

School Life

Information for
parents and carers
about Tasmanian
government schools

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Welcome to School Life.



Having lived in several states and worked in various education systems throughout Australia, I have been extremely impressed with the connectedness of the education community in Tasmania.

The sense of shared purpose and passion that I have seen from teachers, students, parents, school associations, Principals and other stakeholders is inspiring and I hope that collectively, we can continue to deliver high quality education to all Tasmanians.

Educating students is a partnership between school staff and parents and many other stakeholders and it is by working together and supporting each other, that Tasmanian children will receive the highest level of education available.

School Life is designed for parents and carers of students entering Tasmanian government schools for the first time or making the transition from primary to high school.

In addition to information about assessment and reporting, health and wellbeing and yours' and your child's rights and responsibilities, this booklet gives you practical tips on how you can get involved in the school community.

I hope that you find *School Life* useful and wish you and your child a happy and successful school year.

Colin Pettit
Secretary

Tasmanian Government Schools



Public Education

Tasmania's public education system aims to provide a quality education and rich learning experiences for all students. We want every student to have the opportunity to achieve their potential by providing them with the skills they need for the future.

The Department of Education is responsible for education from the early years to Year 12 and Vocational Education and Training (VET) delivered through schools, colleges, the Tasmanian Polytechnic and adult learning (LINC).

There are 192 Tasmanian government schools (excluding colleges) grouped into three Learning Service areas: North, North-West and South, each managed by a General Manager.

The Department of Education uses our resources through Principals and school communities to lead school improvement and work with teachers to focus on the individual needs of students.

Teachers in Tasmanian government schools are required to be qualified, of good character, and registered with the Tasmanian Teachers Registration Board.

Contact details for Tasmanian government schools can be found at the government schools A-Z listing available at: www.education.tas.gov.au/dept/contact/schoolsatoz

School terms and professional learning days

Until 2013, the Tasmanian school year is divided into three terms.

The school dates for this year are available from your local school. They can also be accessed by calling the Recorded Info Line on (03) 6233 7536 or by logging on to the department's website: www.education.tas.gov.au/school/termdates.

Term dates for colleges and the Tasmanian Polytechnic are different from K-10 school term dates and may vary between campuses. Please contact your local campus for more information.

Many schools have professional learning days and a moderation day for student assessments in a school year. Professional learning days enable our teachers to participate in important professional development opportunities while student assessment moderation days ensure student assessments are comparable across schools.

Please contact Learning Services for more details.



Starting age

School starting and leaving ages are set by law, and your child is required to attend school full-time from the age of five. This means that a child who has turned five on or by 1 January in any year must start school in that year, or be provided with approved home education. If you feel that your child is not ready for school, you should discuss your options with your school Principal.

Most children, however, start school in Kindergarten in their local school when they are four years of age.

For more information:

please see Early Years and Kindergarten section or visit www.education.tas.gov.au/dept/legislation/admission



Leaving age

Young people are required to complete the school year during which they turn 16 years of age, and to continue participating in education or training until they turn 17 years of age.

Participation options include:

- undertaking study at a college or a district high school (Years 11 and 12)
- undertaking study at the Tasmanian Polytechnic
- undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship

- undertaking a training course through a registered training organisation
- being home-educated through registration with the Tasmanian Home Education Advisory Council.

Early years and Kindergarten

Most parents in Tasmania enrol their child in Kindergarten.

Young children learn an enormous amount between birth and age five. The values and habits learnt in the first few years of life stay with children forever and affect their ability to learn and succeed throughout life. Research is showing that children who have high quality child care and early learning opportunities gain a strong foundation for future learning.

Kindergarten is a valuable experience for children. It builds on learning from home and supports the development of early literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills; helps children develop confidence and concentration; and develops social skills such as how to get along with others.



At Kindergarten, learning happens through play and activities planned by the teacher. When children play with other children they discover, create, improvise and imagine. It is a time when children test out their ideas, ask questions and expand their thinking. In Kindergarten, children will use a wide range of equipment specially designed to support their learning and spend time as part of a small group, in whole groups and on their own.

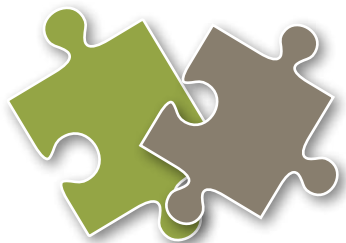
To start Kindergarten your child must be four years old on or by 1 January in the year in which they start.

Your child will attend Kindergarten for up to 15 hours a week. Sessions may be half day or full day depending on arrangements made by the school with its community. Kindergartens are part of a primary school and are usually located at the same campus. (If child care is required to complement the school's Kindergarten program, see more detailed information in the [Child care section](#)).

For more information:

contact your local school

A Starting Kindergarten brochure is also available at:
www.education.tas.gov.au/school/publications/kinder.pdf.



Schools also offer early years' programs to support families and young children's learning and the transition to school. These include the Birth to 4 initiative, *Launching into Learning*, and pre-Kindergarten sessions. Parents and children attend these sessions together.

For more information:

please visit:
www.education.tas.gov.au/earlylearning.



Early entry

Children who are gifted may be eligible to start Kindergarten early. Your child must be at least three years and six months of age on or by 1 January in the year in which they will start.

Early entry may also be permitted for a child who has previously been enrolled in a school in another state or territory and who now resides in Tasmania.

For more information:

- contact and visit the school in your area to talk about Kindergarten and early years' programs
- download the Starting Kindergarten brochure from www.education.tas.gov.au/earlylearning/kinder.pdf
- visit the website for information on enrolment details, available www.education.tas.gov.au/dept/legislation/admission.



Where your child can go to school



Tasmanian government schools

Government primary and high schools are located in designated geographical areas called home areas. Your child is entitled to attend your local school in the home area in which you live.

If you live in a shared home area that has more than one school to choose from, you are guaranteed an enrolment in one of those schools. However, your first preference may not be accepted if that school does not have capacity to accept your child's enrolment. High schools draw their enrolments from nearby primary schools.

For more information:

contact your Learning Services office (details on the back cover), or visit the department's website: www.education.tas.gov.au/dept/contact.



The Tasmanian eSchool

The Tasmanian eSchool is the Department of Education's Flexible Learning School.

