated		
None	80	(0 - 490)	32.8	(0.8 - 90.6)
1–10	30	(10 - 60)	10.9	(2.5 - 31.2)
More than 10	140	(80 - 200)	56.3	(14.7 - 94.7)
Total	**240**	**(90 - 480)**	**100.0**	
		Total		
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.71: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF HAVING MORE THAN 10 DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC AND CARER LEVEL FACTORS

Parameter	More than 10 days of unexplained absence		
	Significance (p value)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Sex			
Male		1.00	
Female	0.983	1.00	(0.79 - 1.25)
Age group			
4–7 years		1.00	
8–11 years	0.154	0.82	(0.62 - 1.08)
12–14 years	0.893	0.98	(0.70 - 1.37)
15–17 years	0.608	0.89	(0.56 - 1.41)
Level of Relative Isolation			
None		1.00	
Low	0.090	1.37	(0.95 - 1.97)
Moderate	< 0.001	2.59	(1.62 - 4.13)
High	< 0.001	3.21	(1.76 - 5.84)
Extreme	0.060	1.92	(0.97 - 3.78)
Primary carer forcibly separated from natural family			
No		1.00	
Yes	0.002	1.82	(1.24 - 2.67)
Not known	0.604	1.19	(0.61 - 2.32)
Not applicable	< 0.001	0.50	(0.34 - 0.73)
Primary carer level of education			
Did not attend school	0.692	1.18	(0.52 - 2.67)
1–9 years	0.439	1.13	(0.83 - 1.55)
10 years		1.00	
11–12 years	0.003	0.64	(0.47 - 0.86)
13+ years	< 0.001	0.37	(0.21 - 0.67)
Not stated	0.221	1.22	(0.89 - 1.67)
Primary carer labour force status			
Unemployed	< 0.001	2.39	(1.60 - 3.58)
Employed		1.00	
Not in labour force	< 0.001	2.05	(1.57 - 2.68)
Not stated	0.221	1.22	(0.89 - 1.67)
Primary carer ever arrested or charged with an offence			
No		1.00	
Yes	< 0.001	1.84	(1.44 - 2.36)
Not stated	0.221	1.22	(0.89 - 1.67)
Primary carer attended an Aboriginal funeral in the last 12 months			
No		1.00	
Yes	< 0.001	1.69	(1.27 - 2.24)
Not stated	0.221	1.22	(0.89 - 1.67)

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TABLE 4.72: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY FAMILY CARE ARRANGEMENTS

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
	Both original parents			
None	3 200	(2 760 - 3 680)	36.3	(32.2 - 40.7)
1–10	1 740	(1 490 - 2 020)	19.7	(17.0 - 22.7)
More than 10	3 890	(3 440 - 4 360)	44.0	(39.7 - 48.3)
Total	**8 830**	**(8 210 - 9 440)**	**100.0**	
	Sole parent			
None	2 040	(1 720 - 2 400)	30.6	(26.3 - 34.9)
1–10	1 270	(1 050 - 1 510)	19.0	(16.1 - 22.3)
More than 10	3 370	(2 930 - 3 830)	50.4	(45.6 - 55.3)
Total	**6 670**	**(6 100 - 7 270)**	**100.0**	
	One original parent and new partner			
None	560	(370 - 840)	30.9	(21.7 - 41.2)
1–10	450	(310 - 620)	24.5	(17.8 - 32.6)
More than 10	810	(640 - 1 010)	44.6	(36.0 - 53.6)
Total	**1 820**	**(1 510 - 2 180)**	**100.0**	
	Aunts and uncles			
None	270	(140 - 470)	25.9	(14.3 - 41.1)
1–10	60	(20 - 140)	5.8	(1.8 - 12.2)
More than 10	720	(490 - 1 010)	68.3	(52.5 - 80.1)
Total	**1 060**	**(790 - 1 400)**	**100.0**	
	Grandparents			
None	260	(150 - 410)	33.3	(21.3 - 46.0)
1–10	120	(50 - 220)	15.0	(7.1 - 26.6)
More than 10	410	(280 - 570)	51.7	(39.4 - 65.1)
Total	**790**	**(600 - 1 040)**	**100.0**	
	Other			
None	220	(90 - 410)	52.7	(31.5 - 76.9)
1–10	70	(20 - 170)	17.2	(5.0 - 38.8)
More than 10	120	(60 - 260)	30.1	(11.9 - 54.3)
Total	**410**	**(240 - 650)**	**100.0**	
	Total			
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

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TABLE 4.73: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY NUMBER OF LIFE STRESS EVENTS EXPERIENCED BY THE FAMILY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
0–2				
None	2 200	(1 820 - 2 620)	38.3	(33.0 - 43.8)
1–10	1 300	(1 060 - 1 560)	22.7	(19.0 - 26.8)
More than 10	2 250	(1 890 - 2 660)	39.1	(33.9 - 44.3)
Total	**5 750**	**(5 170 - 6 360)**	**100.0**	
3–4				
None	1 750	(1 410 - 2 140)	36.6	(30.8 - 42.4)
1–10	840	(650 - 1 080)	17.6	(13.8 - 21.9)
More than 10	2 190	(1 870 - 2 550)	45.9	(40.2 - 51.4)
Total	**4 780**	**(4 250 - 5 350)**	**100.0**	
5–6				
None	1 540	(1 270 - 1 870)	31.9	(26.8 - 37.0)
1–10	920	(720 - 1 140)	18.9	(15.4 - 23.1)
More than 10	2 390	(2 010 - 2 820)	49.2	(43.6 - 55.1)
Total	**4 850**	**(4 310 - 5 420)**	**100.0**	
7–14				
None	990	(760 - 1 250)	24.9	(19.7 - 30.7)
1–10	620	(480 - 780)	15.6	(12.5 - 19.4)
More than 10	2 360	(1 950 - 2 800)	59.4	(52.8 - 65.6)
Total	**3 970**	**(3 480 - 4 500)**	**100.0**	
Not stated				
None	80	(0 - 490)	32.8	(0.8 - 90.6)
1–10	30	(10 - 60)	10.9	(2.5 - 31.2)
More than 10	140	(80 - 200)	56.3	(14.7 - 94.7)
Total	**240**	**(90 - 480)**	**100.0**	
Total				
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

