

4.2 Student attendance

Key Facts:

In Australia in 2024:

- The attendance rate for students in Years 1–10 was 88.3%, down slightly from 88.6% in 2023.
- The student attendance level (the percentage of students with attendance at or above 90 per cent) was 59.8%, down from 61.6% in 2023.
- Attendance rates and attendance levels:
 - increased with the level of socio-educational advantage of the school
 - were higher among students in major cities than in remote areas
 - were lower among students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds than for non-Indigenous students.
- While the gap between attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students increased slightly (0.2 percentage points) between 2023 and 2024, the gap in attendance levels narrowed by 0.7 percentage points.
- Student attendance rates and attendance levels have not returned to their pre-COVID levels. In 2019, national attendance rates were 91.4% and attendance levels 73.1%.

Like enrolment rates, the national KPMs for attendance in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2020 relate to students in the compulsory years of schooling. However, attendance measures are specified in terms of school year (Years 1–10) rather than by student age. Where KPM 1(a) reports on the proportion of children enrolled in school, KPMs 1(b) and 1(c) report on the proportion of available time that students spend at school once enrolled.

Key Performance Measure 1(b)

Attendance rate: The number of actual full-time equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in Years 1–10 in Semester 1 as a percentage of the total possible number of student-days attended in Semester 1

Key Performance Measure 1(c)

Attendance level: The proportion of full-time students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is equal to or greater than 90 per cent

All school sectors in all states and territories use a common reference period – Semester 1 in each school year – for the collection of attendance data for national reporting. This is consistent with the [National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting](#), which came into operation for the 2014 data collection period and onwards. Data is available from 2014 for the attendance rate and from 2015 for the attendance level.¹

¹ NSW government sector implemented the national standards in 2018. Attendance rates for NSW and Australia for 2018 onward are not fully comparable to previous years, due to changes in the calculation method for NSW government schools in 2018.

Attendance rates

Table 4.2 reports KPM 1(b) by state and territory and school sector for 2024. The average school attendance rate for Years 1–10 across Australia in 2024 was 87.1% for government schools, 90.1% for Catholic schools, 91.0% for independent schools and 88.3% for schools overall.

Table 4.2: Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state/territory and school sector, Australia, 2024 (%)

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
Government	87.5	87.5	86.9	87.2	87.1	85.3	74.5	87.8	87.1
Catholic	90.3	89.8	90.3	90.1	90.8	89.0	80.8	88.9	90.1
Independent	90.9	91.5	90.6	91.1	91.6	90.5	84.2	90.5	91.0
All	88.6	88.6	88.1	88.4	88.4	86.8	76.7	88.6	88.3

Note: Excludes part-time students. For data definitions, see the National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

The average attendance rate for Years 1–10 in 2024 exceeded 85% in all states and territories except the NT, where, as in previous years, the much lower average attendance rate (58.3%) for the high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students led to an average rate for all students of 76.7%.

There was little difference in the national average attendance rate for girls (88.4%) and boys (88.2%) in 2024. Average attendance rates were higher in major cities (89.2%) than in remote areas (81.0%), and lowest in very remote areas (65.8%).² As in previous years, a common characteristic across all states and territories was lower average attendance rates in Years 7–10 than in Years 1–6. At the national level in 2024, the average attendance rate for Years 7–10 was 85.9% compared with 90.0% for Years 1–6.

Table 4.3 reports KPM 1(b) nationally, by school sector, for 2014–2024. After a 4.4 percentage point decrease from 2021 to 2022 – which was a result of the impact of the COVID-19 Omicron variant, high Influenza season outbreaks and floods in certain regions across Australia – student attendance rates across Australia increased by 2.1 percentage points nationally in 2023. However, there was a small decline in national attendance rates (0.3 percentage points) in 2024, with declines of 0.4 percentage points in government schools and 0.2 percentage points in non-government schools.

While the national attendance rate was lower in 2024 than in 2023, some states reported higher attendance rates in 2024 than in 2023, with SA, WA and Tasmania all reporting increases of 0.4 percentage points. Declines in attendance rates in the other states ranged from 0.2 percentage points in Queensland to 0.6 percentage points in NSW and 0.7 percentage points in Victoria.