Students who enrol at the Tasmanian eSchool are required to satisfy certain enrolment criteria and may enrol on a full or dual-basis. Students in other schools who require access to online courses for curriculum enrichment and extension may also be supported by Tasmanian eSchool teachers.

The enrolment criteria are:

Isolation - where a student is geographically isolated and unable to reach a government school by normal transport.

Medical advice – where written medical advice indicates that attendance at school is not recommended and that attendance at the eSchool would be appropriate and beneficial. This includes physical and psychological conditions.

Pregnancy – where a student is pregnant and attendance at a local school is not a viable option. Such enrolments may be extended to the post-natal period.

Travel – where a student is involved in constant travel away from home and unable to attend a local school regularly. This includes: families on extended holidays, the children of itinerant workers and the children of Tasmanian residents who work in inaccessible areas.





Exceptional circumstances – where the Department of Education determines that enrolment in the Tasmanian eSchool is a reasonable alternative to mainstream schooling.

Students who meet the criteria for enrolment at the Tasmanian eSchool undertake a program which is designed for them by their teachers, based on the Tasmanian/Australian Curriculum. Parents and carers play an important role in the learning program by providing supervision, support and encouragement to the student and by working closely with teachers.

For more information:

please contact:

The Tasmanian eSchool

P O Box 171

Rosny Park TAS 7018

Phone 1800 068 052 or (03) 6282 8181

www.education.tas.gov.au/tasmanianeschool





Curriculum in Tasmanian schools

The Department of Education is responsible for providing all students in Tasmanian government schools with a high quality education.

Schools work in partnership with families and communities to help provide for the current and future educational and social needs of young Tasmanians.

All schools in Tasmania are committed to the nationally agreed *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*:

Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence

Goal 2: All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens

Achieving these goals is a responsibility shared between all levels of government, the education sector and other training providers, parents, carers, students, business and the broader community.

Schools play an integral role by helping your child to:

- learn about all the areas of the curriculum
- develop important capabilities such as thinking across the whole curriculum
- improve their understanding and skills in areas such as literacy, numeracy, wellbeing and information and communications technology.

Our shared responsibility in supporting your child to bring a positive attitude to their learning will ensure there is no limit to what they can achieve.

Contact your local school for more information.

What is the curriculum?

The curriculum is the courses and subjects that are taught to students. It guides all the teaching and learning in schools. It also includes supportive school environments.

The best way to find out about your child's learning is to ask them directly, but we also encourage you to speak with teachers and the school Principal if you would like more detailed information about the curriculum.



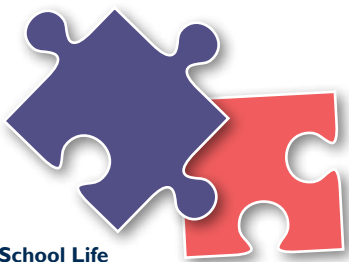
Which curriculum is being used in Tasmanian schools from 2012?

The Australian Curriculum is being implemented in all Australian schools over the next few years.

In 2012, all Tasmanian schools are using the Australian Curriculum for English, Mathematics and Science. Some schools have chosen to use the Australian History Curriculum in 2012, but this is not required in Tasmania until 2013.

Until the other areas of the Australian Curriculum are fully written and finalised over the next two years, Tasmanian schools will continue to use the Tasmanian Curriculum for Society and History, Health and Wellbeing, the Arts, Vocational and Applied Learning, Information and Communications Technology and Languages.

For more information, please speak with your child's teacher or Principal.



Are the Australian and Tasmanian Curricula very different?

This varies from subject to subject, but there are many similarities between the types of learning your child will experience between the Tasmanian and Australian Curriculum.

Schools implement the curriculum in ways that will minimise disruption to students and improve learning for your child.

What will be taught in each of the curriculum areas from 2012?

The following general information is a guide to the areas of the curriculum in Tasmanian government schools.

English

English helps students to become confident and creative communicators by developing their skills in listening, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating with an increasingly sophisticated range of texts.

Mathematics

Mathematics develops students' mathematical understanding, fluency, logical reasoning, thinking and problem solving skills.

Science

An understanding and appreciation for science helps us to explore and understand a changing world. Students develop their understanding of scientific inquiry, their knowledge across science disciplines and learn to communicate their understanding and use evidence to solve problems and make decisions.

Society and History

By understanding the social and historical influences on the human world, students learn how to participate as responsible citizens and to contribute to global sustainability through inquiry, analysis, and critical and reflective thinking.

Health and Wellbeing

Health and Wellbeing studies focus on understanding how to lead healthy, active and fulfilling lifestyles.

Arts

Arts provide students with an opportunity to create and communicate through dance, drama, media, music and visual art.

Vocational and Applied Learning

Vocational and Applied Learning focuses on teaching students valuable life-skills including how to use technology for work and how to apply their curriculum-based learning to real problems.

Information Communications Technology (ICT)

ICT, taught across all areas of the curriculum, enables students to learn how to access and use ICT appropriately.

Languages

Students learn how to communicate effectively in another language and gain skills to help them communicate more effectively in our globalised world.



For more information:

- about the curriculum, please talk to your school or visit the department's website:
www.education.tas.gov.au/curriculum
- about the Australian Curriculum, please visit The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority website:
www.acara.edu.au

Are there other curriculum programs in Tasmanian government schools?

All school's programs have learning outcomes that may be assessed using the Tasmanian government curriculum. These include:

Physical Education

Regular participation in physical education (PE) programs help students to develop their skills and fitness across a range of sporting activities within the school program and through events arranged by external organisations. By participating in sport and other forms of physical activity, students are able to improve their fitness, build self-confidence, gain leadership skills and make new friends.



Learn to swim

Students in Grades 3, 4 and 5 have the opportunity to participate in the Swimming and Water Safety program, where they learn about water safety and survival and how to swim. Students work towards achieving the National Benchmark for swimming and water safety skills.

For more information:

contact your child's school or visit www.education.tas.gov.au/school/health/watersafety.



Religious education

Tasmanian government schools are non-religious. However, the Education Act allows for religious organisations to apply to provide religious instruction programs within school time. These programs are separate to the school curriculum and are voluntary.

All religious instruction programs must comply with the Guidelines for Religious Instruction in State Schools and be approved by the School Association before they can be provided in a school. If a program is being offered through your school, your permission will be required before your child can attend.