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TABLE 4.74: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY WHETHER OVERUSE OF ALCOHOL CAUSES PROBLEMS IN THE HOUSEHOLD

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
Overuse of alcohol does not cause problems in the household				
None	5 810	(5 280 - 6 370)	35.1	(32.1 - 38.3)
1–10	3 290	(2 940 - 3 670)	19.9	(17.8 - 22.1)
More than 10	7 430	(6 860 - 7 990)	44.9	(41.9 - 48.1)
Total	**16 500**	**(16 000 - 17 000)**	**100.0**	
Overuse of alcohol causes problems in the household				
None	670	(470 - 910)	23.9	(17.4 - 31.4)
1–10	390	(250 - 570)	13.8	(9.2 - 19.8)
More than 10	1 760	(1 380 - 2 180)	62.3	(54.2 - 70.0)
Total	**2 820**	**(2 360 - 3 350)**	**100.0**	
Not stated				
None	80	(0 - 490)	32.8	(0.8 - 90.6)
1–10	30	(10 - 60)	10.9	(2.5 - 31.2)
More than 10	140	(80 - 200)	56.3	(14.7 - 94.7)
Total	**240**	**(90 - 480)**	**100.0**	
Total				
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.75: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY HOME OWNERSHIP AND LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION (LORI)

Home ownership	Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
			LORI — None		
Owned or being paid off	None	1 320	(1 030 - 1 650)	56.4	(47.3 - 65.9)
	1–10	510	(350 - 710)	21.8	(15.1 - 29.1)
	More than 10	510	(320 - 740)	21.7	(14.6 - 31.0)
	Total	**2 340**	**(1 970 - 2 750)**	**100.0**	
Rented	None	1 390	(1 110 - 1 690)	30.4	(24.9 - 36.5)
	1–10	1 060	(880 - 1 280)	23.4	(19.2 - 27.8)
	More than 10	2 100	(1 770 - 2 480)	46.2	(40.0 - 52.4)
	Total	**4 550**	**(4 160 - 4 960)**	**100.0**	
Other	None	70	(30 - 130)	57.0	(24.5 - 91.5)
	1–10	20	(0 - 180)	17.6	(0.0 - 84.2)
	More than 10	30	(10 - 70)	25.3	(8.4 - 58.1)
	Total	**120**	**(40 - 240)**	**100.0**	
Not stated	None	20	(0 - 200)	56.2	(2.5 - 100.0)
	1–10	0	(0 - 60)	0.0	(0.0 - 84.2)
	More than 10	20	(0 - 50)	43.8	(0.0 - 97.5)
	Total	**30**	**(0 - 180)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	2 800	(2 440 - 3 170)	39.7	(34.5 - 44.8)
	1–10	1 600	(1 350 - 1 860)	22.7	(19.1 - 26.4)
	More than 10	2 660	(2 310 - 3 040)	37.7	(32.7 - 43.1)
	Total	**7 050**	**(6 900 - 7 200)**	**100.0**	

Continued . . . .

TABLE 4.75 (continued): STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY HOME OWNERSHIP AND LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION (LORI)

