

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Question Taken on Notice

Date: 17 June 2019

Subject: Assaults on principals, teachers and support staff in primary schools

From: Member for Blain

To: Minister for Education

Agency: Department of Education

Number: 7.9

Question: The question relates to the number of reported assaults on principals, teachers and support staff in primary schools. To make it more meaningful, comparative for the last two years if that is possible?

Answer:

In the Northern Territory there are primary, middle, senior secondary and comprehensive schools. More than one stage of schooling may take place at one location, particularly in small and remote schools. The current incident reporting system distinguishes incidents by location, not stage of schooling, meaning some incidents at schools which have a mixed cohort, may be as a result of actions by individuals who are not primary age.

For consistency of comparison, data has been provided for this year and the past two years for the same period (1 July – 31 March).

Comparison data has been sourced from the current Department of Education incident reporting system; using mechanism of incident – being assaulted by a person or persons¹, and covers:

- all primary schools including one primary specific specialist school (Table 1 refers)
- all small and remote schools which have a mixed cohort (Table 2 refers)
- three specialist schools which have a mixed cohort (Table 3 refers).

Table 1: Reported assaults² on Department of Education employees in Primary Schools

	1 July 2016 to 31 March 2017	1 July 2017 to 31 March 2018	1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019
Principals ³	7	5	5
Teachers ⁴	49	60	54
Support staff ⁵	30	76	53
Count	86	141	112

Table 2: Reported assaults on Department of Education employees in remote and small schools

	1 July 2016 to 31 March 2017	1 July 2017 to 31 March 2018	1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019
Principals ³	1	0	1
Teachers ⁴	20	25	9
Support staff ⁵	1	9	6
Count	22	34	16

Table 3: Reported assaults on Department of Education employees in specialist schools⁶

	1 July 2016 to 31 March 2017	1 July 2017 to 31 March 2018	1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019
Principals ³	0	0	2
Teachers ⁴	10	7	9
Support staff ⁵	6	9	11
Count	16	16	22

¹ Being assaulted by a person or persons

Includes:

- deliberate kicks, bites, punches, pushes etc
- assault with or without a weapon
- being assaulted with hand tools, objects or weapons wielded by another person

Excludes:

- all accidental knocks by a person
- being accidentally struck by an object wielded by another person
- where mental stress is more serious than physical injuries
- where mental stress is more serious than physical injuries resulting from repetitive work-related harassment and/or workplace bullying (Type of Occurrence Classification System Third Edition s.F.2.29)

² Assault involves the direct or indirect application of force to a person without their consent or an attempt or threat to use such force (*Criminal Code Act 1983* s.187)

³ Principals include principals and acting principals

⁴ Teachers include assistant teachers, classroom teachers, relief teachers and specialist teachers

⁵ Support staff include classroom-based assistants, office-based assistants, chaplains, maintenance officers, special education support staff, student support staff and tutors

⁶ Mixed cohort in the following specialist schools: Forrest Parade School (P-9); Acacia Hill School (P-12) and Kintore Street School (P-12)