For more information:

visit the website at: www.education.tas.gov.au/school/parents/religion.



Relationships and Sexuality Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education is included in the Health and Wellbeing curriculum where the focus is on personal and social development.

When planning relationships and sexuality education programs, teachers consider what is suitable for children at particular stages of their development. Individual schools and their communities can determine the most suitable program for their children and teachers are supported by a state-wide plan and curriculum documents with age-appropriate activities.

Many schools also use outside providers to deliver relationship education programs to students.

Drug education

All Tasmanian government schools are supported by the *Management of Drug Issues and Drug Education in Tasmanian Schools* policy. Your school will emphasise prevention of harm from drugs and will do this by education, information and the provision of safe and supportive school environments. Your school will be supported to respond to incidents that involve the possession, use and/or distribution of illicit and other unsanctioned drugs and will have access to appropriate support for students directly and indirectly involved in drug-related incidents.

In addition, your school will have processes for addressing the range of health care requirements for all students, including procedures for storing and administering students' medications.



We all have an important role to play in the development of your child's knowledge and attitudes in relation to drug use. You can help your child by taking an interest in the drug-related topics that are discussed in the classroom and by becoming familiar with, and supporting, school procedures for managing drug-use problems.

If you suspect that your child has a problem with drug use, stay calm and find out as much as you can. What appear to be symptoms of drug use could be symptoms of other things happening in your child's life. If you are still concerned, please make an appointment to speak with your child's teacher or school Principal who can advise you on how best to proceed.

For more information:

contact your school or visit the website:
www.education.tas.gov.au/school/health/drugeducation.

Disability Support Services

In the Tasmanian government education system, students with disabilities are encouraged to attend regular schools wherever possible. If your child has a disability, we will work with you and your child to ensure they have the support necessary to meet their learning needs while being taught with other children in their own age group.

Depending on the learning needs of eligible students, support services may include providing support teachers, guidance officers, speech and language pathologists and social workers.

Sometimes students, who meet the eligibility requirements, may be best suited to attend a special school, which is able to provide specialist facilities, curriculum and support that best meets their needs.

For more information:

contact the Learning Services' office for your area (details on back cover).

Young children with a disability

If your child is four years of age or younger, and has a disability, a medical condition and/or developmental delays, they may be eligible for services provided by the Early Childhood Intervention Service.

The Service offers a range of programs that:

- provide support and information to families
- provide stimulating activities and experiences for children
- provide ideas to assist families at home
- help children prepare for starting school

- strengthen family capacities to support their child's learning and development
- develop connections with the government school support staff who will assist with the ongoing needs of your child.

For more information:



Early Childhood Intervention Service offices are located in:

Hobart: (03) 6231 1625
 Launceston: (03) 6344 1729
 Devonport: (03) 6424 3111
 Burnie: (03) 6435 2021 or
 0427 563 873

Students with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

If English is not your child's first language, they may be supported by the English as an Additional Language (EAL) Program, which provides English language support for Kindergarten to Year 12 students.

Support is provided on an as-needed basis with priority given to newly arrived students.

EAL students may be:

- newly arrived or adopted children with little or no English
- children whose parents speak limited English at home
- children who are experiencing literacy difficulties due to insufficiently developed first language skills.

If English is not your first language and you need help understanding the Tasmanian education system or how your child is progressing, an interpreter service is available.

For more information:



ask your school Principal or contact the Principal Education Officer EAL by telephone on (03) 6233 7719 or by emailing:
eal.program@education.tas.gov.au

Gifted students

Tasmanian government schools offer extended learning opportunities for gifted and highly able students.

The department has policy and guidelines that define giftedness and provide guidance for schools and teachers.

Online extension programs are offered through the Tasmanian eSchool.

For more information:



please visit:
www.education.tas.gov.au/school/curriculum/extended-learning/policy
 or contact the Department of Education's Curriculum team.



Tasmanian Association for the Gifted

The Tasmanian Association for the Gifted Inc (TAG) is a state-wide, volunteer-run association of parents and teachers. TAG provides information and support for parents and teachers with an interest in gifted children.

Resources include books and articles, information packs and newsletters. Activities include children's activities, family activities, parent and teacher information evenings, seminars and a biennial state conference.

For more information:

contact the Tasmanian Association for the Gifted Inc on 0488 291 497, or tasgifted@gmail.com, or visit the website: www.tasgifted.com



Aboriginal students

Aboriginal Education Services deliver a range of programs to support schools in meeting the educational needs of Aboriginal students and families in Tasmanian government schools.

An Aboriginal Early Years Liaison Officer in each Learning Service provides support to parents with Aboriginal children, from birth to five years, to prepare their children for school, to participate in their learning development and to access pre-school services.

Aboriginal Education Workers are employed to support schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal students in Kindergarten to Year 8. They support school engagement with the Aboriginal Community and assist students to participate in and achieve at school. They also work closely with parents and the Aboriginal Early Years Liaison Officers.

Aboriginal Education Officers in each Learning Service support students in Years 9 to 12 to attend and engage in their schooling, and assist with transition to further education, training and employment.

For more information:

contact Aboriginal Education Services on (03) 6233 7968.



Additional information for parents



Your child is more likely to thrive at school if they feel happy, confident and secure.

Tasmanian government schools provide a range of services and programs to support the health and wellbeing of your child. Many of these are strongly connected to the curriculum learning that your child will experience in class.

Healthy eating/being active

Over 100 Tasmanian government schools are now participating in the Move Well Eat Well Program.

Move Well Eat Well works to create a school environment that promotes healthy eating and physical activity. It provides primary schools with a simple guide, resources and recognition for promoting messages around healthy eating and physical activity to promote good health.

The Move Well Eat Well program supports the healthy lifestyle messages parents give their children at home.



For more information:

visit the Move Well Eat Well website: www.movewelleatwell.tas.gov.au and look for the 'For families' section.

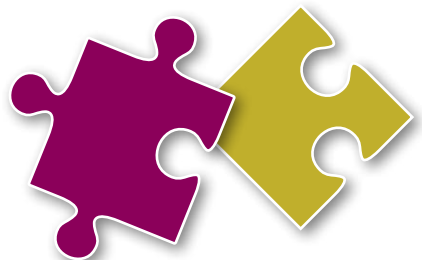
School canteens

Healthy eating is encouraged in all Tasmanian government schools.