Home ownership	Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		LORI — Low			
Owned or being paid off	None	540	(340 - 800)	46.8	(32.6 - 60.4)
	1–10	250	(140 - 400)	22.1	(13.9 - 33.2)
	More than 10	360	(220 - 570)	31.2	(19.2 - 43.9)
	Total	**1 160**	**(860 - 1 500)**	**100.0**	
Rented	None	1 140	(920 - 1 390)	29.1	(24.0 - 34.3)
	1–10	850	(670 - 1 070)	21.7	(17.4 - 26.6)
	More than 10	1 920	(1 630 - 2 260)	49.2	(43.3 - 55.0)
	Total	**3 910**	**(3 500 - 4 350)**	**100.0**	
Other	None	30	(20 - 50)	31.9	(17.3 - 52.8)
	1–10	20	(10 - 40)	18.5	(4.7 - 37.4)
	More than 10	50	(20 - 110)	49.6	(23.0 - 72.2)
	Total	**100**	**(60 - 170)**	**100.0**	
Not stated	None	10	(0 - 30)	22.0	(0.6 - 80.6)
	1–10	0	(0 - 60)	0.0	(0.0 - 84.2)
	More than 10	30	(10 - 60)	78.0	(19.4 - 99.4)
	Total	**40**	**(10 - 90)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	1 720	(1 430 - 2 030)	33.0	(28.0 - 38.4)
	1–10	1 120	(900 - 1 370)	21.5	(17.5 - 25.8)
	More than 10	2 360	(2 020 - 2 740)	45.4	(39.9 - 51.1)
	Total	**5 200**	**(4 770 - 5 660)**	**100.0**	
		LORI — Moderate			
Owned or being paid off	None	290	(200 - 400)	27.9	(20.6 - 35.8)
	1–10	240	(180 - 320)	23.1	(16.3 - 31.5)
	More than 10	510	(320 - 760)	49.1	(38.7 - 60.2)
	Total	**1 030**	**(780 - 1 350)**	**100.0**	
Rented	None	900	(690 - 1 150)	27.3	(22.1 - 32.9)
	1–10	470	(370 - 590)	14.3	(11.5 - 17.3)
	More than 10	1 930	(1 570 - 2 360)	58.4	(52.5 - 64.2)
	Total	**3 310**	**(2 770 - 3 870)**	**100.0**	
Other	None	60	(20 - 120)	35.4	(12.8 - 64.9)
	1–10	20	(10 - 40)	12.9	(2.5 - 31.2)
	More than 10	80	(20 - 230)	51.7	(15.7 - 84.3)
	Total	**160**	**(70 - 340)**	**100.0**	
Not stated	None	20	(10 - 40)	14.0	(4.8 - 30.3)
	1–10	10	(0 - 40)	11.9	(2.8 - 33.6)
	More than 10	90	(50 - 160)	74.1	(44.9 - 92.2)
	Total	**120**	**(80 - 190)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	1 260	(1 000 - 1 560)	27.3	(22.7 - 32.1)
	1–10	750	(590 - 920)	16.1	(13.2 - 19.3)
	More than 10	2 610	(2 170 - 3 100)	56.5	(51.2 - 61.8)
	Total	**4 620**	**(3 980 - 5 300)**	**100.0**	

Continued . . . .

TABLE 4.75 *(continued)*: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY HOME OWNERSHIP AND LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION (LORI)

Home ownership	Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
			LORI — High		
Owned or being paid off	None	30	(10 - 90)	36.5	(0.6 - 80.6)
	1–10	30	(10 - 110)	38.9	(4.3 - 77.7)
	More than 10	20	(10 - 50)	24.6	(8.2 - 47.2)
	Total	**80**	**(30 - 180)**	**100.0**	
Rented	None	370	(260 - 530)	21.1	(15.9 - 26.9)
	1–10	160	(100 - 230)	8.9	(6.3 - 12.4)
	More than 10	1 240	(890 - 1 670)	70.0	(62.9 - 76.4)
	Total	**1 780**	**(1 330 - 2 340)**	**100.0**	
Other	None	50	(0 - 440)	40.5	(0.0 - 97.5)
	1–10	10	(0 - 40)	9.6	(0.3 - 48.2)
	More than 10	60	(10 - 150)	49.9	(0.0 - 97.5)
	Total	**110**	**(20 - 490)**	**100.0**	
Not stated	None	10	(0 - 150)	46.8	(0.0 - 100.0)
	1–10	10	(0 - 50)	53.2	(0.0 - 100.0)
	More than 10	0	(0 - 60)	0.0	(0.0 - 97.5)
	Total	**20**	**(0 - 120)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	460	(270 - 720)	23.1	(15.2 - 32.1)
	1–10	210	(130 - 340)	10.7	(6.8 - 15.3)
	More than 10	1 320	(960 - 1 750)	66.2	(56.2 - 75.0)
	Total	**2 000**	**(1 490 - 2 610)**	**100.0**	
			LORI — Extreme		
Owned or being paid off	None	10	(0 - 40)	26.6	(0.0 - 100.0)
	1–10	0	(0 - 60)	0.0	(0.0 - 97.5)
	More than 10	10	(0 - 360)	73.4	(0.0 - 100.0)
	Total	**20**	**(0 - 270)**	**100.0**	
Rented	None	250	(60 - 830)	45.9	(9.9 - 81.6)
	1–10	20	(0 - 190)	3.9	(0.2 - 30.2)
	More than 10	270	(80 - 710)	50.2	(15.7 - 84.3)
	Total	**540**	**(170 - 1 190)**	**100.0**	
Other	None	50	(0 - 230)	33.1	(0.6 - 80.6)
	1–10	10	(0 - 180)	6.1	(0.0 - 70.8)
	More than 10	90	(10 - 290)	60.8	(6.8 - 93.2)
	Total	**140**	**(20 - 500)**	**100.0**	
Not stated	None	**20**	**(0 - 840)**	**100.0**	**(15.8 - 100.0)**
	1–10	0	(0 - 60)	0.0	(0.0 - 84.2)
	More than 10	0	(0 - 60)	0.0	(0.0 - 84.2)
	Total	**20**	**(0 - 840)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	320	(60 - 900)	44.7	(13.7 - 78.8)
	1–10	30	(0 - 210)	4.1	(0.1 - 24.9)
	More than 10	370	(130 - 910)	51.2	(18.7 - 81.3)
	Total	**720**	**(260 - 1 510)**	**100.0**	

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TABLE 4.75 (continued): STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY HOME OWNERSHIP AND LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION (LORI)

