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Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the management and minimisation of bullying
and violence in ACT schools

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INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT AND MINIMISATION OF BULLYING AND VIOLENCE IN GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

**ACT Government Submission to the Standing
Committee on Education, Employment and
Youth Affairs**

Education Directorate
May 2019



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INTRODUCTION

The ACT Government submission to the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs (the Committee) *Inquiry into the Management and Minimisation of Bullying and Violence in ACT Schools* focuses on work under way to prevent and respond to bullying and violence in ACT government schools.

There are 88 ACT government schools with more than 49,000 students, supported by around 7,000 staff. Bullying and violence is a broad societal issue. The ACT Government has taken a comprehensive approach to supporting school communities, students, staff and their families, in managing this complex issue. The approach taken follows extensive reform undertaken by the ACT Education Directorate in recent years to develop a systematic approach to supporting the health and safety of all people in ACT government schools. There are strong foundations for what is an ongoing journey of improvement, as is illustrated through several case studies.

The Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development has recently sought an independent, expert appraisal of the status of the government's management of these issues through a constructive forum comprising key perspectives, including that of parents and carers. The Minister established a school education advisory committee for the *Education Act 2004* to provide advice on opportunities for strengthening safe and supportive school culture in every ACT government school.

To enhance the submission, case studies at the student, teacher and school level have been provided to illustrate how the Education Directorate's multi-faceted approach guides schools in creating safe and supportive environments and managing issues when they arise.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ACT Government is investing in an equitable, inclusive, universally accessible and safe public education system. The government wants each young person in the ACT empowered to learn and reach their potential despite the social and economic circumstances in their life. Every young person has a place in government school education and the ACT Government is investing in strengthening the capability of every government school to respond to the diversity of individual student needs and behaviours that seen in the community. In doing so, government school teachers are supported to develop capable, mature and resilient adults who understand the value of learning, live productively in society, and think, create and work in an increasingly digital environment.

Students, teachers and parents have joined the government through the *Future of Education Strategy* in committing to place students at the centre of their learning, empowering teachers, school leaders and other professionals to meet the learning needs of all students, building strong communities for learning and strengthening systems to focus on equity with quality. The Strategy builds on the significant government investment over recent years in creating safe, supportive and inclusive schools. It echoes the simple but important principle that school leaders and staff are committed to nurturing and developing people to make a positive, constructive contribution to the ACT community. It is important that the ACT community recognise and value this commitment and the effort it requires.

Schools in the public education system reflect the full breadth of the ACT community and overwhelmingly schools see the positive values and attributes of the community in schools every day. Sometimes, issues of bullying and violence from the broader community are transposed into schools. Mostly this manifests as student on student bullying and violence (including cyberbullying), and occupational violence, including that directed by parents towards school staff. The ACT Government does not accept or condone violence anywhere in society and is committed to prevention and early support to reduce the incidence and impact of violence in the ACT community. This commitment is reflected in the policies and procedures that drive and guide practice in our schools to support safe, supportive and inclusive environments. The government take this matter very seriously because bullying and violence can have immediate and long term negative impacts on all parties involved. Bullying and violence can create anxiety, fear and distress and have lasting impact on a person's



psychological and physical health. For students, this can impede their full participation in school life, learning and enjoyment of school.



The government's commitment to safe and supportive schools for staff and students is unambiguous. There is no place for bullying or violence in government schools.

Safety in schools is important to the ACT Government, students, their families, school staff and the broader community. Schools are places where students love to learn, and where they should feel confident and connected. This requires safe and predictable learning environments for students and staff alike, with a focus on wellbeing and mutual respect. Just as schools have a clearly articulated vision for the education of each young person, they are also committed to supporting the safety and wellbeing of staff and students.

The Education Directorate's multifaceted approach to minimising violence and bullying in schools seeks to foster positive, healthy and respectful relationships where students demonstrate pro-social values and attitudes and are equipped with social and emotional skills for life. The ACT Education Directorate's *Safe and Supportive Schools Policy 2016*¹ is a key foundation of this approach, articulating a commitment to:

"...ensuring schools are inclusive places where students, families and staff feel accepted, valued and connected to their school. Respectful relationships, fair and equitable processes and embracing diversity are core values which underpin ACT government schools" (p.1).