School canteens operate under departmental policies and regulations that promote nutrition and safe food preparation. Schools work to help ensure that the messages students receive in their curriculum studies are supported by healthy eating messages from the school canteen.

Many schools are participating in the Cool Canteen Accreditation Program which offers a model of best practice for canteens and the provision of guidelines and procedures for high quality and safe food service for school students and staff.

For information on your school's canteen operating hours, ordering arrangements and menu, contact your child's school.



Community facilities

If you or your child are members of a not-for-profit community, sporting or recreational group, and are in need of a good quality gym, sports ground or meeting place, talk to your school about the possibility of using the first-class facilities at your local school.

Facilities for hire include gyms, swimming pools, and sports ovals, playgrounds, meeting rooms, kitchens and auditoriums.

All community and not-for-profit groups are covered for third party insurance under a State Government public liability initiative, and it's a fantastic way of getting active and involved in your local community!



For more information:

visit the department's website:
www.education.tas.gov.au/dept/contact/community-use



Important Medical Advice



Allergies and asthma

If your child has asthma and/or an allergy, you should discuss this with their classroom teacher.

If your child has a severe allergic reaction and is at risk of anaphylaxis you should notify the school at enrolment, or as soon as a diagnosis is made.

Every student who is known to be at risk of anaphylaxis should have an **Anaphylaxis Action Plan** completed by their medical practitioner before the student starts school or as soon as the condition is diagnosed. An individual Anaphylaxis Management Plan will then be developed by the school in consultation with you and health professionals who will provide professional learning and management support. This will include EpiPen or AnaPen training as required. The Anaphylaxis Action Plan and the Anaphylaxis Management Plan will then be held and displayed at the school as appropriate.

The Asthma Foundation of Tasmania works in close collaboration with schools to develop asthma active and anaphylaxis active schools.



Medication

Medication should be prescribed for administration during school hours only when absolutely necessary.

If your child requires medication to be administered while they are at school, you must meet with your child's teacher and/or Principal to ensure that the responsibilities of school staff are clearly outlined.

The school will also ask you to provide:

- a written request to the school to administer the medication
- the medical practitioner's specific prescribed instructions for administration on the pharmacist's label
- the safe transfer of medication to the school
- medication in originally prescribed containers only.

Students requiring asthma medication may be responsible for their own asthma inhaler with written permission from a parent/ legal guardian, and with the approval of the school Principal.

An official register for the administration of medication to students will be maintained by your school.

Immunisation

Immunisation provides effective protection against disease. It is in the best interests of your child and of other children to complete the recommended National Immunisation Program Schedule.

Childhood vaccines included on the current schedule are provided free of charge to children of eligible ages.

When you fill out your child's school enrolment form, you'll be asked whether your child has received particular vaccinations and to provide evidence of your child's vaccination status. This is usually in the form of your child's health record book or a letter from a doctor or council on letterhead.

The Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) keeps a record of immunisations given to children under the age of seven years. Statements of your child's immunisation history can be requested from ACIR by phoning 1800 653 809 or visiting www.medicareaustralia.gov.au.

If proof is not available, a statutory declaration form can be obtained from your school or from the Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmania.



For more information:



please contact:

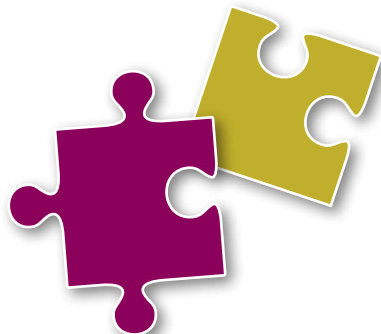
- your school or child care facility
- your local council
- your family doctor or health nurse
- the Department of Health and Human Services on 1800 671 738

or visit the Department's website:
[www.education.tas.gov.au/
school/parents/starting/
immunisationrequirements](http://www.education.tas.gov.au/school/parents/starting/immunisationrequirements)

Contagious diseases

If your child suffers from an illness that is infectious, contagious or harmful to others at the school, you may be asked to keep your child at home.

Information on the types of illness and the period of non-attendance required is available from your school. You should tell the school if your child has one of the listed diseases so that the absence can be recorded and the health of other children monitored.



Head lice (nits)

As parents, you have the primary responsibility for detecting and treating head lice. If your child has head lice, they must remain at home until an initial application of head lice treatment and preferably all eggs (nits) are removed.

To help prevent the spread of head lice, we ask that you:

- notify your child's school as soon as you detect head lice or nits in their hair
- wash your child's hair in a lice-killing shampoo available from your local chemist or pharmacy
- apply plenty of conditioner and comb your child's hair with a fine nit comb, looking out for the lice's empty egg cases or 'nits'. The lice themselves are harder to spot, but look out for brown or grey insects about the size of a match head that lurk at the roots of your child's hair
- teach your child not to share brushes, combs, hats, swimming caps or hair bands
- braid long hair, or tie it back while your child is at school.

Dental health

Oral Health Services Tasmania welcomes all children from birth to 18 years of age to the children's service. Dental therapists, in community settings, provide the majority of dental care needs for children in a friendly and caring environment.

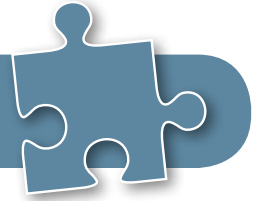
All dental examinations are free of charge and may include:

- oral examination and x-rays
- dietary advice, oral hygiene instruction and preventive advice
- referral to dentist or dental specialist for further assessment.

Following examination, and if dental treatment is required, there may be a fee for the course of care. Treatment is free if your child is under the age of six or is covered by a current Health Care Card or Concession Card.



Student Support



If you have any concerns about your child's development or wellbeing, first talk to their teacher or the Principal.

Student support staff including support teachers, school psychologists, speech pathologists, social workers and school chaplains can help you and your child to resolve problems and refer you to other professional help where required.

Support teachers – are skilled teachers who support the school and classroom teacher to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and/or additional needs.

School psychologists – are registered psychologists. They work with students, staff and parents towards the best outcomes for students' educational achievement and personal wellbeing through assessments, counselling and case management. They offer support for concerns such as under-achievement, poor social coping skills, anxiety, depression, grief and loss and trauma impact.

