



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2025

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),
Miss Laura Nuttall MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS

Asked by: Ms Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Education and Youth Affairs

Redirected to: NA

Reference: Uncorrected Hansard Transcript pages 124 - 126

In relation to: Global conflict policies and guidance

Hearing Date: 1 August 2024

QTON lodgement date: 2 August 2024

Answer Due Date: 7 August 2024

MS CLAY: Thank you, Chair. Minister, what policies and guidance have been put in place to support teachers and other school staff in their engagement with children when the subject of the Israel Palestine and Gaza arises in the school environment?

Ms Haire: Ms Clay, I will ask that to Deputy Director-General Ms Simmons, to answer that question, which I think we also answered through a QON with one of your—a question on notice—with one of your colleagues recently.

Ms Berry: I think this is a challenging space but it is not something that schools have not experienced before across a range of complex areas, including marriage equality, the voice campaign and now this Palestine—this one as well. It is a challenge, but it is a challenge that the schools try their best to manage, but we are one part of the community, so we cannot fix all of the problems of the world; we do our best.

MS CLAY: Thank you. We did have a question on notice; the last I checked, we had not received a response back, but maybe it has come back recently. That is okay. Are there specific policies and guidance that we have in place; is there anything that we have published?

Ms Simmons: In October last year we provided guidance and information to all staff about the wellbeing services and resources that are available to support them when there is any distressing event, particular, obviously, the Middle East issue was a distressing event and we provided that information and that information came from me in October last year. Some of that is guidance about how to reach out to families and students and talk with students and their families about actually what is going on, we have given guidance around that.

We have also given guidance around access to the eSafety Commissioner so that a range of materials are available on websites and things like that, that can be distressing and so that information was provided. Also how to undertaken, an eSafety online report when those distressing items do come up on a website. There are also resources to support young people and their

families on how to respond if they are, you know, obviously family trauma associated with families that may be in the Middle East and so resources for that.

Also support for staff, the schools are encouraged to check in with their staff and encourage conversations with one another. Obviously, that was very much at the forefront when it first became apparent that this was going to be something that was going to affect our schools and our community. Of course, the support for our schools through all of our allied health professionals, and they have certainly been aware of that, and when there have been instances where students need support that support has been provided.

Also we were able to—the Australia government announced the delivery of additional funding for socio-cohesion support, and that was in October last year as well. the funding recognised the impact of the Hamas attack on Israel and ongoing conflict in the Gaza. The funding was a one-off payment to Jewish and Islamic schools or those schools with a high proportion of students of Jewish or Islamic faith. That funding period was for the 2023-24 year. 15 ACT schools, both public and non-government schools, received funding and the total funding was \$113,240.47.

MS CLAY: Thank you, Ms Simmons. Now, I was tracking, I may have missed, there were a number of guidance's that you provided on the eSafety Commissioner, distressing events, how to respond to young people, support for staff, and there might have been a fifth one; can you publish those?

Ms Simmons: Yes. So, there is also information now, safe and supportive schools policy, which Ms Spence could give more details around, but that information is certainly available. We gave links to the schools for that information and we can provide that.

MS CLAY: Could you perhaps just on notice provide the published links to all of those documents that you have mentioned?

Ms Simmons: Yes.

Minister Yvette Berry: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

On 13 October 2023, the Education Directorate Deputy Director-General provided the following links to resources to all ACT public schools for principals to disseminate to their school communities.

- Responding to students' trauma disclosures
<https://sifr.foundationhouse.org.au/app/uploads/2020/07/Responding-to-students-trauma-disclosures.pdf>
- Responding to students' trauma reactions
<https://sifr.foundationhouse.org.au/app/uploads/2020/07/Responding-to-students-trauma-reactions-v3-1.pdf>
- Dealing with trauma: A guide for young people who have experienced trauma
<https://www.phoenixaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Dealing-with-trauma-A-Guide-for-Young-People-who-have-Experienced-Trauma.pdf>
- Helping my children after trauma: A guide for parents
<https://psychology.org.au/for-the-public/psychology-topics/tragic-events-community-violence/helping-children-cope-after-community-violence>
- Helping Children After Traumatic Events
<https://www.phoenixaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Helping-my-Children-after-Trauma-%E2%80%93-A-Guide-for-Parents.pdf>
- Responding Constructively to Tragedy
<https://psychology.org.au/for-the-public/psychology-topics/tragic-events-community-violence/responding-constructively-to-disaster-tragedy>
- Helping Children Cope after Community Tragedy
<https://psychology.org.au/for-the-public/psychology-topics/tragic-events-community-violence/helping-children-cope-after-community-violence>
- [MindMap](#): 1800 862 111
- [headspace](#): 1800 650 890
- [Kids Helpline](#): 1800 551 800

- [Lifeline](#): 13 11 14
- [Beyond Blue](#): 1300 224 636.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-2025

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' shape with a horizontal line through the middle.

Date:

28/05/24

By the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs [Yvette Berry]