

Question on Notice
No. 1332
Asked on 25 October 2023

DR C ROWAN ASKED MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON G GRACE)

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise in all state schools (a) how many teachers have taken sick leave in 2021-22 and 2022-23 and (b) how many days of sick leave have been taken in total in each year?

ANSWER:

Supporting the health and wellbeing of the 96,000 (headcount) strong workforce is a priority for the Department of Education.

Access to sick leave is an important entitlement for an employee's health and wellbeing, and sustains a healthy and productive environment in our schools for everyone. This has been particularly important in recent times while schools have been operating within emerging COVID-19 infections and during winter flu seasons. The health advice is always to stay home if you are unwell.

In relation to part (a), 53,092 teachers took a period of sick leave in 2021–22 and 53,429 teachers took a period of sick leave in 2022–23. A period of sick leave is where leave has been recorded in line with the Leave Policy for the department. The figures above represent the number of unique (individual) teachers who took sick leave over the course of the year. It does not include casuals as they do not accrue sick leave benefits.

In relation to part (b), there were 401,626 total work days absent for the teacher workforce in 2021–22 and 464,688 work days absent for the teacher workforce in 2022–23. As per parts (a) and (b), this equates to approximately 7.5 and 8.7 days of sick leave on average for each teacher over those two years respectively.

Teacher sick leave rates are comparable to sick leave rates for the whole of department, and below that when benchmarked against the whole-of-Government.