Speech and language pathologists – are qualified and skilled in assessing, diagnosing and managing speech, language and feeding disorders and difficulties. They work with students, parents, teachers and support staff to help students overcome development delays or disorders which affect their ability to communicate.

Social workers – are professional practitioners who provide confidential counselling and support to students and their families around a range of issues including relationships, mental health difficulties, stress management, attendance issues, grief counselling and conflict resolution. They provide assistance for families/students at risk of harm (from self or from others) such as suicide, self-harm, child protection issues or risk of homelessness. Social work services can be accessed directly by families or students, or through referral from school staff.

School chaplains – provide pastoral support and spiritual and ethical support when appropriate.

For more information:
contact your Learning Services office.



Assessment and reporting



Your child will receive regular assessments that inform them about their progress and enable them to continually improve their learning and achievement in all areas of the curriculum.

You will also be updated on your child's progress through a range of communications including regular written reports and parent-teacher meetings.

Parent-teacher meetings are an opportunity for you to meet your child's teacher(s).

You can discuss the information provided in your child's detailed mid-year school report, and become more involved in your child's learning.

Teachers are also happy to meet with you to discuss your child's progress at any time during the year, although an appointment is preferable to allow you the time you need.

Will assessment and reporting change because of the Australian Curriculum?

As the subject areas of the Australian Curriculum are being implemented over the next three years, assessments and reports will change to reflect the new curriculum.

Reports will indicate how your child is performing in these areas, including English, Mathematics and Science, in relation to nationally agreed achievement standards.

These standards describe what is expected of students at each year level.

For more information contact your child's school.



Parent/Carer rights and responsibilities



Attendance

All children enrolled in a government school in Tasmania must attend each school day as required by the Principal unless:

- they are absent because of illness, incapacity or for another reasonable cause and you have notified the school
- the Principal has excused them from attendance because of an infestation or contagious disease
- the student is exempted from attendance, which includes having been suspended, excluded, expelled or prohibited from attendance through an approved disciplinary process
- the student has a certificate for part-time attendance.

If your child is going to be away from school for a short time (for example illness), please notify the school office as soon as possible to let them know the reason and length of the planned absence.

If your child is going to be absent from school for three or more days because of illness, the school Principal may ask for a medical certificate to cover the period of absence.

When your child is going to be away for an extended period of time (more than a few days), please contact the school Principal to discuss your child's learning needs during their period of absence from school.

If your child is not at school and an acceptable reason has not been provided, the absence will be recorded as 'unexplained' or 'unauthorised' and you will be contacted by your school. If your child is frequently absent from school, your school will work with you to find ways of helping your child continue or resume their education.

Please remember you have a legal obligation to ensure that your child attends school each day as required and **you can be prosecuted for unexplained or unauthorised prolonged absence of your child from school.**

If your child has been suspended or excluded from school due to unacceptable behaviour, you have a responsibility to provide appropriate supervision during the period of suspension or exclusion.

If you have any questions about attendance, please contact your school to discuss.



When to keep your child home

There will be times when it is in your and your child's best interests for them to stay home from school, including when they are sick, have a temporary medical condition that prevents them attending, or for any other reasonable reason approved by the Principal such as bereavement.

There are other times when keeping your child home from school will benefit your child and other children in their class or school, such as when they have an infectious, contagious or harmful condition that may affect the health of others. In these situations, the Principal may ask you to temporarily remove your child from school.

If there is an outbreak of vaccine preventable diseases such as Rubella, Measles or Mumps in the community and your child has not been vaccinated against it, you will be asked to keep your child home from school until the outbreak is over to ensure they are not put at unnecessary risk of being infected with these diseases.

For information on the types of illness and the period of non-attendance required, please contact your school.

If your child has one of the listed diseases please contact your school as soon as possible so that their absence can be properly recorded and the health of other children monitored.

Sickness or emergency

The best place for students to be if they are unwell, is at home. So if your child becomes ill or is injured at school, your school will contact you and seek the necessary medical attention. In the event of an emergency, your child will be moved to a safe place for appropriate care or treatment without prior permission. This may be by ambulance or other form of transportation.

It is therefore very important for you to keep the school updated about any medical conditions or allergies that your child may have, and that you keep contact numbers for you and your doctor up-to-date.

Schools keep records of accidents and follow guidelines for dealing with them and for removing any dangers.



School behaviour

For every community to function and run smoothly there needs to be a shared understanding of core values. The Department of Education operates on a number of key values, which shape and direct the rules, responsibilities and expectations we have of ourselves and others we work with. As an organisation, we value:

Learning – Tasmanians are engaged in positive, productive and supported learning experiences, and are encouraged towards lifelong learning.

Excellence – we have high expectations for our learners and a strong commitment to the pursuit of excellence and innovation in our people, in our programs and in our resources.

Equity – we all have the right to challenging and engaging learning opportunities in appropriate settings.

Respect – Positive and effective interactions, with each other and with our environment, are conducted on the basis of responsibility, integrity and accountability.

Relationships – we achieve growth and strength through partnerships and connections with our learners, their communities and the world.

Students can contribute to these values by:

- ensuring their behaviour is not disruptive to the learning of others
- ensuring that the school environment is kept neat, tidy and secure
- ensuring that they are on time and ready to learn
- behaving in a way that protects the safety and wellbeing of others
- treating others in a respectful and courteous way.

Students who choose to operate outside these rules need to be aware of the school's disciplinary policy which details unacceptable behaviour and associated disciplinary measures. These may include detention, suspension, exclusion, expulsion or prohibition.

As a parent, you can assist your child to be a positive member of his/her school community by being familiar with yours' and your child's rights and responsibilities in the school environment, and by operating within those parameters. Encourage your child to speak with you about their actions and behaviours as this will help them to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Educating students is a partnership between school staff and parents. By working together and supporting each other, staff and parents can support students to achieve their best at school.



Unacceptable behaviour and discipline

Each school has a disciplinary policy that outlines unacceptable behaviour and disciplinary measures that the school can use.

Unacceptable behaviour by students includes:

- refusing to participate in the education program
- refusing to follow instructions about conduct
- behaviour that disrupts or affects the learning of other students
- actions likely to be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of staff or other students
- behaviour that causes or is likely to cause damage
- behaviour that is likely to bring the school into disrepute.