This policy provides guidance to schools on establishing a culture of respect, equality and compassion. It also requires schools to adopt a whole school approach to positive behaviour support, such as the Positive Behaviour for Learning Framework which is being rolled out across ACT government schools, and to explicitly teach social and emotional learning skills to students. Building on these strong foundations and guided by relevant learning areas and general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum, schools implement a range of programs and initiatives aimed at building respectful relationships and tackling issues of bullying, cyberbullying and e-safety.

Providing strong support for student wellbeing is core to responding to violence in schools. This Submission outlines the contemporary and holistic model of student wellbeing employed in ACT government schools that draws on the expertise of professionals across a range of disciplines to meet the specific needs of individual students. The government prioritises a whole school consistent approach to positive behaviour management for all students, planning and individualised support for students with additional needs and targeted supports and risk mitigation for the small number of students who demonstrate potentially harmful behaviours.

Schools are both proactive and responsive in their approaches to prevent bullying and violence and ensure students have access to the early support they need when they need it. This Submission provides detailed information on each inter-related element of this approach in addition to a sample of case studies illustrating what this looks like on the ground in our schools.

When examining the issue of bullying and violence in schools, it is important to consider the whole landscape, including what is working well and areas that need to be strengthened. Work undertaken by the Directorate through the Schools for All program has strengthened schools' capacity to support students with complex needs and challenging behaviours across four areas – improving student outcomes, building capability, being informed and collaboration. This program of work provided extensive opportunities for school leaders, teachers and learning support assistants to develop their skills and knowledge through participation in relevant and evidence-based professional learning.

Aligning with Schools for All, empowering school staff to know that they are valued and have the support to respond to individual student need continues to be a key focus on the Directorate under the *Future of Education Strategy*. Schools for All has continued to deliver tangible outcomes and improvements within ACT schools. Notably, this includes a shift in schools' understanding and management of student behaviour in a way that supports positive academic and behavioural outcomes for students as a growing number of schools have commenced implementation of the Positive Behaviour for Learning framework. Outcomes of the Schools for All program are being measured through a robust evaluation framework. A final evaluation report will be prepared at the end of 2019 and made publicly available.



The Directorate has also undertaken substantial work over the past two years to develop a systemic approach to work health and safety that supports the prevention of physical and psychological injury to school staff arising from incidents of occupational violence within ACT schools. This work is ongoing and includes detailed guidance to schools on relevant policies and procedures such as the *Occupational Violence Policy and Management Plan*, professional development for staff on appropriate responses to occupational violence and promotion of a safety and reporting culture. This approach is being undertaken in parallel with Schools for All.

The Directorate is clear on the areas for improvement and continues to invest in reforms that will help reduce the incidence of bullying and violence in our schools. This includes significant investment, in strengthening business intelligence capability to address identified limitations with the legacy systems. This new capability supports the Directorate's strong focus on improving the reporting culture of the organisation and will allow for effective tracking and analysis of data on bullying and violence to facilitate measurement of impact and early support for students and staff through earlier identification of issues. The Directorate is also looking at how the application of restorative justice principles and practices can be strengthened in schools to reduce conflict and strengthen school communities. The ACT Government's commitment to safe and supportive schools is unambiguous. Every student and school worker is entitled to be safe - there is no place for bullying or violence in government schools.

Managing and minimising bullying and violence in schools is a complex issue that cannot be achieved by the education system alone. While this submission focuses on strategies in the ACT public education system, it is important to recognise issues relating to bullying and violence extend beyond the school gate and requires a broader societal response. Tackling this issue requires a community-wide response and action across a range of government and community sectors. There is context for the occurrence of bullying and violence in our community, which affects how this issue manifests in all schools, including ACT government schools, and the scope and impact of the problem.

The prevention and management of bullying and violence in schools is not a new issue. It is an area that requires constant vigilance and review. Over the past four years, significant reform initiatives within the Education Directorate have included a key focus on enhancing staff and student safety. This Submission highlights the relevant work undertaken through these reform initiatives and provides an overview of the Directorate's current strategies for minimising and management bullying and violence in ACT Government schools. It demonstrates the Directorate is already well advanced in its journey to strengthen systems, policies and practices that support safe, supportive inclusive school environments

As the Directorate progresses on this journey, it will be done so with constant vigilance, reflecting the increasingly changing nature of social dynamics in our community in areas such as social media and the amplified connectedness experienced in the digital world. This submission highlights the alignment between ACT approaches to minimising and managing bullying and violence in schools with a range of relevant national policies and initiatives. The Directorate will continue to actively engage with and influence national policy that responds to emerging needs to ensure our approaches to policy and practice are contemporary and fit for purpose.