While student attendance rates were higher in 2024 than in 2022, they have not returned to pre-COVID levels. The [Key Performance Measures Dashboard](#) in the National Report on Schooling data portal reports a downward trend in student attendance rates over the period 2014–2024 of -0.5 percentage points per annum. Further analysis of reasons for absences is required to determine the reason for this decline.

² Student attendance rates disaggregated by year level, gender and geolocation are available in the National Report on Schooling data portal, Student Attendance data set.

Table 4.3: Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by school sector, Australia, 2014–2024 (%)

School sector	Government	Catholic	Independent	All
2014	91.9	93.9	94.3	92.7
2015	92.0	93.6	93.9	92.6
2016	91.9	93.6	93.8	92.5
2017	91.8	93.4	93.7	92.4
2018	91.3	92.9	93.5	91.9
2019	90.7	92.4	93.1	91.4
2020	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2021	90.0	92.3	93.0	90.9
2022	85.6	87.9	88.8	86.5
2023	87.5	90.3	91.2	88.6
2024	87.1	90.1	91.0	88.3

Notes:

See note for Table 4.2.

Attendance rates for NSW and Australia for 2018 onward are not fully comparable to previous years, due to changes in the calculation method for NSW government schools in 2018. Attendance data for 2021 to 2024 in NSW is not comparable with previous years due to changes to the attendance calculations for government schools to align with the revised 2020 National Standards for student attendance data reporting.

School attendance data for 2020 has not been published due to inconsistencies in the data as a result of the varying health advice and schooling arrangements across the country in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The inconsistencies in data collection have now been addressed through national agreement by schools and systems. However, the impact of the pandemic varies widely on the operation of individual schools.

Source: ACARA National Student Attendance Data Collection.

Table 4.4 shows comparative attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students in Years 1–10 by state and territory, and the gaps between them, in 2014, 2023 and 2024. In all three years, above average gaps in attendance rates were recorded in the NT, WA, and SA.

At a national level, the decline in attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between 2023 and 2024 (0.5 percentage points) was slightly larger than that for non-Indigenous students (0.3 percentage points). This increased the national gap in attendance rates by 0.2 percentage points to 12.3 percentage points in 2024. However, in SA and Tasmania, attendance rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased between 2023 and 2024, by 0.8 and 0.6 percentage points respectively. Declines in attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were largest in Victoria (1.6 percentage points) and NSW (1.0 percentage points).

Geographic differences were much more marked for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than for non-Indigenous students. For non-Indigenous students, the average attendance rate in 2024 was 89.6% in major cities, 88.2% in remote areas and 87.0% in very remote areas. Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, attendance rates were 79.9% in major cities, 66.6% in remote areas and 54.9% in very remote areas. This results in a difference of 9.7 percentage points between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students in major cities, 21.6 percentage points in remote areas, and 32.1 percentage points in very remote areas.³

³ National Report on Schooling data portal, Student Attendance data set.

Table 4.4: Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2014, 2023 and 2024 (%)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2014									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	87.5	86.8	85.2	81.1	77.4	88.5	70.2	85.2	83.5
Non-Indigenous students	93.9	93.1	92.8	92.6	92.7	92.4	90.9	92.5	93.2
All students	93.6	93	92.2	92.1	91.7	92.1	82.3	92.3	92.7
Gap: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous students (percentage points)	6.4	6.3	7.6	11.5	15.4	3.9	20.7	7.4	9.6
2023									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	80.8	81.0	79.1	75.0	70.1	80.9	59.0	79.4	77.4
Non-Indigenous students	89.9	89.5	89.3	88.8	89.4	87.1	89.2	89.1	89.5
All students	89.2	89.3	88.3	88.0	88.0	86.4	77.2	88.8	88.6
Gap: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous students (percentage points)	9.1	8.5	10.2	13.8	19.4	6.2	30.2	9.7	12.1
2024									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	79.8	79.4	78.7	75.8	69.8	81.5	58.3	79.2	76.9
Non-Indigenous students	89.4	88.8	89.1	89.2	89.9	87.5	89.2	88.9	89.2
All students	88.6	88.6	88.1	88.4	88.4	86.8	76.7	88.6	88.3
Gap: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous students (percentage points)	9.5	9.4	10.4	13.4	20.1	6.0	30.9	9.7	12.3
Change in gap 2014–23 (percentage points)	2.7	2.2	2.6	2.3	4.0	2.3	9.5	2.3	2.5
Change in gap 2014–24 (percentage points)	3.1	3.1	2.8	1.9	4.7	2.1	10.2	2.3	2.7
Change in gap 2023–24 (percentage points)	0.4	0.9	0.2	-0.4	0.7	-0.2	0.7	0.0	0.2

Note: See notes for Tables 4.2 and 4.3.

