

The impact of school chaplaincy on attendance and educational outcomes

Snapshot of a study into the relationship between school chaplaincy services and educational outcomes in Western Australia

975

Days of additional learning per classroom over the course of their schooling

Average classroom size of 25 students*

"This report tells us something we have always known. Students must first feel a sense of safety, belonging and purpose, before they are in a position to succeed with anything else. School chaplains play a vital role in creating safe, connected and caring school communities. When children know they are supported, valued and that a team of people genuinely have their back, they are far more likely to believe in themselves, believe in their ability to learn and they thrive both socially and academically."

Niel Smith, President of Western Australian Primary Principals' Association (WAAPA)



"Secondary school leaders have long felt that chaplains make a difference in their schools; with our students, their families, and our staff reporting the positive impact their School Chaplain has on their wellbeing. What we haven't had, until now, was concrete data to back up our feelings. The McCrindle report provides this data, categorically showing the link between school chaplaincy and student attendance over the last decade. Post-COVID, the stark difference in attendance between schools with a chaplain and those without cannot be ignored. Investing in a chaplain to improve student attendance is likely the most cost effective investment a school could ever make. But it's more than just attendance – you can't put a cost on the value of kids feeling safe and supported at school."

Melissa Gillett, President of Western Australian Secondary School Executives Association (WASSEA)

Socio-educationally disadvantaged schools with a chaplain present experience

1,100

days of extra classtime over the course of their schooling per classroom

Average classroom size of 20 students*

YouthCARE's report clearly shows that regular chaplaincy has a measurable impact on attendance, particularly in our most disadvantaged schools. For WA-ESPAA this shows in students with disability and neurodivergence, with the relational safety and predictable support chaplains provide often being the difference between attending and disengaging. To meet the needs of today's complexities in schools, chaplains must be equipped with strong neurodiversity capability. Leaders must embed them within multidisciplinary wellbeing teams, and the funding has to be consistent rather than ad-hoc. Upskilling chaplains in this space is not optional, it is the future of effective, inclusive support in WA schools.

Joanne Markovic, President of Western Australian Education Support Principals and Administrators Association (WA-ESPAA)

7^{to}9%

Students in schools with regular chaplaincy are more likely to meet NAPLAN national minimum standards, with a **seven to nine percentage point advantage** over schools without.



87%



More than **six in seven** WA school parents (87%) believe it is important to have chaplains in school. This includes nearly half (48%) who consider it very important.

93%



YouthCARE Chaplains support more than **nine in ten** (93%) of Western Australia's total government schools.

89%



Among those with access, nearly **nine in ten** WA school parents (89%) rate the chaplaincy services as good or very good.