Home ownership	Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Western Australia			
Owned or being paid off	None	2 190	(1 810 - 2 600)	47.2	(40.8 - 53.4)
	1–10	1 040	(820 - 1 280)	22.4	(18.0 - 27.2)
	More than 10	1 410	(1 110 - 1 800)	30.5	(24.7 - 36.7)
	Total	**4 640**	**(4 090 - 5 210)**	**100.0**	
Rented	None	4 050	(3 590 - 4 550)	28.7	(25.6 - 32.0)
	1–10	2 560	(2 270 - 2 880)	18.2	(16.2 - 20.4)
	More than 10	7 470	(6 890 - 8 060)	53.1	(49.8 - 56.4)
	Total	**14 100**	**(13 400 - 14 700)**	**100.0**	
Other	None	250	(100 - 500)	39.3	(18.8 - 59.4)
	1–10	80	(20 - 210)	12.6	(3.3 - 27.5)
	More than 10	300	(160 - 500)	48.1	(29.4 - 67.5)
	Total	**630**	**(370 - 1 010)**	**100.0**	
Not stated	None	80	(0 - 490)	32.8	(0.8 - 90.6)
	1–10	30	(10 - 60)	10.9	(2.5 - 31.2)
	More than 10	140	(80 - 200)	56.3	(14.7 - 94.7)
	Total	**240**	**(90 - 480)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
	1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
	More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
	Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.76: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY HOUSEHOLD OCCUPANCY LEVEL

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
	Household occupancy level — Low			
None	5 170	(4 650 - 5 720)	35.8	(32.5 - 39.2)
1–10	2 920	(2 580 - 3 290)	20.3	(17.9 - 22.7)
More than 10	6 330	(5 810 - 6 880)	43.9	(40.6 - 47.3)
Total	**14 400**	**(13 800 - 15 000)**	**100.0**	
	Household occupancy level — High			
None	1 310	(1 020 - 1 640)	26.6	(21.7 - 32.3)
1–10	760	(630 - 910)	15.4	(12.7 - 18.4)
More than 10	2 850	(2 410 - 3 330)	58.0	(52.3 - 63.4)
Total	**4 920**	**(4 360 - 5 520)**	**100.0**	
	Household occupancy level — Not stated			
None	80	(0 - 490)	32.8	(0.8 - 90.6)
1–10	30	(10 - 60)	10.9	(2.5 - 31.2)
More than 10	140	(80 - 200)	56.3	(14.7 - 94.7)
Total	**240**	**(90 - 480)**	**100.0**	
	Total			
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.77: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF HAVING MORE THAN 10 DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC AND FAMILY LEVEL FACTORS

Parameter	More than 10 days of unexplained absence		
	Significance (p value)	*Odds Ratio*	*95% CI*
Sex			
Male		1.00	
Female	0.724	0.96	(0.77 - 1.20)
Age group			
4–7 years		1.00	
8–11 years	0.236	0.85	(0.65 - 1.11)
12–14 years	0.905	0.98	(0.70 - 1.37)
15–17 years	0.807	1.06	(0.66 - 1.69)
Level of Relative Isolation			
None		1.00	
Low	0.063	1.41	(0.98 - 2.03)
Moderate	< 0.001	2.75	(1.72 - 4.38)
High	0.002	2.64	(1.44 - 4.85)
Extreme	0.077	1.88	(0.94 - 3.77)
Family care arrangement			
Both original parents		1.00	
Sole parent	0.063	1.29	(0.99 - 1.69)
One original parent and new partner	0.457	0.85	(0.55 - 1.31)
Aunts and uncles	0.021	1.89	(1.10 - 3.26)
Grandparents	0.972	0.99	(0.57 - 1.73)
Other	0.039	0.42	(0.18 - 0.96)
Home ownership			
Owned or being paid off		1.00	
Rented	< 0.001	2.43	(1.79 - 3.29)
Other	0.096	1.82	(0.90 - 3.69)
Not stated	0.026	1.86	(1.08 - 3.21)
Number of life stress events experienced by family in the last 12 months			
0–2		1.00	
3–4	0.032	1.42	(1.03 - 1.95)
5–6	0.007	1.56	(1.13 - 2.15)
7–14	< 0.001	2.41	(1.72 - 3.40)
Not stated	0.026	1.86	(1.08 - 3.21)
Number of homes lived in since birth			
1–4		1.00	
5 or more	< 0.001	0.64	(0.50 - 0.83)

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TABLE 4.78: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY CATEGORY OF SCHOOL

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Government school		
None	4 980	(4 510 - 5 480)	30.5	(27.7 - 33.4)
1–10	3 410	(3 040 - 3 800)	20.9	(18.7 - 23.2)
More than 10	7 950	(7 340 - 8 570)	48.6	(45.4 - 51.8)
Total	**16 300**	**(15 700 - 16 900)**	**100.0**	
		Catholic school		
None	1 030	(710 - 1 420)	42.6	(32.7 - 52.4)
1–10	250	(190 - 330)	10.4	(7.7 - 13.8)
More than 10	1 140	(870 - 1 490)	47.0	(37.5 - 56.0)
Total	**2 430**	**(1 960 - 2 960)**	**100.0**	
		Independent school		
None	310	(130 - 580)	70.8	(48.9 - 87.4)
1–10	30	(10 - 80)	7.2	(1.4 - 18.3)
More than 10	100	(50 - 170)	22.0	(9.9 - 42.3)
Total	**440**	**(240 - 710)**	**100.0**	
		Aboriginal community governed school		
None	230	(60 - 530)	61.7	(30.8 - 89.1)
1–10	10	(0 - 30)	2.6	(0.3 - 9.4)
More than 10	130	(40 - 290)	35.7	(9.9 - 65.1)
Total	**370**	**(140 - 710)**	**100.0**	
		Total		
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.79: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY PROPORTION OF STUDENTS AT THE SCHOOL WHO ARE ABORIGINAL

Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		Less than 10%		
None	3 090	(2 630 - 3 570)	41.8	(36.6 - 47.1)
1–10	1 640	(1 360 - 1 970)	22.2	(18.6 - 26.2)
More than 10	2 650	(2 260 - 3 100)	35.9	(30.9 - 41.1)
Total	**7 380**	**(6 820 - 7 940)**	**100.0**	
		10%–90%		
None	2 610	(2 250 - 3 020)	28.0	(24.6 - 31.6)
1–10	1 820	(1 570 - 2 090)	19.5	(17.0 - 22.2)
More than 10	4 880	(4 340 - 5 470)	52.4	(48.5 - 56.4)
Total	**9 310**	**(8 600 - 10 100)**	**100.0**	
		90% or more		
None	860	(560 - 1 250)	29.8	(21.2 - 40.0)
1–10	250	(160 - 360)	8.5	(5.7 - 12.2)
More than 10	1 790	(1 380 - 2 260)	61.7	(52.6 - 70.4)
Total	**2 900**	**(2 320 - 3 540)**	**100.0**	
		Total		
None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.80: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY WHETHER THERE IS AN ABORIGINAL STUDENT SUPPORT AND PARENT AWARENESS COMMITTEE (ASSPA) AT THE SCHOOL, AND LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION (LORI)

Is there an ASSPA?	Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		LORI — None			
Yes	None	2 090	(1 780 - 2 430)	36.1	(31.1 - 41.5)
	1–10	1 330	(1 110 - 1 570)	22.8	(19.1 - 26.8)
	More than 10	2 380	(2 030 - 2 780)	41.1	(35.6 - 46.9)
	Total	**5 800**	**(5 450 - 6 170)**	**100.0**	
No	None	700	(450 - 1 040)	56.5	(42.2 - 71.7)
	1–10	270	(140 - 460)	21.8	(12.5 - 35.3)
	More than 10	270	(160 - 460)	21.8	(11.9 - 33.7)
	Total	**1 250**	**(930 - 1 640)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	2 800	(2 440 - 3 170)	39.7	(34.5 - 44.8)
	1–10	1 600	(1 350 - 1 860)	22.7	(19.1 - 26.4)
	More than 10	2 660	(2 310 - 3 040)	37.7	(32.7 - 43.1)
	Total	**7 050**	**(6 900 - 7 200)**	**100.0**	
		LORI — Low			
Yes	None	1 590	(1 310 - 1 900)	32.0	(27.0 - 37.4)
	1–10	1 090	(880 - 1 340)	21.9	(17.9 - 26.2)
	More than 10	2 300	(1 950 - 2 660)	46.1	(40.6 - 51.9)
	Total	**4 980**	**(4 530 - 5 450)**	**100.0**	
No	None	130	(40 - 300)	55.8	(18.4 - 90.1)
	1–10	30	(0 - 200)	14.2	(0.4 - 57.9)
	More than 10	70	(10 - 260)	30.0	(0.5 - 71.6)
	Total	**230**	**(80 - 470)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	1 720	(1 430 - 2 030)	33.0	(28.0 - 38.4)
	1–10	1 120	(900 - 1 370)	21.5	(17.5 - 25.8)
	More than 10	2 360	(2 020 - 2 740)	45.4	(39.9 - 51.1)
	Total	**5 200**	**(4 770 - 5 660)**	**100.0**	
		LORI — Moderate			
Yes	None	1 250	(980 - 1 540)	27.2	(22.7 - 32.2)
	1–10	750	(590 - 920)	16.3	(13.4 - 19.6)
	More than 10	2 590	(2 160 - 3 090)	56.5	(51.2 - 61.9)
	Total	**4 590**	**(3 960 - 5 270)**	**100.0**	
No	None	20	(10 - 30)	47.4	(1.3 - 98.7)
	1–10	0	(0 - 60)	0.0	(0.0 - 84.2)
	More than 10	20	(0 - 50)	52.6	(1.3 - 98.7)
	Total	**30**	**(10 - 70)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	1 260	(1 000 - 1 560)	27.3	(22.7 - 32.1)
	1–10	750	(590 - 920)	16.1	(13.2 - 19.3)
	More than 10	2 610	(2 170 - 3 100)	56.5	(51.2 - 61.8)
	Total	**4 620**	**(3 980 - 5 300)**	**100.0**	
		LORI — High			
Yes	None	460	(270 - 720)	23.1	(15.2 - 32.1)
	1–10	210	(130 - 340)	10.7	(6.8 - 15.3)
	More than 10	1 320	(960 - 1 750)	66.2	(56.2 - 75.0)
	Total	**2 000**	**(1 490 - 2 610)**	**100.0**	
No	None	0	(0 - 60)		
	1–10	0	(0 - 60)		
	More than 10	0	(0 - 60)		
	Total	**0**	**(0 - 60)**		
Total	None	460	(270 - 720)	23.1	(15.2 - 32.1)
	1–10	210	(130 - 340)	10.7	(6.8 - 15.3)
	More than 10	1 320	(960 - 1 750)	66.2	(56.2 - 75.0)
	Total	**2 000**	**(1 490 - 2 610)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.80 *(continued)*: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY WHETHER THERE IS AN ABORIGINAL STUDENT SUPPORT AND PARENT AWARENESS COMMITTEE (ASSPA) AT THE SCHOOL, AND LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION (LORI)

