

Dear families

Our school community is a vibrant and diverse representation of society, where children learn and grow. We rely on the local community, parents and families to partner with us in their children's learning journey and encourage open communication.

We all share a responsibility for providing a safe, supportive and productive environment, free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence. Parents and carers, and other visitors to our school, support safety by ensuring communication and conduct at school and school activities is respectful. We all have the right to feel safe and be safe at school.

The Department of Education has recently released *Connect and Respect*, a suite of resources to assist school communities in setting shared and respectful expectations to enable us to continue to work together in the best interests of our children.

This includes when and how to contact the school, what you can expect from us and the behaviours that interfere with teaching and learning. These resources and guidelines will assist us to continue to build upon our culture of connection and engagement, and we will implement them to support our staff to deliver quality education at our school.

Yours sincerely



Helen Maitland
Principal

20 July 2023



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Standing together against violence

**Minister's statement on how
families can help keep schools safe**



From the Minister

Students, teachers and staff members have a right to feel safe at school. We need to ensure our schools are a safe learning environment – free from the threat of violence.

Violence is a complicated issue and there are many factors involved – but bringing this into our public schools is unacceptable. The overwhelming majority of students and families show care and respect for peers and school staff, however, we are serious about protecting the needs of our school communities from any form of violence from both students and family members.

In the same way parents are our children's most influential role models at home, so too are they seminal role models when it comes to showing kids how they should behave at school. The behaviour of students is strongly influenced by the way adults conduct themselves.

This is why we are asking school communities to lead by example and focus on building respectful relationships with staff, to demonstrate to their own children the type of positive engagement they expect them to have with their teachers.

Parents and staff working hand in hand is the most effective way of preventing bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence in our schools. To keep our public schools safe, parents and staff are encouraged to connect and respect the vital part each play in ensuring our places of learning are supportive and empowering.

To assist, a guide has been created to make it clear about what is expected when parents and school staff engage. It provides practical ways in which parents, carers and visitors to schools can contribute to creating a better culture, improved communication and greater collaboration. It's about strengthening these important partnerships and sharing the responsibility of caring for our children.

In response to emerging social issues, this updated action plan builds on previous State Government initiatives. It outlines procedures if schools need to escalate matters, with targeted use of suspensions and exclusions to support students to make good choices.

A new initiative to broaden this approach is the launch of a Connect and Respect support team available to principals and school managers offering advice and wraparound services. It will explore strategies and provide resources to address and resolve concerns.

Trusting and transparent relationships between schools and families is key to preventing school violence. These strengthen student foundations – at home and at school – increasing overall wellbeing, resilience and positive behaviour.

Fundamentally, our schools are a reflection of our local communities. We all share a personal responsibility of how to behave in the community and we equally need to demonstrate the same level of respect and caring in our schools.

Our Government is committed to providing quality education to all students – help us work together, in the best interest of our kids, to keep our schools safe places for learning.



Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA
Minister for Education



Actions

Our implementation of these updated actions will demonstrate the principles of fairness, inclusion and respect.

Action 1

Principals to suspend students who attack other students, start fights or share and promote violence

- Automatic suspension for students who attack other students or instigate fights.
- Automatic suspension for students who choose to film or share fight content or promote violence.
- Principals to develop a behaviour plan with families for the student's return to school.

Action 2

Principals to automatically move to exclude any student who physically attacks school staff

- After a physical attack, principals will immediately start an exclusion process.
- 'Exclusion' means the student is removed from a particular school permanently or for a specified period of time.
- Exclusion orders can only be made by the Director General.
- An exclusion order can be made to direct the student to attend an alternative school or education program.

Action 3

Alternative learning settings for the most violent students

- Every student has the right to an education – however some need intensive behaviour support.
- Alternative learning settings provide programs for students to continue their learning.
- These programs have been expanded to all education regions and support positive behaviour change in violent students.

Action 4

Clear advice for principals, teachers and education assistants on authority and responsibility to take action

- New protocols and guidelines to help support safer schools.
- Clear expectations to ensure respectful engagement with schools.
- This includes protocols to help build respectful school cultures, and productive collaboration and communication.

Action 5

Provide training and support for school staff

- Provide a range of training options to support schools to increase pro-social behaviour and reduce coercive behaviours.
- Support schools to implement the Quality Teaching Strategy.
- Targeted support for schools with high incidence of violence and aggression.

Action 6

Enhance 'good standing' requirements

- Expand loss of 'good standing' to include students who share or promote violence.
- Every public school to review its 'good standing' requirements.
- Students who lose 'good standing' for violent behaviour will have privileges removed – such as being banned from school social activities.
- 'Good standing' can be re-instated after the student has demonstrated positive behavioural change, as decided by the principal.

Action 7

Support programs for parents with clear expectations

- Internationally-recognised Triple P – Positive Parenting Program offered free to all Western Australian parents.
- Clear expectations for parents to engage respectfully with schools.

Action 8

Ensure schools are ready to respond to incidents of intruders or external risk

- Provide advice through the Incident Support Unit to support schools to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a range of incidents.
- Establish protocols with police to deal with incidents of extreme violence.
- Provide training and targeted support for principals.

Action 9

Continue a community conversation about violence in schools and online

- A consistent message for parents to set clear expectations of behaviour.
- Delivery and implementation of 'Connect and Respect' resources.
- Clear approach to manage adult behaviour that impacts learning.

Action 10

Give young people a voice and let them identify actions they believe could address violence in the community

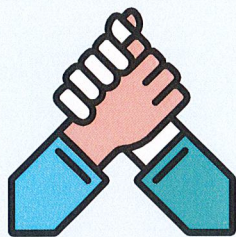
- Harness the views and ideas of the WA Student Council.
- Continue focus groups with students to share their views on violence.
- Support young people to recommend solutions.

Connect and Respect

Every student, staff member, parent or carer has the right to feel safe and be safe in our schools.

We all share a responsibility for providing a safe, supportive and productive environment, free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence.

What we can all expect:



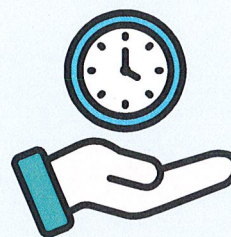
mutual
respect



good
behaviour



open
communication



respect for each
other's time

We will not tolerate:



offensive, insulting
or aggressive
language



malicious or
judgemental
gossip



using
social media
disrespectfully



any form
of violence

Shared and respectful expectations and values will enable us to work together in the best interests of our children.