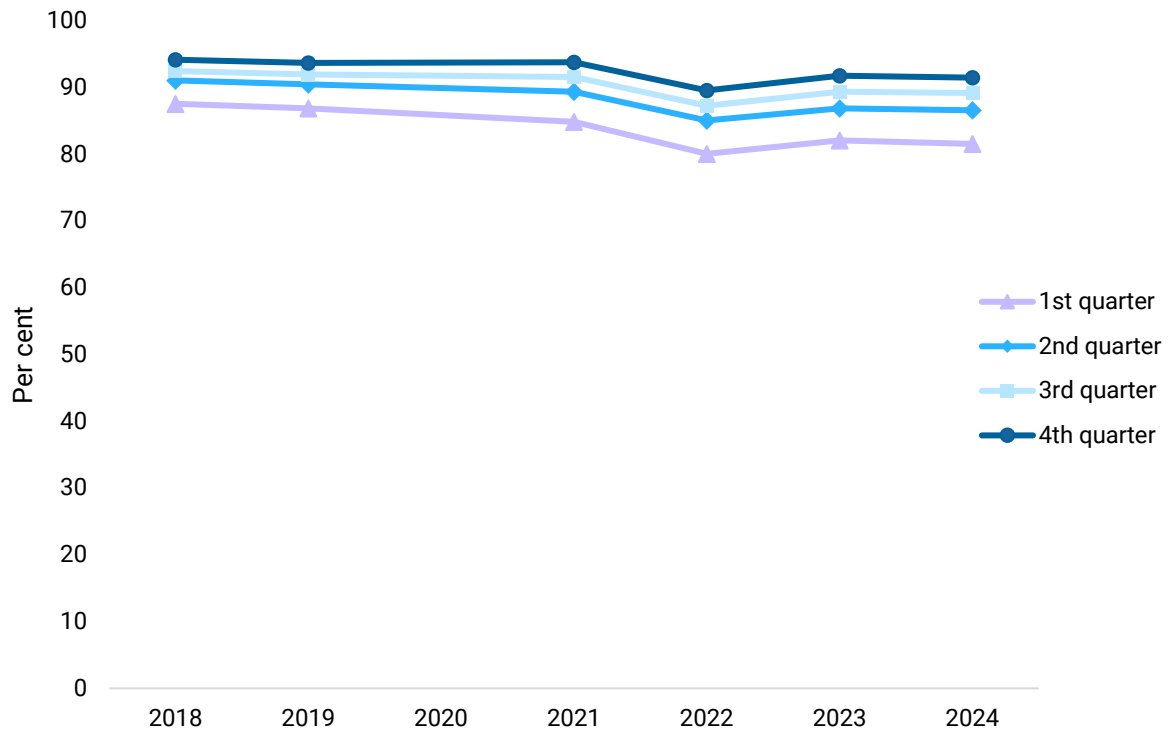
Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

The average attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was lower for older year groups. In 2024, the average attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 80.9% for Years 1–6, compared to 70.7% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 7–10.

Attendance rates in 2024 for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in remote and very remote areas were lower than for older students in other locations, with an average national attendance rate of only 39.2% for Year 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in very remote areas, compared to 79.0% for non-Indigenous Year 10 students in very remote areas. As a result, the attendance gap is larger at higher year levels in these areas.

Across all states and territories, attendance rates increased with socio-educational advantage (measured by the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)), as shown in Figure 4.1. In 2024, the average attendance rate for schools in the lowest ICSEA quarter was 81.6%, compared to 91.5% for students in schools in the highest ICSEA quarter. This difference was more pronounced in the NT than in other states and territories, with average attendance rates of 63.1% among students in schools in the lowest ICSEA quarter, compared to 91.5% for students in schools in the highest ICSEA quarter.