Is there an ASSPA?	Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		LORI — Extreme			
Yes	None	320	(60 - 900)	44.7	(13.7 - 78.8)
	1–10	30	(0 - 210)	4.1	(0.1 - 24.9)
	More than 10	370	(130 - 910)	51.2	(18.7 - 81.3)
	Total	**720**	**(260 - 1 510)**	**100.0**	
No	None	0	(0 - 60)		
	1–10	0	(0 - 60)		
	More than 10	0	(0 - 60)		
	Total	**0**	**(0 - 60)**		
Total	None	320	(60 - 900)	44.7	(13.7 - 78.8)
	1–10	30	(0 - 210)	4.1	(0.1 - 24.9)
	More than 10	370	(130 - 910)	51.2	(18.7 - 81.3)
	Total	**720**	**(260 - 1 510)**	**100.0**	
		Western Australia			
Yes	None	5 720	(5 170 - 6 290)	31.6	(28.7 - 34.7)
	1–10	3 400	(3 050 - 3 770)	18.8	(16.9 - 20.8)
	More than 10	8 970	(8 370 - 9 570)	49.6	(46.4 - 52.7)
	Total	**18 100**	**(17 700 - 18 400)**	**100.0**	
No	None	840	(560 - 1 190)	56.2	(43.2 - 69.8)
	1–10	300	(160 - 500)	20.1	(11.7 - 32.1)
	More than 10	360	(210 - 580)	23.7	(14.5 - 36.4)
	Total	**1 500**	**(1 140 - 1 930)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
	1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
	More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
	Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.81: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY WHETHER THERE IS AN ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER EDUCATION OFFICER (AIEO) AT THE SCHOOL, AND LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION (LORI)

Is there an AIEO?	Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		LORI — None			
Yes	None	1 430	(1 180 - 1 720)	33.6	(28.1 - 39.7)
	1–10	930	(740 - 1 150)	21.9	(17.6 - 26.5)
	More than 10	1 890	(1 570 - 2 270)	44.5	(38.1 - 50.8)
	Total	**4 260**	**(3 850 - 4 680)**	**100.0**	
No	None	1 370	(1 060 - 1 710)	48.9	(39.9 - 58.4)
	1–10	660	(480 - 880)	23.8	(17.6 - 31.0)
	More than 10	760	(530 - 1 070)	27.3	(19.2 - 35.8)
	Total	**2 790**	**(2 390 - 3 210)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	2 800	(2 440 - 3 170)	39.7	(34.5 - 44.8)
	1–10	1 600	(1 350 - 1 860)	22.7	(19.1 - 26.4)
	More than 10	2 660	(2 310 - 3 040)	37.7	(32.7 - 43.1)
	Total	**7 050**	**(6 900 - 7 200)**	**100.0**	

TABLE 4.81 *(continued)*: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY WHETHER THERE IS AN ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER EDUCATIONAL OFFICER (AIEO) AT THE SCHOOL, AND LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION (LORI)

Is there an AIEO?	Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		LORI — Low			
Yes	None	1 170	(930 - 1 430)	29.5	(24.2 - 35.0)
	1–10	870	(680 - 1 090)	22.0	(17.8 - 26.6)
	More than 10	1 920	(1 620 - 2 260)	48.5	(42.5 - 54.4)
	Total	**3 950**	**(3 510 - 4 420)**	**100.0**	
No	None	550	(360 - 790)	44.2	(31.5 - 57.6)
	1–10	250	(130 - 410)	20.0	(11.4 - 31.3)
	More than 10	450	(280 - 710)	35.9	(22.7 - 49.4)
	Total	**1 250**	**(940 - 1 610)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	1 720	(1 430 - 2 030)	33.0	(28.0 - 38.4)
	1–10	1 120	(900 - 1 370)	21.5	(17.5 - 25.8)
	More than 10	2 360	(2 020 - 2 740)	45.4	(39.9 - 51.1)
	Total	**5 200**	**(4 770 - 5 660)**	**100.0**	
		LORI — Moderate			
Yes	None	1 130	(900 - 1 400)	26.9	(22.3 - 31.9)
	1–10	670	(520 - 840)	15.9	(12.7 - 19.4)
	More than 10	2 390	(1 970 - 2 860)	57.1	(51.5 - 62.4)
	Total	**4 180**	**(3 580 - 4 820)**	**100.0**	
No	None	140	(90 - 210)	31.1	(22.0 - 42.2)
	1–10	80	(50 - 130)	18.2	(11.4 - 27.1)
	More than 10	220	(140 - 320)	50.8	(39.4 - 63.1)
	Total	**440**	**(310 - 610)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	1 260	(1 000 - 1 560)	27.3	(22.7 - 32.1)
	1–10	750	(590 - 920)	16.1	(13.2 - 19.3)
	More than 10	2 610	(2 170 - 3 100)	56.5	(51.2 - 61.8)
	Total	**4 620**	**(3 980 - 5 300)**	**100.0**	
		LORI — High			
Yes	None	400	(230 - 690)	22.5	(14.4 - 33.4)
	1–10	210	(120 - 320)	11.5	(7.2 - 16.7)
	More than 10	1 190	(840 - 1 590)	66.0	(54.6 - 75.4)
	Total	**1 800**	**(1 320 - 2 400)**	**100.0**	
No	None	60	(30 - 100)	28.4	(15.9 - 47.0)
	1–10	10	(0 - 30)	3.4	(0.1 - 18.3)
	More than 10	140	(60 - 240)	68.2	(51.9 - 81.9)
	Total	**200**	**(100 - 350)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	460	(270 - 720)	23.1	(15.2 - 32.1)
	1–10	210	(130 - 340)	10.7	(6.8 - 15.3)
	More than 10	1 320	(960 - 1 750)	66.2	(56.2 - 75.0)
	Total	**2 000**	**(1 490 - 2 610)**	**100.0**	

Continued . . . .

