

9 December 2022

Submission to: The national trend of school refusal and related matters inquiry

School refusal is a live issue in the Queensland independent school sector and an area of growing concern for parents and educators.

In our research for this submission, ***Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network*** has been told of:

- Parents who have had to quit their jobs - or significantly scale back their hours - to care for a child who is refusing to go to school and can't be left unsupervised at home;
- Emotional and wellbeing impacts on parents who are doing their best to support their child and navigate very complex situations, without adequate mental health support/resources.
- School teachers and principals doing their very best to support students and families but who are under-resourced in terms of available support services/mental health support;
- Smaller schools and distance education schools being sought out by parents as a potential better fit or 'fix' for their child who is refusing school, resulting in overload on schools with limited resources compared to their larger counterparts;
- In some cases, the children who are refusing school have parents with anxiety, so supporting a child can also involve supporting their parents.

The ***Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network*** would advocate for:

1. Increased - and equal -mental health and wellbeing resources for schools across all education sectors.
2. Increased - and equal - mental health and wellbeing resources for families across all education sectors.
3. Targeted, evidence-based support for students who are repeatedly refusing school.
4. Evidence-based education and information for families about school refusal including steps they can take and advice on where they can go for assistance.

ENDS