Figure 4.1: Student attendance rates, Years 1–10, by ICSEA quarter, Australia, 2018–2024 (%)



Note: See notes for Table 4.2.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

Attendance levels

The attendance level is a measure of the proportion of full-time students in Years 1–10, whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is greater than or equal to 90%. Several studies have shown that learning outcomes and educational achievement decline markedly when student attendance is below 90%.⁴ KPM 1(c) aims to identify populations or groups for whom attendance is over 90%. Conversely, it identifies groups whose lower levels of attendance may put them at a disadvantage.

Table 4.5 shows KPM 1(c) by state and territory, by school sector, for 2024.

Table 4.5: Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90%, by state and territory and school sector, Australia, 2024 (%); Change 2023–2024 (percentage points)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2024									
Government	55.8	56.4	55.6	58.4	59.6	53.7	41.3	56.8	56.3
Catholic	63.8	62.6	64.8	63.8	69.0	60.4	44.8	58.4	63.8
Independent	67.8	70.3	67.2	68.8	71.7	67.5	55.9	65.3	68.6
All	59.5	59.7	59.1	61.3	63.2	57.1	43.9	58.8	59.8
Change 2023–2024									
Government	-4.1	-5.7	-0.5	2.1	2.4	3.1	-0.3	0.3	-2.3
Catholic	-2.1	-2.4	-1.3	0.4	2.5	2.1	0.0	-1.9	-1.4
Independent	-3.1	-0.3	-1.7	0.9	3.0	3.4	-0.7	-2.8	-1.0
All	-3.5	-4.3	-0.8	1.6	2.6	3.1	-0.3	-0.7	-1.8

Note: See notes for Tables 4.2 and 4.3.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

In 2024, 59.8% of Australian students in Years 1–10 attended school for at least 90% of school days, down 1.8 percentage points from 61.6% in 2023. Attendance levels declined across all school sectors, with larger declines for government schools (2.3 percentage points) than non-government schools (1.4 percentage points in Catholic schools and 1.0 percentage point in Independent schools).

As was the case for attendance rates, there were increases in attendance levels in SA (1.6 percentage points), WA (2.6 percentage points) and Tasmania (3.1 percentage points) and declines for all other states. The largest declines in attendance rates were in NSW (3.5 percentage points) and Victoria (4.3 percentage points), with larger declines for government schools than for non-government schools in these states.

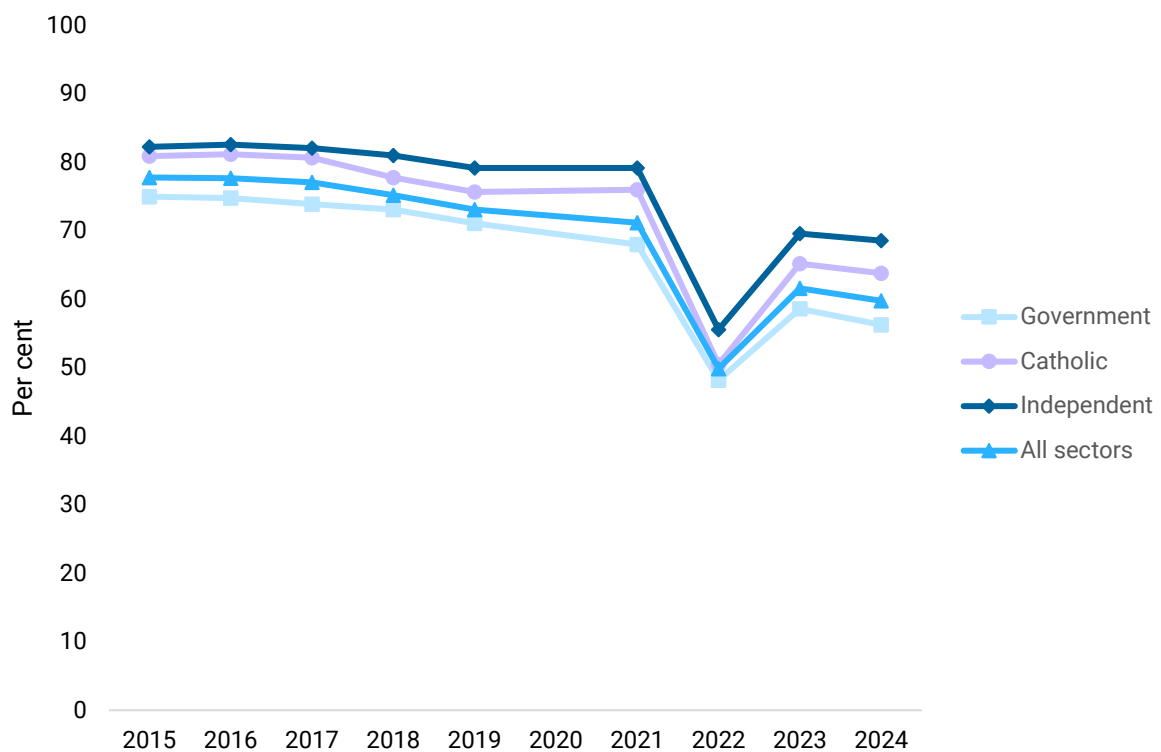
In SA, increases in attendance levels were larger for government schools than for non-government schools; and in the ACT there was a small increase in attendance levels in government schools and declines in attendance levels in non-government schools.