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TABLE 4.81 *(continued)*: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — NUMBER OF DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, BY WHETHER THERE IS AN ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER EDUCATION OFFICER (AIEO) AT THE SCHOOL, AND LEVEL OF RELATIVE ISOLATION (LORI)

Is there an AIEO?	Days of unexplained absence	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
		LORI — Extreme			
Yes	None	170	(20 - 730)	34.7	(3.7 - 71.0)
	1–10	20	(0 - 150)	3.6	(0.1 - 27.3)
	More than 10	310	(80 - 710)	61.7	(24.5 - 91.5)
	Total	**500**	**(130 - 1 170)**	**100.0**	
No	None	150	(0 - 620)	66.9	(2.5 - 100.0)
	1–10	10	(0 - 200)	5.1	(0.0 - 60.2)
	More than 10	60	(0 - 620)	28.0	(1.3 - 98.7)
	Total	**220**	**(30 - 920)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	320	(60 - 900)	44.7	(13.7 - 78.8)
	1–10	30	(0 - 210)	4.1	(0.1 - 24.9)
	More than 10	370	(130 - 910)	51.2	(18.7 - 81.3)
	Total	**720**	**(260 - 1 510)**	**100.0**	
		Western Australia			
Yes	None	4 300	(3 840 - 4 800)	29.3	(26.3 - 32.3)
	1–10	2 700	(2 380 - 3 030)	18.4	(16.3 - 20.6)
	More than 10	7 690	(7 110 - 8 290)	52.4	(49.1 - 55.7)
	Total	**14 700**	**(14 100 - 15 300)**	**100.0**	
No	None	2 260	(1 830 - 2 760)	46.1	(39.2 - 53.4)
	1–10	1 010	(790 - 1 290)	20.6	(16.2 - 25.7)
	More than 10	1 630	(1 270 - 2 050)	33.3	(27.0 - 40.1)
	Total	**4 900**	**(4 290 - 5 530)**	**100.0**	
Total	None	6 560	(5 980 - 7 150)	33.5	(30.5 - 36.5)
	1–10	3 710	(3 330 - 4 100)	18.9	(17.0 - 20.9)
	More than 10	9 320	(8 720 - 9 910)	47.6	(44.5 - 50.6)
	Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

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TABLE 4.82: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF STUDENTS HAVING MORE THAN 10 DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC AND SCHOOL LEVEL FACTORS

Parameter	More than 10 days of unexplained absence		
	Significance (p value)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Sex			
Male		1.00	
Female	0.258	1.14	(0.91 - 1.44)
Age group			
4–7 years		1.00	
8–11 years	0.047	0.76	(0.58 - 1.00)
12–14 years	0.128	0.77	(0.55 - 1.08)
15–17 years	0.897	0.97	(0.61 - 1.55)
Level of Relative Isolation			
None		1.00	
Low	0.508	1.13	(0.78 - 1.64)
Moderate	0.009	1.97	(1.19 - 3.27)
High	0.142	1.71	(0.84 - 3.52)
Extreme	0.936	1.04	(0.42 - 2.55)
Category of school			
Government school		1.00	
Catholic school	0.005	0.47	(0.27 - 0.80)
Independent school	0.442	0.76	(0.37 - 1.54)
Aboriginal community governed school	0.154	0.44	(0.14 - 1.36)
Ratio of Aboriginal students in student population			
Less than 10%		1.00	
10%–90%	0.016	1.67	(1.10 - 2.52)
90% or more	0.006	3.02	(1.38 - 6.59)
Otitis Media Professional Development implemented			
No	0.016	1.67	(1.10 - 2.54)
Yes		1.00	
Not stated	0.413	1.23	(0.75 - 2.04)
Principal's assessment of adequacy of Aboriginal parents' involvement in school activities			
Inadequate	0.081	0.45	(0.19 - 1.10)
2	0.270	0.63	(0.28 - 1.43)
3	0.015	0.36	(0.16 - 0.81)
4	0.096	0.49	(0.21 - 1.13)
5	0.058	0.46	(0.20 - 1.03)
6	< 0.001	0.20	(0.08 - 0.51)
Fully adequate		1.00	
Does the school have an AIEO?			
Yes		1.00	
No	0.001	0.53	(0.36 - 0.78)
Student removed from class due to misbehaviour this year			
Never		1.00	
Rarely	0.002	1.73	(1.23 - 2.44)
Sometimes	0.009	1.71	(1.14 - 2.55)
Frequently	0.653	1.16	(0.60 - 2.26)
Student suspended from school this year			
No		1.00	
Yes	0.022	1.78	(1.09 - 2.92)

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TABLE 4.83: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF STUDENTS HAVING MORE THAN 10 DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC, STUDENT, CARER, FAMILY AND SCHOOL LEVEL FACTORS