In line with the government's deep commitment to ensuring the safety of students and staff in ACT Government schools, the Education Directorate will continue to build on and strengthen strategies that support health and safety for the benefit of its workers and students. This will include consideration of advice from the recently established Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee comprising local experts and focused on the identification of opportunities to further strengthen practice in schools.



SOCIETAL CONTEXT AND SCOPE OF THE ISSUE

In Australia and across the globe there is a growing awareness of the level and impact of bullying in society. Bullying is experienced in many contexts, for example in homes, workplaces, online social media and via text messaging or email. Bullying may be physical, but it can also be verbal, emotional and include online messages and statements intended to harm and cause distress. Whatever form bullying takes, results can have lasting negative impact on the person and the people around them.

Bullying and violence occur within a social context and as children and young people develop their personal relationships, they integrate the values and social norms from their family, school and wider social contexts. This includes societal values in relation to diversity and inclusion and how the community treat individuals who may be perceived as 'different'. Schools as mini communities reflect wider social issues, attitudes and values, including where there is bullying or violence in the broader community.

It is therefore not surprising that schools in all sectors experience incidents of student violence or bullying. For example, two in five Australians (39 per cent or 7.2 million people) aged 18 years and over experienced an incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 15ⁱⁱ. A little over one quarter (27 per cent) of year 4 to year 9 Australian students reported being bullied every few weeks or more often in a national study in 2009ⁱⁱⁱ. A 2018 PricewaterhouseCoopers report commissioned by the Alannah & Madeline Foundation's National Centre Against Bullying found that almost 25 per cent of school students in Australia experience bullying at some stage during their time in school^{iv}.

Society's increased use of technology has contributed to the need to protect the online safety for children and young people. This is evidenced by data collected on an ongoing basis by the Office of the eSafety Commissioner. Supporting this protective approach, ACT government schools are proactive in teaching values and conduct to young people that support positive online engagement, including critical skills to help them navigate the online world more safely. The establishment of this office in 2015 aimed to assist Australians and empower them to have safer, more positive experiences online^v, including by encouraging young people to exercise the fundamental values of respect, responsibility, reasoning and resilience.

Education is a universal need in a child's life and establishes their future trajectory. ACT government schools respond to this universal need by aspiring to provide equitable access to education that responds to the individual circumstances of each student. Government schools are open to all children and young people and are the schools of choice in the ACT, with over 49,000 students in 88 schools supported by around 7,000 staff. There is no doubt that for the vast majority of time, schools are safe and supportive for students and staff. When this safety is impacted it is important that our school support networks respond in the way that they should do to support the wellbeing of our staff and students.

In the ACT, the ability to collect and analyse data in relation to bullying and violence in ACT Government schools has been limited by legacy business systems like MAZE and paper files. Capturing the provision of support to students who have experienced bullying or violence is also challenging due to the number of avenues that exist for students to seek help. Information collected on individual cases as part of the school psychology service, for example, is not held centrally as it is governed by health records and privacy legislation. De-identified data collected by the Education Directorate indicates that 0.83% of all referrals to a school psychologist in 2018 related to bullying.

To support the operations of schools, the ACT Government in 2016 invested \$10 million in a project to replace the business information systems for school management. Over time, this system, will significantly improve business intelligence capability, allowing users to identify and report in trends across all ACT Government schools.

There will always be need for deliberate effort to make school communities safe, supportive and inclusive. Every student and school worker is entitled to feel safe and experience safety at school. This expectation of safety is paramount and extends to all members of school communities including teachers, learning support assistants, school leaders, support staff members and volunteers.

For bullying that occurs in the workplace, the *Work Health and Safety (Preventing and Responding to Bullying) Code of Practice 2012^{vi}* provides guidance for organisations in the ACT on preventing and responding to



bullying at work. This includes measures to develop systems that will prevent bullying, respond to reports of bullying and effectively meet legal responsibilities set out in the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*. In complying with this legislation, the Education Directorate seeks to prevent bullying in the workplace long before it becomes a risk to health and safety of staff.

