TRANSIENT STUDENTS

Around 3,200 students were recognised as transient during the 2019 year. Māori students and students who attend low decile 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 2019, 3,262 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 2% transferred 4 times or more.

Over the measurement period from March to November, the rate of student transience was 4.0 per 1,000 students; this is a decrease in the rate since 2018 where the rate was 4.5 per 1,000 students. There has been a steady decline in the rate of transience since 2016.

Figure 1: Transient students per 1,000 students (2011 - 2019)
Ethnic Group

While Māori students have the highest rate of transience in 2019, with a rate of 9.4 per 1,000 enrolled Māori students, this rate has been dropping since 2016.

Pacific students also have a relatively high transience rate of 4.9 per 1,000 enrolled Pacific students. The rates for other ethnic groups are below 3.0 per 1,000 students. In 2019, European/Pākehā was 2.8 per 1,000 students, and Asian students was 1.3 per 1,000 students.

Figure 2: Transient students per 1,000 students by ethnic group (2011 - 2019)
Gender

In 2019, the transience rate for female students dropped to 4.1 per 1,000 students, almost the same the male rate of 4.0 per 1,000 students.

Figure 3: Transient students per 1,000 students by gender (2011-2019)
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 2019.

There are two exceptions to this trend. In 2019 there is a spike at age 9 for female students. The second spike in the transient rate is at age 14 for both male and female students, this age generally being one year after the transition into secondary schooling and typically before beginning NCEA.

Figure 4: Transient students per 1,000 students by age as at 1st March (2019)
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 quintile 1 (decile 1 and 2) school was 20.6 per 1,000 students, this is more than 6 times higher than students who attend a quintile 5 (decile 9 and 10) school, where the rate is 3.3 per 1,000 students.

Over last nine years, the rate of transient students in quintile 1 schools peaked in 2016 (26.3 per 1,000 students), however it has decreased in 2019 to the lowest level since 2011. The transience rate has decreased most in schools in lower quintiles since 2018.

Figure 5: Transient students per 1,000 students by Quintile (2011 - 2019)
Region

Transient students are counted once in each Region where they attended school\(^1\).

Students in Auckland had the lowest rate of transience at 4.1 per 1,000 students. Northland had the highest rate of transience (14.9 per 1,000), followed by West Coast (12.5 per 1,000) and Gisborne (11.3 per 1,000).

When examining the number of transient students in each region, Auckland, Waikato and Canterbury regions have the highest number of transient students.

**Figure 6: Transient students per 1,000 students by Region (2019)**

\(^1\) Although, not all students who are transient attend a physical school, as such the rate of transience for correspondence school is 48.9 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 2014 cohort of 5-year-olds had over the six years before they reached this first natural schooling transition.

In their first year, 2014, 0.5% (299 students) 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 (since children start school throughout the year, as they reach 5 years of age). By the end of their sixth year since starting school the cumulative percentage of transient students increased to 14.7% (9,294 students) having made more than two school movements.

The proportion of the cohort which had made two or more school movements by the end of their sixth year since starting school is consistent for the 2010 to 2014 cohorts.

Table 1: Cumulative transient measure for 2014* cohort

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Note:
1 *All students who started school at 5 years of age in 2014.
2 Examines a cohort across first 6 years of schooling (before any natural transitions into other schooling types e.g. Intermediate/secondary school).
3 This table relates to cumulative movements over a cumulative time period unlike other measures in this indicator that look at movement within a given year.

Figure 7: Proportion of the cohort with two or more transients by the end of their sixth year since starting (2010 to 2014 cohorts)
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 2014, 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. Only 49% of students who have moved school twice or more achieve NCEA Level 2 or above. This is an improvement from the 2013 cohort of Year 9 students, in which 43% of students who had moved school twice or more achieved NCEA Level 2 or above.

Figure 8: Secondary school transience and NCEA Level 2 achievement as a school leaver

Note: 2014 year 9
Where to Find Out More

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

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

References