Parameter	More than 10 days of unexplained absence		
	Significance (p value)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Sex			
Male		1.00	
Female	0.413	1.10	(0.87 - 1.40)
Age group			
4–7 years		1.00	
8–11 years	0.173	0.81	(0.60 - 1.09)
12–14 years	0.121	0.58	(0.29 - 1.16)
15–17 years	0.258	0.62	(0.27 - 1.42)
Level of Relative Isolation			
None		1.00	
Low	0.390	1.17	(0.82 - 1.66)
Moderate	0.062	1.56	(0.98 - 2.47)
High	0.508	1.24	(0.66 - 2.34)
Extreme	0.124	0.51	(0.22 - 1.20)
Main language spoken in the playground			
English		1.00	
Aboriginal English	0.001	1.95	(1.31 - 2.91)
Kriol/Creole	0.264	1.71	(0.67 - 4.41)
Aboriginal language	0.013	3.42	(1.29 - 9.06)
Other	0.512	1.99	(0.30 - 15.50)
Who usually helps with school work at home			
No-one	0.032	1.66	(1.04 - 2.64)
No homework given	0.402	1.16	(0.82 - 1.65)
Someone from this house		1.00	
Another person	0.344	0.74	(0.39 - 1.38)
Not stated	0.854	1.13	(0.31 - 4.14)
Has trouble getting enough sleep			
No		1.00	
Yes	< 0.001	2.13	(1.43 - 3.18)
Overall academic performance			
Low	< 0.001	1.81	(1.41 - 2.33)
Average or above average		1.00	
Primary carer forcibly separated from natural family			
Not separated		1.00	
Separated	0.013	1.64	(1.11 - 2.42)
Not known	0.529	1.24	(0.63 - 2.43)
Not applicable	0.010	0.60	(0.41 - 0.88)
Primary carer level of education			
Did not attend school	0.886	0.94	(0.41 - 2.15)
1–9 years education	0.573	0.91	(0.66 - 1.26)
10 years education		1.00	
11–12 years education	0.004	0.64	(0.48 - 0.87)
13+ years education	0.003	0.41	(0.22 - 0.74)
Not stated	0.190	1.16	(0.93 - 1.45)
Primary carer labour force status			
Unemployed	0.001	1.96	(1.30 - 2.96)
Employed		1.00	
Not in labour force	< 0.001	1.82	(1.39 - 2.39)
Not stated	0.190	1.16	(0.93 - 1.45)

TABLE 4.83 *(continued)*: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — LIKELIHOOD OF STUDENTS HAVING MORE THAN 10 DAYS OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE, ASSOCIATED WITH DEMOGRAPHIC, STUDENT, CARER, FAMILY AND SCHOOL LEVEL FACTORS

Parameter	More than 10 days of unexplained absence		
	Significance (p value)	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Primary carer ever arrested or charged with an offence			
No		1.00	
Yes	< 0.001	1.73	(1.34 - 2.23)
Not stated	0.190	1.16	(0.93 - 1.45)
Primary carer attended an Aboriginal funeral in the last 6 months			
No		1.00	
Yes	0.039	1.37	(1.02 - 1.84)
Not stated	0.190	1.16	(0.93 - 1.45)
Home ownership			
Owned or being paid off		1.00	
Rented	0.001	1.68	(1.23 - 2.30)
Other	0.381	1.37	(0.68 - 2.79)
Not stated	0.190	1.16	(0.93 - 1.45)
Number of life stress events experienced by family in the last 12 months			
0–2		1.00	
3–4	0.289	1.19	(0.86 - 1.66)
5–6	0.182	1.26	(0.90 - 1.76)
7–14	0.011	1.61	(1.12 - 2.32)
Not stated	0.190	1.16	(0.93 - 1.45)
How often someone looks at a book with the child (children aged 4–11 years only)			
Several times a day	0.113	1.48	(0.91 - 2.41)
Once a day		1.00	
2–3 times a week	0.031	1.47	(1.04 - 2.08)
Hardly ever	0.016	1.65	(1.10 - 2.48)
Not applicable	0.014	2.50	(1.20 - 5.18)
Does the school have an AIEO?			
Yes		1.00	
No	< 0.001	0.57	(0.41 - 0.78)
Number of homes lived in since birth			
1–4		1.00	
5 or more	0.010	0.70	(0.53 - 0.92)

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IMPACT OF LOW LEVELS OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

TABLE 4.84: STUDENTS AGED 4–17 YEARS — OVERALL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, BY DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL

Overall academic performance	Number	95% CI	%	95% CI
26 days or more				
Low	6 630	(6 080 - 7 180)	67.5	(63.7 - 71.2)
Average or above average	3 200	(2 800 - 3 620)	32.5	(28.8 - 36.3)
Total	**9 830**	**(9 200 - 10 400)**	**100.0**	
Less than 26 days				
Low	4 630	(4 180 - 5 100)	47.5	(43.7 - 51.3)
Average or above average	5 130	(4 660 - 5 620)	52.5	(48.7 - 56.3)
Total	**9 760**	**(9 200 - 10 300)**	**100.0**	
Total				
Low	11 300	(10 700 - 11 800)	57.5	(54.7 - 60.3)
Average or above average	8 330	(7 790 - 8 870)	42.5	(39.7 - 45.3)
Total	**19 600**	**(19 500 - 19 600)**	**100.0**	

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