Schools are not isolated from wider social issues and their effects, like bullying or violence seen in the community. They do play a key role, however, in fostering respectful relationships and explicitly teaching students social and emotional skills that support positive interactions and citizenship.

Violence is a complex issue that cannot be attributed to a single factor. Preventing or reducing violence, and meeting the complex needs of vulnerable ACT citizens therefore requires action across a range of sectors including: child, youth and family support, justice, health (particularly mental health), disability, transport, sport and community development. Schools are well positioned to play an important role to play as a partner in achieving this goal. They have the power to influence children and young people with effective universal and targeted approaches. However, it is neither realistic nor feasible for schools to carry the burden of this societal issue alone. Violence is a community problem that requires community-wide solutions.

RECENT REFORMS: A STRONG PLATFORM TO STRENGTHEN STAFF AND STUDENT SAFETY

Over the past four years the Education Directorate has engaged in broad, deep work in developing the current approach to managing and minimising bullying and violence in ACT government schools.

Two major reform initiatives share a focus on increasing safety in schools and have established a solid foundation for ongoing work:

- > Implementation of the Schools for All Program – a three-year program of cultural change (2016-2018) delivering on 50 recommendations from the *Expert Panel on Students with Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviours*; and
- > Development of the ACT Government's *Future of Education Strategy*, a ten-year roadmap for the future of education in the ACT.

Schools for All

The *Schools for All Children and Young People: Report of the Expert Panel on Students with Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour* (Schools for All report) was commissioned in 2015 and authored by an expert panel comprised of Professor Anthony Shaddock, Dr Sue Packer and Mr Alasdair Roy^{vii}. The report made 50 recommendations to the ACT Government, which were considered and actioned as part of the Schools for All program.

Implementation of the Schools for All program involved a collaborative approach to system reform across the Government, Catholic and Independent school sectors to:

- > implement the 50 recommendations of the 2015 Schools for All Report;
- > reinforce a student-centred vision that gives priority to each student's needs in education policy and practice, particularly those with complex needs and challenging behaviour; and
- > implement systemic cultural change, including major policy and program reform necessary to ensure that all recommendations can be sustained in the long-term to support all students, particularly those with complex needs and challenging behaviour.



The Schools for All program has continued to deliver tangible outcomes and improvements within ACT schools, the Education workforce and the broader Education Directorate. This is reflected in the following summary of progress across the life of the three-year program:

Improving student outcomes

- > Schools' understanding and management of student behaviour is shifting in a way that supports positive academic, behavioural and wellbeing outcomes for all students. A growing number of schools have commenced implementation of the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) framework with a focus on values, behaviours and consistent responses to student behaviour. The Education Directorate is committed to implementation of the PBL framework in all government schools;
- > The Directorate has developed and implemented a coherent approach to alternative education programs, with all ACT public high schools now implementing the Continuum of Education model - an evidence-based framework that supports engagement of all students and enables every high school to respond flexibly to meet the diversity of need within their school community; and
- > The ACT Government has committed \$5.6 million over the forward estimates to support the enhancement and development of sensory spaces in schools where staff are able to support students with complex needs and behaviours of concern. Students and staff at 53 schools have benefitted from this investment through improvements to physical environments and infrastructure that have created safe and inclusive spaces that support student engagement and learning.

Building Capability

- > Teachers have continued to build their skills in supporting students with complex needs and challenging behaviour through a high level of engagement with a broad range of relevant online training. More than 130 teachers completed online learning modules in the last 12 months of the program alone;
- > School leaders and teachers have also been supported to access professional learning in areas such as Positive Behaviour for Learning, Team Teach, Essential Skills for Classroom Teachers, Trauma Informed Practice which applies neuroscience in education principals and professional learning packages delivered by allied health specialists to meet the specific needs of students with disability;
- > Teachers and school leaders have been supported to undertake formal study in relation to students with complex needs and challenging behaviours and to share their learnings and best practice through initiatives such as the Teacher Scholarship Program and the Aspiring Leaders Programs;
- > The General Capabilities of the *Australian Curriculum* encompasses several areas which incorporate digital citizenship. Teachers are expected to teach and assess general capabilities incorporated within learning area content. Schools are encouraged and supported to access a range of resources relating to digital citizenship and e-safety. This includes classroom and parent resources on the eSafety Commissioner's website, Bullying. No Way! website and parent resources and presentations available through ThinkUKnow Australia;
- > More than 350 teachers and school leaders across the three education sectors have developed a stronger understanding of the needs of students with disability and how to create inclusive school environments through participation in the award-winning *Everyone Everyday: A Toolkit for Inclusion* professional learning program. Twenty-two of these teachers and school leaders have become inclusion champions through this program's train-the-trainer model;
- > The capacity building and career progression of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) has been supported through access to professional learning, including a pilot program for LSAs to undertake a Certificate IV in Education Support to financially support up to 50 LSAs to complete this training;