⁴ For example, Hancock, K.J., Shepherd, C., Lawrence, D., & Zubrick, S. (2013), Student Attendance and Educational Outcomes: Every day counts, Telethon Institute for Child Health Research.

The decline in attendance levels follows a significant increase in 2023, after a substantial drop in 2022, as shown in Figure 4.2. It is likely that the decline in 2022 resulted from the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on school operations in that year. This included public health advice that students with cold and flu symptoms should not attend school.

As was the case for student attendance rates, student attendance levels in 2024 are still lower than pre-COVID levels. The Key Performance Measures Dashboard in the National Report on Schooling data portal reports a downward trend in student attendance levels over the period 2018–2024 of -3.2 percentage points per annum. The lower attendance rates in 2024 compared to 2021 and previous years can thus be seen as consistent with a long-term trend.

Figure 4.2: Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90%, by school sector, Australia, 2015–2024 (%)



Notes:

See notes for Table 4.2.

For NSW government schools, attendance level data is only available from 2018.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

KPM 1(c) is intended to monitor progress in Australia’s priority to close the gaps in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The measure for 2024 confirms that a much lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander than non-Indigenous students were present at school for 90% or more of the expected number of days. Table 4.6 shows student attendance levels for 2024 by Indigenous status and state and territory, the gap in this measure between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students and the change in attendance levels between 2023 and 2024.

Table 4.6: Student attendance levels: proportion of students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate is equal to, or greater than, 90%, by state and territory and Indigenous status, Australia, 2024 (%); Change 2023–2024 (percentage points)

State/territory	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Australia
2024									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	37.1	38.2	37.1	33.8	28.7	44.2	18.5	35.5	35.2
Non-Indigenous	61.4	60.2	61.5	63.0	66.0	58.7	60.9	59.6	61.6
All students	59.5	59.7	59.1	61.3	63.2	57.1	43.9	58.8	59.8
Gap Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	24.3	22.0	24.4	29.1	37.2	14.6	42.4	24.1	26.4
Change 2023–2024									
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	-3.5	-4.5	-0.3	2.1	1.5	3.3	-0.2	-1.7	-1.2
Non-Indigenous	-3.3	-4.2	-0.7	1.7	2.8	3.1	-0.3	-0.7	-1.8
All students	-3.5	-4.3	-0.8	1.6	2.6	3.1	-0.3	-0.7	-1.8
Gap Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Indigenous (percentage points)	0.2	0.3	-0.4	-0.6	1.2	-0.1	-0.1	1.0	-0.7

Note: See notes for Table 4.2.

Source: ACARA, National Student Attendance Data Collection.

In 2024, 35.2% of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attended school for 90% of the time or more, with a gap of 26.4 percentage points between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous students. The gaps in SA, WA and the NT were above the national average.

The decline in attendance levels between 2023 and 2024 was larger for non-Indigenous students (1.8 percentage points) than for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (1.2 percentage points), resulting in a 0.7 percentage point reduction in the gap in attendance levels since 2023.

Between 2023 and 2024, the gap in attendance levels widened in NSW, Victoria, WA and the ACT, and narrowed in Queensland, SA, Tasmania and the NT, with Queensland and SA experiencing the largest decreases in the attendance level gap.