Students who behave in an unacceptable way may receive a detention, be removed from regular classes, be suspended, excluded or expelled from a school, depending on the level and frequency of the behaviour. In the worst case, a student may be prohibited from attending any government school in Tasmania.

Below is a summary of approved disciplinary measures and what action they entail:

Detention - when a student is detained at school during recess, lunch time or after school, or excluded from regular classes.

Suspension - a temporary part-time or full-time withdrawal of a student's right to attend school for up to 10 school days.

Exclusion - a temporary part-time or full-time withdrawal of a student's right to attend school for a period of more than 10 school days.

Expulsion - the withdrawal of a student's right to continue attendance at their present school, with enrolment at another school being arranged.

Prohibition - the full-time permanent withdrawal of a student's right to attend any government school.

You can discuss decisions of exclusion, expulsion and prohibition if you think they have been made unfairly. You should first talk to your school Principal and if the matter cannot be resolved, contact the General Manager of your Learning Service (contact details on back cover).



Bullying

In spite of the best efforts of schools, bullying sometimes occurs.

Bullying is deliberately hurting, threatening or frightening someone repeatedly or over time. This can involve teasing, name-calling, ostracising, physically hurting someone or preventing others from going where they want to go or from doing what they want to do.

It can be done directly, through other people, or by using technology such as email, text messaging or social media such as Facebook, My Space and internet chat online.

If you believe that your child is being bullied:

- encourage your child to talk about what is happening
- write down when, where and with whom problems seem to be happening
- make an appointment to see your child's teacher or the school Principal to discuss the matter
- ask about the school's policies on bullying and acceptable behaviour
- keep in contact with the school until you are happy that the problem has been sorted out.

Bullying is an issue that schools take extremely seriously. All Tasmanian government schools have clearly established procedures to deal with bullying.



Parent and guardian legal issues



The Department of Education recognises that educating children is a responsibility shared by many stakeholders including parents. As such, we recognise that parents have a number of rights and responsibilities relating to their children's education and are keen to work with you to ensure your rights are met and that you have sufficient knowledge and support to meet your responsibilities.

We value the involvement of parents and guardians in the education of their children, but in order to know who we should be speaking with it's very important that we are told about changes in parent or guardian relationships in your family.

Our view is that we will continue to work with both parents to support the learning needs of their children, regardless of separation, divorce or other changes in circumstances, unless both parents agree or the court orders otherwise. In some instances, your child's teacher or school Principal may request that you provide a Parenting Plan or a Parenting Order.

It is especially important to provide the school with correct contact information in case of an emergency.

Student reports and other contact with the school will be provided to all people who have a legal right to that information.

Grandparents

Grandparents are playing an increasingly important role in caring for and/or raising grandchildren. If you are a grandparent raising your grandchildren, please contact the school to notify them that you are the primary carer. Your grandchild's school will ask for written evidence of 'parental responsibility', which can either be legal documents or a statutory declaration stating that you are the primary carer for the child.

As the primary carer, you will automatically receive all the information from your school that a parent would, including school reports and parent-teacher interview notices, school newsletters and correspondence relating to discipline, non-attendance and permission forms.

If your grandchild has experienced trauma or difficulties in adjusting to changes within the family, support services are available to help both grandparents and children adjust.

Please contact your school if you have any questions about enrolment, life at school or support services.



Grievance procedures

Sometimes concerns and misunderstandings can arise at school, and these are best addressed as quickly as possible.

The following process may help you approach the school if you are concerned about something that is happening or has happened.

Please note that you can contact the Tasmanian State School Parents and Friends Inc at any point for support and advice.

Aim for resolution at the school level

1 First talk to the class teacher, grade supervisor and/or the school.



2 Clearly document your concern and the resolution you are seeking. Keep records of all contact with your school about the matter.



3 Request another meeting with your school Principal and attempt to resolve the matter at this level.

If not resolved



4 Contact the Manager School Support in your Learning Services. Provide clear documentation of your attempts to resolve this matter.



5 The Manager School Support will work to resolve the matter with you.

If after following these procedures, the matter remains unresolved, you can request the department (through your Learning Services General Manager) to consider appointing a mediator to assist in reaching a resolution.

If your grievance relates to a state wide policy issue, contact the Learning Services from where it will be referred to the appropriate Deputy Secretary.

If your grievance relates to a serious misconduct issue, contact the Learning Services from where it will be referred to the Conduct and Investigations Unit.

If your grievance directly relates to a General Manager, contact the Deputy Secretary, Early Years and Schools (03) 6233 8065. The matter will be considered for investigation, mediation or other course of action as considered appropriate.



Rights and responsibilities

We all share a responsibility to educate children within our care and have specific rights to assist us in fulfilling that responsibility. The Department of Education believes you have the following rights and responsibilities:

Your rights are:

- to feel welcome in your school and to be comfortable when expressing your views
- to receive a high quality education for your child that is delivered by trained professionals in a safe and happy environment
- to be respected, and to expect that any information collected about you or your child is accurately recorded, treated with sensitivity and used only for the purposes for which it is collected
- to receive regular written and verbal reports on your child's progress
- to be informed about your school, its procedures, services, rules and programs, and to be consulted before changes are made which affect you or your child
- to be able to contribute to the school through parent groups, and to share in school decision-making through membership of the School Association
- to be able to discuss concerns about your child's education and your expectations with the school, the Department of Education, and the State Government.

Your responsibilities are:

- to ensure that your child attends school every day
- to inform the school about any health problems or medical requirements your child may have, and to find out the school's policy on administering medication, where this is necessary
- to keep the school informed of any legal or custodial matters that affect your child, and to keep the school up to date with any changes to those arrangements, including when your child's name is changed
- to inform the school if your child is ill – particularly if the child has a contagious disease, in which case you should ask a doctor about how long your child should be kept at home
- to inform the school Principal if your child will be away for an extended period, such as for a family holiday
- to arrange for a reliable adult to collect very young children at the end of the school day
- to tell the teacher who will normally collect your child, and keep the teacher informed of any changes to arrangements
- to respect the confidential nature of information which you may receive through participation in school activities.



Parents getting involved



Your child will benefit greatly if you are actively involved in their education and if you are informed about the education system.