Being Informed

- > Students, parents and carers and the school community now have easier access to information about supports and services available to students and their families through a new 'one-stop-shop' Inclusion and Wellbeing portal on the Directorate's website;

- > School staff have easier access to information and resources to assist them in supporting student wellbeing and learning needs through a new Inclusion and Wellbeing intranet page that includes comprehensive resources to support children and young people with complex needs and challenging behaviour; and
- > School staff have a better understanding of the legislative and policy context in which they operate through improved Policy Development Guidelines, easier access to policies and procedures and professional learning opportunities.

Collaborating

- > Schools have been supported to better listen and act on the opinions of children and young people through development of an Ask Us Student Voice Toolkit, informed by the voice of 3,600 students across 66 schools;
- > Together the three education sectors have developed an extensive suite of resources for schools to support strengthened student voice and parental engagement;
- > Continuation of the ACT Minister's Student Congress in which ACT government school students come together to discuss issues which matter to them and affect their education. A student-elected Executive Team facilitates the Congress which is held twice a year and represents the wider student body with the ACT Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development; and
- > The Directorate has continued to strengthen relationships with the key partners in the broader education sector, government and service providers to ensure the needs of students and their families can be met effectively and in a timely manner.

A robust evaluation framework has been developed to ensure integrity of the implementation of the Schools for All recommendations. This evaluation framework will be used to monitor the program's impact over the coming years and provides another opportunity to strengthen and mature the capability of our schools to respond effectively to students with complex needs and challenging behaviours. A final report will be produced at the end of 2019 and will be publicly released.

The development of new policies and initiatives and strengthening of existing education policy and practice through this program of work has set a strong foundation for the Future of Education Strategy. The four themes highlighted above are underpinning concepts for the four foundations of the Future of Education Strategy, which is providing a solid framework to sustain the positive momentum achieved through the program.

An Independent Oversight Group was in place until December 2016 to provide oversight to implementation of the Schools for All recommendations and a Program Board monitored and reviewed implementation progress for the duration of the program. These governance groups provided assurance of quality and rigour in implementation and advice and guidance to the government on the careful management of the work to ensure it was of a high enduring standard capable of achieving sustainable cultural change. In their concluding letter, the Oversight Group commended the achievements of the Schools for All program as having "achieved more than just the delivery of the 50 recommendations".

Over the past two years, following from the Schools for All Report, the ACT Government has invested more than \$8 million to undertake significant improvements in its approach to health and safety and support for children with complex needs and behaviour and for school staff. This includes staff training, strengthening staff support systems and enhancing learning environments.

The ACT Government has invested more than \$8 million to undertake significant improvements in its approach to health, safety and support for children with complex needs and behaviour and school staff.



This recent work provided an opportunity to look at the education system critically and refresh the way inclusive education and supports for students with complex needs and behaviours of concern are provided.

The Future of Education Strategy

The government's *Future of Education Strategy*, launched in August 2018, is a ten-year roadmap for continuing reform led by the principles of equity, student agency, access and inclusion. The strategy was released following an 18-month consultation process involving 5,000 people in the ACT community, 2,400 of them students, as well as being informed by peer-reviewed research. The Strategy provides an important strategic policy that aids continued focus on elements of providing inclusive, safe and supportive schools.

Documents summarising the community feedback and research evidence base for the strategy are available on the Education Directorate website^{viii}. A desire for strengthened inclusion and recognition of the diverse factors that may affect individual student engagement in learning and development, was clear in the community input, including from student, staff and parent feedback.

