

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 175**  
**Asked on 6 March 2024**

**MR T NICHOLLS** ASKED MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND MINISTER FOR YOUTH JUSTICE (HON D FARMER)

QUESTION:

Will the Minister provide (reported separately by year for the last three years) the number of actual contact hours of education provided by Department of Education staff to individual detainees in watchhouses per (a) day and (b) five day working week?

ANSWER:

Young people who are refused bail and held in a watchhouse are in the custody of the Queensland Police Service (QPS); however, additional supports and services are provided by the Department of Youth Justice (DYJ) and Queensland Health through 24/7 presence along with service delivery by the Youth Advocacy Centre and Murri Watch within the Caboolture Watchhouse Education Support Hub (the Hub), working collaboratively alongside the QPS continuing to manage and operate the Hub as a functional watchhouse.

The Department of Education (DoE) recently entered into an interim arrangement for the provision of educational services to young persons held temporarily at the Hub pending their admission to a youth detention centre or their next court appearance. These arrangements commenced on 15 December 2023 and are expected to continue until the commencement of the new Wacol youth remand facility in late 2024.

Outside of the arrangement with the Hub, DoE does not currently directly deliver education sessions to young persons held temporarily in QPS watchhouses; however, DoE has developed a range of resources to provide meaningful education, literacy and numeracy that young people can complete while they are in a watchhouse. Where resources permit, DYJ staff assist young people to complete these activities.

The number of contact hours provided to students through the Hub per day and per week are set out below. In order to provide a manageable data set, the response has been expressed in terms of average contact hours per student per day.

Average contact hours per student 22 to 26 January 2024\*: Monday – 0.5; Tuesday – 0.7; Wednesday – 1.0; Thursday – 1.1; and Friday – Public Holiday; Average contact hours per week:2.6.

Average contact hours per student per day 29 January to 2 February 2024\*: Monday – 0.9; Tuesday – 0.9; Wednesday – 0.8; Thursday – 0.9; and Friday –0.7. Average contact hours per week:5.0.

Average contact hours per student 5 to 9 February 2024\*: Monday – 0.8; Tuesday – 0.9; Wednesday – 0.8; Thursday – 0.4; and Friday – 0.7. Average contact hours per week: 3.4.

Average contact hours per student 12 to 16 February 2024\*: Monday – 0.9; Tuesday – 0.8; Wednesday – 0.6; Thursday – Student Free Day; and Friday – Student Free Day. Average contact hours per week: 2.7.

Average contact hours per student 19 to 23 February 2024\*: Monday – 0.6; Tuesday – 0.6; Wednesday – 0.7; Thursday – 0.8; and Friday – 1.0. Average contact hours per week: 4.5.

Average contact hours per student 26 February to 1 March 2024\*: Monday – 0.9; Tuesday – 0.9; Wednesday – 1.1; Thursday – 0.9; and Friday – 0.8. Average contact hours per week: 3.8.

Average contact hours per student 4 to 8 March 2024\*: Monday – 0.7; Tuesday – 0.7; Wednesday – 0.7; Thursday – 0.7; and Friday – 0.9. Average contact hours per week: 3.8

Average contact hours per student 11 to 15 March 2024\*: Monday – 0.7; Tuesday – 0.7; Wednesday – 0.9; Thursday – 0.6; and Friday – 0.9. Average contact hours per week: 3.8.

*\* As the question requested contact hours, these figures have been expressed as hours or proportions thereof. For example, 0.5 would be 30 minutes and 1.1 would be 1 hour 6 minutes.*

Average contact hours are calculated based on the total number of young people accommodated at the watchhouse facility who are able to attend education sessions. This may be impacted by a wide range of factors which are predominantly outside the control of the Hub, including absences relating to court attendance, medical treatment or testing and QPS assessments of whether a young person is able to safely attend a learning session.

Average contact hours per week were only calculated for those students who have been accommodated at the Caboolture Watchhouse for a full school week (noting that students are typically only held at the watchhouse for a number of days).

Young people are held in watchhouses as part of normal processing following an arrest or if they are refused bail, while waiting to appear in court or be admitted to a youth detention centre.

At times, young people can be held for longer periods where admission to youth detention is not possible or practicable within the constraints of transport, distance to a youth detention centre, in-person court appearance requirements and when youth detention centres are operating at full capacity.

Young people who are remanded in custody in a watchhouse are provided a range of support by DYJ staff and funded non-government service providers, including educational materials, books, mental health, and family, cultural and legal visits as needed.

DYJ conducts daily prioritisation assessments (Monday to Friday) of all young people in watchhouses across the State ensuring those most vulnerable are prioritised for youth detention centre admission.

In liaison with QPS and Queensland Health, these assessments consider a range of factors including age, gender, Indigenous status and any specific risks or vulnerabilities, such as medical conditions and mental health issues.