Being involved in your child's education adds richness to their school experience and sends a clear message that their education is important to you. There are many ways that you can be involved in your child's education.

Some parents like to volunteer at the school by participating in classroom activities, in the canteen, supervising excursions or being an active member of the Parents & Friends Association.

For many parents, school-hours' volunteering is not an option. However, there are still plenty of ways to support and encourage your child's learning. Taking an active interest in your child's day is a great way to understand what's happening at school and how your child is feeling socially and academically. This can be as easy as asking 'what did you learn at school today?' or 'how was your day?'

Other ways to get involved may include asking your child to help write the grocery list or add up some numbers, help with directions to the shopping centre or to remember where you parked the car.

Involving children in day-to-day tasks and asking them to remember, contribute or make decisions can be a great way to show them how their learning in school will help them complete various tasks in life. By creating meaning and relevance, children are more likely to remember their learning.

School Associations

All government schools in Tasmania have a School Association.

The Association provides parents, staff, students and other members of the community with a way to be involved in issues important to the school. School Associations help schools in a number of ways, such as organising fundraising, participating in developing school policy, advising on school management and approving the budget.



When your child starts school, you are automatically a member of the School Association. School Association committees meet at least four times a year and all parents are welcome to attend. Elections are held each year to appoint committee members.

The committee is responsible for managing the work undertaken by the association. Information about meeting times and association contacts is available from your school.

Parent groups

Many schools also have groups specifically for parents and carers, such as a parents and friends group (sometimes called the P&F). This is a great way to meet other parents and find out how you can contribute to your school community.

A member of the parent group will also usually be on the School Association Committee, so that any issues raised can be brought to the attention of the School Association.

The Tasmanian State School Parents and Friends Inc (TASSP&F) is the peak body representing all Tasmanian government school parents. It publishes brochures on ways you can support your child at school, as well as a bi-monthly newsletter, Parent Contact, which is available through affiliated schools and from the TASSP&F website.

School Canteens

Parent volunteers are an important part of school canteens and provide a great opportunity to get involved in your child's school.



For more information:

please visit the Tasmanian School Canteen Association website
www.tascanteenassn.org.au



Child Care



You may need care for your child before or after school, or during school holidays.

Many schools have arrangements with child care services for outside school-hours care, and there are an increasing number of services available on school sites. These services generally cater for children aged five to 12 years.

Services need to be licensed or approved by the Child Care Unit so that, in most services, eligible parents can access the Commonwealth Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate. Licensing or approval means that services meet standards and regulations for providing quality child care in safe and secure surroundings.

Some family day carers also offer out of school-hours care. This can be arranged through your local Family Day Care Scheme.

For more information:

please contact:

Australian Government's Child Care Access Hotline

Phone 1800 670 305. A Translator Information Service is also available.

Department of Education, Child Care Unit, phone (03) 6233 5676 or (03) 6233 8812 or 1300 135 513
www.childcare.tas.gov.au



Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate

The Australian Government's Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate may be available to help you with the cost of child care.

For more information:

contact the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50 or visit the websites:

www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/childcare_benefit.htm

www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/childcare_rebate.htm



Travelling to and from school safely



Regardless of how your child gets to and from school, safety is one of the most important factors to remember.

If your child travels on a bus, encourage them to behave sensibly and safely while on the bus and accept reasonable direction from the bus driver. There is a code of behaviour that all student passengers must follow.

If you drive your child to school or the bus stop, you should abide by all parking restrictions and, if possible, park on the same side of the road as the school or bus stop. If you must park opposite the school or bus stop, please get out of your vehicle and cross the road with your child.

Walking

Walking is a free and healthy way to get to school. Consider the route that your child will take and make sure that they use the safest road crossings.

Younger children should be accompanied by an adult until you are certain that they can safely manage the journey alone. Even for older children it is advisable to walk with them at first on the route they will be using, and talk about what they should do if they ever feel uncomfortable or unsafe while walking alone.

Some schools have organised 'walking buses' where a number of children walk to and from school together, supervised by adults. The 'bus' picks children up at designated meeting points along the route.



For more information:

contact Sustainable Living Tasmania on (03) 6234 5566 or visit: www.sustainablelivingtasmania.org.au/content/walking-bus.htm



Buses

If your child's school is not within walking distance, a bus service may be available. This may be free or it may be a fare-charging bus service. Contact your school to find out about the bus services available for your area.

If your child will be using fare-charging bus services, they may be eligible for one of the following concessions:

- Student Bus Pass for Free Travel
- Student Transfer Bus Pass.

Information and application forms are available from Service Tasmania offices or apply online at:

www.transport.tas.gov.au/concessions



For information on metropolitan bus services, including timetables and fares contact:

Metro Tasmania

(Hobart, Launceston, Burnie)

Phone 13 22 01 or visit

www.metrotas.com.au

MerseyLink Bus Service

(Devonport)

Phone 1300 367 590 or visit

www.merseylink.com.au

For a copy of the Code of Behaviour contact the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources on 1300 851 225 or visit www.transport.tas.gov.au/passenger_information_and_forms



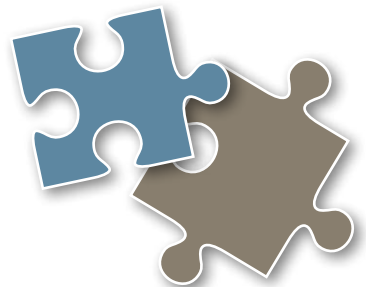
Private transport

Where a bus service is not available, or the nearest bus stop serving your closest school is at least five kilometres away from your home, you may need to use private transport to get your child to school.

In this case you may be eligible to receive Conveyance Allowance, which helps with the cost of driving students between home and school, or to and from the nearest bus stop, whichever is closer.

Information and application forms are available from Service Tasmania offices, phone (03) 6233 5193 or the Transport website:

www.transport.tas.gov.au/concessions



Costs and financial assistance



When your child goes to school you will find that there are a number of costs. These include levies, school uniforms, excursions and other costs associated with your child's educational program. If you are eligible, there are a number of financial assistance schemes available to assist you to cover costs.

Levies

The levy you pay at the beginning of each year contributes to the costs of your child's education program, and includes:

- items your child uses during the school year such as learning materials and stationery
- services such as school excursions, visiting performances and school camps that are part of your child's educational program.