As outlined in the *2018-2021 ACT Education Strategic Plan*, the Directorate is committed to providing schools where students love to learn: "we provide safe learning environment with a focus on wellbeing where students feel good at school and have access to the support they need, when they need it". The Directorate has committed to achieving this through:

- > ensuring all students feel welcome, respected, supported, and valued in their school community and addressing social and psychological wellbeing concerns; and
- > creating physical environments that are safe and inclusive.

The Directorate has also committed to evaluating programs to ensure innovations deliver positive impacts and building on existing models with proven results.

These programs of work, collectively, have strengthened approaches to safety in schools through directly responding to recommendations and findings, and supporting safe, supportive and inclusive school culture. The government is pursuing an ongoing and ambitious process of capability-building, best-practice research, and policy and program development in schools.

CURRENT STRATEGIES: A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH TO MANAGING AND MINIMISING BULLYING AND VIOLENCE IN ACT GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Informed by these recent reforms, it is important to acknowledge the significant activity and progress that has occurred in relation to student and staff safety over recent years. This work has shaped the current approach to managing and minimising bullying and violence in ACT government schools.

The government does not accept that violence and bullying is something that belongs in schools or the community. However, the government's responsibility to staff, students and their families is to respond efficiently, effectively and with empathy when such incidents occur. The Directorate's approach to reduce occurrence of these instances and respond effectively when they occur is multi-faceted, reflecting the comprehensive considerations in implementation of these recent reforms. To ensure sustainable, quality and effective cultural change it includes considerations in the areas of:

- > **People:** Building the capacity of schools and the Education support office to support students with complex needs and challenging behaviour, and fostering positive cultural change and a focus on respect, integrity, innovation and collaboration;
- > **Information:** Providing timely and transparent access to information for schools and families;
- > **Technology:** Having the systems to enable the work and allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of our work; and

- 
- > Process: Providing school staff with access to clear policies, procedures and resources that support development of safe, supportive and inclusive learning environments and guide schools in responding to incidents of bullying and violence.

The Education Directorate is focused on ensuring policy and procedures are contemporaneous, continue to reflect national and international best practice and are informed by effective consultation with all stakeholders. This includes the fidelity of policy implementation, noting the journey that the Directorate has been on over the last three years and the opportunities to strengthen policies, procedures and programs.

The Schools for All program in particular, has refocused awareness on the legislative and policy context whereby schools support students with complex needs and challenging behaviour. The Education Directorate has worked to ensure schools are supported to meet their legislative obligations through the provision of clear and readily accessible policies, procedures and guidelines that include explicit consideration of the needs of students with complex needs and challenging behaviour.

Through this program the Directorate established a new Policy Development Framework to improve consistency and quality of documents, support a more integrated approach across the Directorate, facilitate accessibility and support schools in an authorising environment. To ensure new and reviewed policies and procedures acknowledge the impact on, and the needs of, students with complex needs and challenging behaviour, the Education Directorate has built consideration of this cohort into its Policy Development Guide. A new policy and procedures webpage has also been developed with searchable access to a comprehensive suite of policies and procedures.

Policy and program implementation support for schools – national and local

The Education Directorate provides clear policy frameworks that outline health and safety objectives and facilitate compliance with applicable legal requirements. Schools use the Directorate policies and procedures, providing expert advice and guidance about evidence-based best practice. Schools build on these documents to guide school operations and practices which may involve authoring additional practice documents for individual schools. While continued focus on rigorous implementation of existing evidence-based approaches across government schools is required, the government is making necessary investments, working to prevent violence in schools affecting both students and staff, and responding when incidents of violence arise.

The Education Directorate's current approach to providing safe, supportive and inclusive schools is based on contemporary advice and evidence about the system's strengths and areas for further work.

Importantly, the Directorate's approach is also informed and guided by a range of work endorsed at a national level, including:

- > The newly refreshed *Australian Student Wellbeing Framework*^{ix} (the Wellbeing Framework), supports school leaders, teachers, students and their families to build a respectful and inclusive learning environment where all students can reach their potential. The Wellbeing Framework is a foundational document that provides Australian schools with a vision and set of guiding principles to support school communities to build positive learning environments and to review their current safety and wellbeing policies and practices. The Wellbeing Framework has been endorsed by Education Ministers with input from all states and territories, education authorities and a range of national and international experts. It is aligned to state, territory and other national wellbeing and safety initiatives as well as to the Australian Curriculum and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and Principals. The ACT's *Safe and Supportive Schools Policy* and procedures have been tested against the Wellbeing Framework to ensure alignment and has been incorporated into several professional learning packages building capacity of



schools and staff. ACT schools may choose to use the Wellbeing Framework as a component of planning and/or evidence of achievement for school improvement goals;

