

A system of **PROGRAMS** and **SERVICES**

Meeting the needs of all students

Queensland's schooling system aims to meet the needs of all students from Prep to Year 12. This means building a strong system of options for children and young people who are at risk or disengaged.

Inclusive mainstream schooling

Safe, supportive and inclusive schools with high-quality curriculum and pedagogy are an essential component of a strong system.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to meeting the needs of any student. All schools need to provide differentiated responses to their students. Many students experience challenges at various junctures in their school life, and for most students, remaining at their school provides their best chance of success. Queensland state schools are resourced to provide a wide range of support, such as the Positive Behaviour for Learning approach and targeted interventions.

Furthermore, students are able to maintain peer relationships, transport arrangements, uninterrupted study and a sense of inclusion and connectedness with their school community. Additionally, mainstream schools, for the main part, achieve greatest economy of scale and are therefore more cost-efficient.

Some young people experience complex situations that warrant an alternative arrangement. The Department of Education works to minimise the need for this wherever possible, as mainstream schooling generally offers the best outcomes for young people. However, it is recognised that for a small number, alternative education will be their path through to Year 12 or equivalent.

Intervention models

Targeted, timely and sustained interventions play an important role in maximising engagement and outcomes.

Education professionals all know that prevention is better than intervention, but where this fails, early intervention is the key to success.

Across all education and training settings, some children and young people require intervention to support them to remain engaged in their education or training setting. Such interventions might include:

- ▶ individualised case management
- ▶ attendance improvement plans
- ▶ success coaches
- ▶ mentors
- ▶ behaviour support
- ▶ counselling
- ▶ welfare support (for example, bus fares, uniforms, food)
- ▶ referral to health services, or other services
- ▶ complex case management panels.

Intervention is everybody's business, and everyone in a school plays a role in supporting young people in need of intervention. The most effective interventions are delivered by a cohesive team, under the leadership or guidance of someone skilled and experienced in intervention and in assessment of individual student needs. In many cases, multidisciplinary teams are required to provide the necessary professional support including psychological, behavioural and educational expertise, and cross-agency collaboration or referrals are considered as part of an intervention plan wherever necessary.

Re-engagement approaches

Where students become disengaged from education or training, a concerted effort is made to ensure they are supported to re-engage.

This may occur through a range of approaches. In many instances, where enrolling schools become aware of prolonged student attendance issues, they will make every effort to re-engage the student. This occurs through case management back into the school setting from which the student disengaged, or referral to another eligible option.¹

In some cases, other agencies may refer the student to the Department of Education regional office, or the regional office will seek out young people not attending schooling. Officers within the region will take a direct role in supporting disengaged young people and managing their positive transitions. In addition, regional Youth Engagement Hubs work with schools and other agencies to support students to re-engage in education, training or employment, and collaborate with other agencies that may be working with those young people.

1. Parents may be prosecuted if they do not fulfil their legal obligations in regard to enrolment and attendance of their child at school, or participation in an eligible option in accordance with the Education (General Provisions) Act (2006).



Focussing on the retention of all students requires supporting those with complex needs or challenging behaviours.

Alternative education pathways

It is vital to maintain the right balance of learning pathways and options. School principals should focus on the retention of their students, including those with more complex needs or challenging behaviours.

At the same time, it is important that options are available for young people who cannot thrive in mainstream settings. In most cases, a principal's decision to refer a student to an alternative setting will only occur after there have been significant attempts to meet the student's needs, respectful consultation with the student and their parents/carers, and careful consideration of the alternative options.

Alternative options may include, but are not confined to:

- ▶ non-state special assistance schools
- ▶ schools of distance education (where specialist programs are provided)
- ▶ programs funded through Skilling Queenslanders for Work for young people aged 15 or older and no longer at school:
 - Get Set for Work
 - Youth Skills
 - Ready for Work
 - Community Work Skills
 - Work Skills Traineeships.