The amount payable is determined each year by each school in consultation with the School Association. For details contact your school.

Families on low incomes who satisfy the eligibility conditions of the Student Assistance Scheme (STAS) and grandparents raising grandchildren will not be required to pay school levies.

Families who do not qualify for STAS but who may experience financial hardship can talk to the school about the possibility of paying their levies in instalments.

For more information, contact your school or visit the department's website: www.education.tas.gov.au/school/parents/costs

School staff understand that financial matters are highly sensitive, so your questions about STAS, the payment of levies in instalments or any other financial matter will remain completely confidential.

These matters will also be dealt with directly with you and not through your child. The resolution of any levy related issues will not interfere with your child's participation in their education program or any associated activities or services.

Levies when transferring to a new school

If your child is transferring to a new school during the school year, you will need to find out from both schools what their policies are for refunds and payments of levies on transfer. Levies are usually only refunded in exceptional circumstances.

If your child is transferring to another Tasmanian government school during the year, most schools do not ask for levies if you have paid them at the previous school. If you were paying the levies by instalments, you will usually be asked to pay the balance owing to the new school plus any subject levies specific to the new school.

School uniforms

Wearing a school uniform is strongly encouraged in Tasmanian government schools.

Wearing a uniform identifies your child with their school and places all students on the same level in terms of clothing. Most schools have a uniform shop or clothing pool that sells new and/or second-hand items. There are also retail shops that supply uniforms. Ask your school about your options.

Excursions and other school activities

While at school, your child is likely to attend excursions, cultural performances, school camps and sporting activities. Where these activities are part of the school program, costs will be included as part of the school levy.

Where these activities are additional to the educational program (and therefore optional), the costs will be additional to the levy, but should be clearly outlined up front. For more information, contact your school.



Other charges

In some subjects there may be an option of extending a project or task at an additional cost. This contribution will only need to be paid if your child chooses to take up the opportunity. Other charges for all students (including students eligible for STAS) may apply to items such as the school magazine, locker hire, school social events, extra music tuition, recreational or holiday trips and other items that are outside the standard educational program.

When introducing other chargeable activities, your school must consider inclusiveness and cost, and ensure that sufficient notice and payment options are provided.

Financial assistance

If you are on a low income, you may be eligible for financial assistance to help with the costs of your child's education.

The following is a description of some allowances and assistance schemes that you or your child may be eligible for:

Student Assistance Scheme (STAS)

This scheme for low-income families provides help towards the cost of school levies. It is available for full-time students attending a government or registered non-government school.

Eligibility depends on a parent/guardian income test or independent student income test for all applicants.

Spectacles Assistance Scheme

This scheme provides financial assistance towards the purchase of spectacles from participating optometrists for students in low-income families. Students must be attending a government or registered non-government school, or be in a registered home education situation.

Eligibility also depends on a parent/guardian income test or independent student income test for all applicants.

Centrelink student allowances

There are several student allowances available through Centrelink, subject to certain eligibility criteria. These allowances include:

Youth Allowance - For full-time students or new apprentices aged 16-24, and for people aged under 21 who are undertaking job search or a combination of approved activities

ABSTUDY - A range of allowances to assist Indigenous students

Pensioner Education Supplement - For people receiving income-support, to help with their education expenses.

Assistance for Isolated Children - For families with a child who cannot attend school locally because of distance or special needs.



For more information:

contact the Department of Education, Finance and Procurement Services

Phone: 1800 816 057

For information on Centrelink assistance programs contact Centrelink's Youth and Student Services on 13 24 90 or visit: www.centrelink.gov.au

Financial assistance for grandparents

Financial assistance is available to grandparents raising grandchildren and includes access to both the Student Assistant Scheme (STAS) and the Spectacles Assistance Scheme.

To be eligible for financial assistance, grandparents will be required to complete a STAS application form and show evidence that grandchildren are legally in their care.



Dependent children of temporary visa holders

If you hold a temporary visa, your child can be enrolled in a government school. Enrolment entitlement into a specific school is based on residential address, the same as it is for the children of Australian citizens and permanent residents.

Tuition fees apply to most temporary resident enrolments. Liability for tuition fees, and the amount payable, depends on the class of visa you hold. Before you can enrol your child you must have an Authority to Enrol. The Authority is issued by Government Education and Training International following payment of tuition fees.

School levies also apply to the enrolment of temporary residents. These are paid directly to your school when you enrol your child.

If you have difficulty in meeting the financial requirements, please contact Government Education and Training International by phoning (03) 6233 3020.

Education Tax Refund

The Education Tax Refund (ETR) helps eligible families and independent students meet the cost of primary and secondary school education.

If eligible, you can claim a refund for education expenses you incur while your child is attending school or college.

For the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011, you can claim expenditure up to:

- \$794 for each eligible child in primary school – with a 50% refund of \$397
- \$1,588 for each eligible child in secondary school – with a 50% refund of \$794.

Eligible education expenses includes expenditure on things like home computing – computers, printers, software, internet costs etc. that are used for educational purposes - textbooks, stationery etc.

With effect from the 2011-12 financial year school uniform costs are also claimable.

For more information about the Education Tax Refund, including eligibility conditions and more detail on what can and can't be claimed, you should either visit the Australian Taxation Office website www.ato.gov.au or talk to your accountant.

Other financial assistance

There are some other options which may provide funding for students needing additional support.

For further information:

visit the Department's website:
www.education.tas.gov.au/school/parents/costs/assistance

or contact Finance and Procurement Services by phoning 1800 816 057.



Learning Services

Learning Services (South)

213 Cambridge Road, Warrane 7018

Phone: (03) 6212 3119 Fax: (03) 6212 3111

Email: Learning.Services.SE@education.tas.gov.au

Learning Services (North-West)

60 Wilmot Street, Burnie, Tasmania 7320

Phone: (03) 6434 6389 Fax: (03) 6431 8085

Email: Learning.Services.NW@education.tas.gov.au

Learning Services (North)

2 Invermay Road, Inveresk, Tasmania 7250

Phone: (03) 6336 2594 Fax: (03) 6334 3350

Email: Learning.Services.north@education.tas.gov.au

Department of Education Service Centre

1800 816 057

www.education.tas.gov.au