- > The *National School Improvement Tool*^x, endorsed by the Education Ministers in 2012, is a key component of the school review and improvement processes for ACT government schools and assists schools to review and reflect on their efforts to improve the quality of classroom teaching and learning. One of the nine inter-related domains in this tool focuses on promoting and maintaining a safe, respectful, tolerant inclusive school culture that promotes student learning and wellbeing. The tool provides ample opportunities for schools to illustrate strategies and achievements in multiple elements using the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework;
- > The Australian Institute for teaching and School Leadership publications, *Australian Professional Standard for Principals*^{xi} and *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*^{xii}, guide professional learning, practice and engagement of school leaders and teachers across Australia also include a focus on skills and values that foster safe, supportive and inclusive learning environments;
- > Participation in the National Safe and Supportive Schools Community (SSSC) that supports development of evidence-based resources that promote student wellbeing and the delivery of the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence in Schools. The SSSC includes representatives from the Commonwealth and all states and territories, as well as national Catholic and independent schooling representatives. The SSSC is also responsible for the Bullying. No Way! digital platform which provides information and resources for students, parents and teachers. In 2019, 74 ACT government schools participated in the national day of action running learning focussed events that referenced the General Capabilities in the *Australian Curriculum*, Personal and Social capabilities including: self-awareness, self-management, social management and social awareness;
- > Representation on the COAG Bullying and Cyberbullying Senior Officials Working Group in 2018 to develop a work program, to enhance community responses to student bullying, including cyberbullying. This work plan includes fourteen actions and initiatives including six requiring direct implementation by states and territories. Actions implemented by the ACT to date in response to this work program include:
 - adoption of a revised national definition of bullying developed by the working group
 - review of the ACT's Safe and Supportive Schools Policy to confirm alignment with the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework launched on 19 October 2019
 - supporting roll out of *Be You*, the national education initiative to support mental health
 - Inviting the Minister's Student Congress to focus on bullying and cyberbullying in 2019;
- > Membership on the National Respectful Relationships Education Expert Group convened by OurWatch and made up of members from a variety of areas including governments, education stakeholders, NGOs and organisations working with and for young people. Membership of this group provides the Directorate with opportunities to share and discuss implementation of Respectful Relationships Education (RRE) and related curriculum resources at a national level. Schools may access a range of quality RRE resources through the Directorate's intranet Respectful Relationships Education site. A corresponding external webpage on the Directorate's website explains RRE and provides resources for the school community.

The Education Directorate's policies and procedures that guide schools to appropriately address bullying, harassment and violence and to respond to complex and challenging behaviour are clearly aligned with the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework.

