TRANSIENT STUDENTS

Around 3,500 students were recognised as transient during the 2018 year. Māori students, female students and students who attend decile 1 schools were more likely to be transient than other groups.

Indicator Description

Students who move school twice or more over the period from the 1st of March to the 1st of November.

Why This Is Important

Students need stability in their schooling in order to experience continuity, belonging and support so that they stay interested and engaged in learning.

All schools face the constant challenge of ensuring that students feel they belong and are encouraged to participate at school. When students arrive at a school part-way through a term or school year, having been at another school with different routines, this challenge may become greater.

Students have better outcomes if they do not move school regularly. There is good evidence that student transience has a negative impact on student outcomes, both in New Zealand and overseas. Research suggests that students who move home or school frequently are more likely to underachieve in formal education when compared with students that have a more stable school life. A recent study found that school movement had an even stronger effect on educational success than residential movement.

There is also evidence that transience can have negative effects on student behaviour, and on short term social and health experiences.
How We Are Going

In 2018, 3,548 students were identified as transferring school twice or more between 1st March and 1st November. These students are considered transient. Of these transient students, 88% transferred school twice, 10% transferred 3 times, and 1% transferred 4 times or more.

Over the measurement period from March to November, the rate of student transience was 4.5 per 1,000 students; this is a decrease in the rate since 2017 where the rate was 4.7 per 1,000 students. There has been a steady decline in the rate of transience since 2016, particularly driven by the decline in rates for Māori students.

Figure 1: Transients per 1,000 enrolled students (2011 - 2018)
Ethnic Group

Māori students continue to have highest rate of transience in 2018, with a rate of 10.4 per 1,000 enrolled Māori students. They have also seen the largest decrease in the rate of transience amongst all ethnic groups, there was a decrease of 0.7 students per 1,000 from the 2017 rate of 11.4 per 1,000. This is most likely the primary reason the national rate of transience has been in decline.

Since 2011, Māori students have had the highest rates of transience, nearly twice that of the next closest group which is Pacific students with a rate of 5.8 per 1,000 enrolled Pacific students. The rate for other ethnic groups all fall below 3.0 per 1,000 students in 2018; European/Pākehā was 2.9 per 1,000, and Asian students was 1.8 per 1,000 students.

Figure 2: Transients per 1,000 enrolled students by ethnic group (2011 - 2018)
Gender

In 2018, female students continued to have a higher rate of transience than male students, with a rate of 4.6 per 1,000 students; compared to the male rate of 4.3 per 1,000 students. In 2012 the rate for female students was 10% higher than that of males and in 2018 that difference has decreased to 7%.

Figure 3: Transients per 1,000 enrolled students by gender (2011-2018)
Age

Younger students are more likely to be transient, with the highest rate of transience being reported by those who were 6 years old at the 1st of March 2018.

There is an exception to this trend at age 14 where there is a spike in the transient rate; this age generally being one year after the transition into secondary schooling and typically before beginning NCEA.

Figure 4: Transients per 1,000 enrolled students by age as at 1st March (2018)
Decile

Schools in the lowest deciles draw their students from communities with the highest degree of socio-economic disadvantage. To look at the relationship between decile and transient student rates, students are counted once for each decile associated with each of the schools they attended.

There is a correlation between school socio-economic mix and the rate of transient students. As decile increases, the number of transient students decreases.

The rate of transience for students who attended a decile 1 school was 23.9 per 1,000 students, this is nearly 6 times higher than students who attend a decile 10 school, where the rate is 3.6 per 1,000 students.

Figure 5: Transients per 1,000 enrolled students by Decile (2018)
Region

Transient students are counted once in each Region they attended school. Regional spread of transient students was examined in the same way as the spread amongst deciles.

Students in Auckland had the lowest rate of transience at 4.6 per 1,000 students. The highest rate of transience Northland (16.6 per 1,000), followed by West Coast (15.3 per 1,000) and Gisborne (14.8 per 1,000). ¹

As rates of transience take into account the population of a region, regions with smaller populations can have an inflated rate of transience. When examining the number of transient students in each region, Auckland, Waikato and Canterbury regions have the highest number of transient students.

Figure 6: Transients per 1,000 enrolled students by Region (2018)

¹ Although, not all students who are transient attend a physical school, as such the rate of transience for correspondence school is 47.1 per 1,000 students.
Cumulative transience in primary aged children

This section provides a measure of student movement over time.

The earliest that a student may need to transition to the next stage of their schooling is at the start of their seventh school year, when they may need to move into an intermediate or secondary school. We examined how many school movements the 2013 cohort of 5-year-olds had over the six years before they reached this first natural schooling transition.

In their first year, 2013, 0.5% of the cohort had made two or more school movements, which may be explained by the shorter time period which they have to make these moves in the first year. But over time this percentage increases steadily between the years 2013 to 2018, with 15% having made more than two school movements by the end of their sixth year since starting school.

*Table 1: Cumulative transient measure for 2013* cohort*

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**Notes:**
1. All students who started school at 5 years of age in 2013
2. Examines a cohort across the first 6 years of schooling, before any natural transitions to other schooling eg, intermediate/secondary
3. This table related to cumulative movements over a cumulative time period, unlike other measures in this indicator that look at movements within a given year.
Transience and achievement as a school leaver

Students who have moved school twice or more across Year 9 to Year 11 are less than half as likely to achieve NCEA Level 2 or above by the time they leave school compared to those who have not moved school.

For the cohort of students who began Year 9 in 2013, students who had not moved school from Year 9 to Year 11 achieve NCEA Level 2 or above at a rate of 87% by the time they leave school. This is compared to those who have moved school twice or more who achieve NCEA Level 2 or above at a rate of 43%. These results are consistent with findings from previous years.

Figure 7: Secondary school transience and NCEA Level 2 achievement as a school leaver

![Bar chart showing percentage of cohort achieving Level 2 or above when leaving school.](chart.png)
Where to Find Out More

To obtain information about other forms of student disengagement consider these indicators:

- Early leaving exemptions.
- Non-enrolled students.
- Retention of students in senior secondary schools.
- Stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions from school.
- Truancy from school.

References