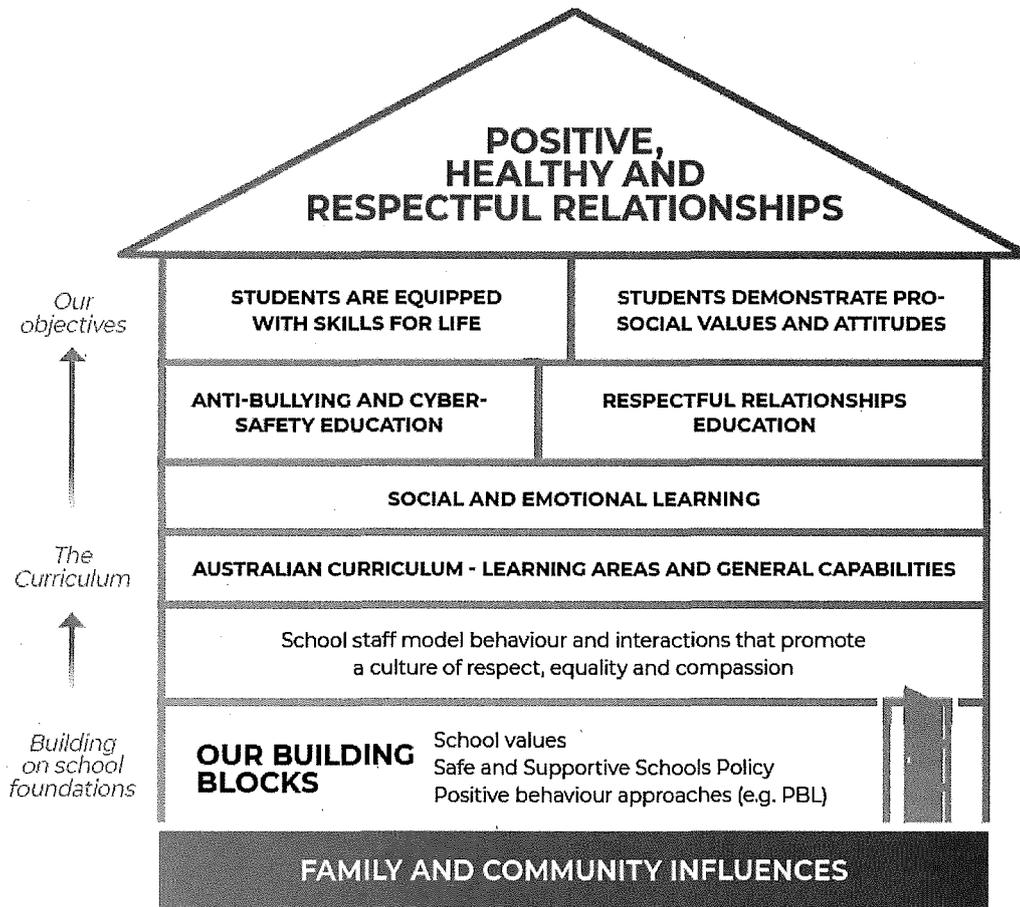
School leaders in each ACT government school determine the most appropriate measures to meet the specific needs of their school community. Their experience and professional judgement ensure that what we do at the school level is meaningful to students and engages parents and their community.

Fostering Safe and Supportive Schools

Schools that are responsive to students' needs and have a whole-school approach to optimising student wellbeing experience lower levels of bullying. As illustrated in Figure 1, this includes the explicit teaching and modelling of positive values and wellbeing through Social and Emotional Learning curriculum and pastoral

care. Anti-bullying campaigns and programs are just one aspect of the work schools need to do to counter bullying. The long-term aim is to foster a school culture based on positive values and supportive relationships which feature respect, inclusion, belonging and cooperation^{xiii}. A positive school climate is therefore critical for preventing bullying and violence. The Education Directorate's *Safe and Supportive Schools Policy 2016*^{xiv} is core to providing direction to government schools about the fundamentals of developing and maintaining safe, respectful school environments. In addition to this preventative, proactive approach, it guides schools in responding to, recording and communicating incidents when they occur.

Figure 1: A whole school approach to fostering safe and supportive schools



The Safe and Supportive Schools Policy recognises a safe culture for learning is paramount. It requires government schools to have processes and procedures in place to address and prevent bullying, harassment and violence. The policy and associated procedures encourage critical evaluation of the effectiveness of social and emotional learning approaches which contribute to the development and maintenance of safe and supportive school environments. These documents also address the area of complex behaviour and the associated safety implications for school communities, including the use of Positive Behaviour Support Plans.

For some students with a pattern of behaviours of concern, it may be necessary to develop a Protective Action Plan as part of their Positive Behaviour Support Plan to ensure behaviour that poses a risk to their own safety, or the safety of other students and staff, can be safely and effectively responded to. Protective Action Plans consider de-escalation techniques which are suited to the child or young person's individual situation. The Education Directorate is working closely with the newly appointed ACT Senior Practitioner to ensure positive behaviour support reduces the need for restrictive practices in ACT schools.

The Education Directorate is in the final stages of reviewing and updating the *Suspension, Transfer and Exclusion of Students in ACT Public Schools Policy*^{xv} with consideration of national and international research and practice and in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders. The revised policy includes a focus on a prevention and early support approach to reduce the incidence of behaviours that potentially lead to



suspension, transfer or exclusion. This revised policy reinforces the requirements of the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy by outlining the school's role in setting up responsive environments with whole school positive approaches to behaviour.

Positive Behaviour for Learning

The Schools for All Expert Panel called for all school sectors to endorse and resource school-wide positive behaviour support. In making this recommendation, the Expert Panel drew together stakeholder feedback, international experience and evidence for this kind of approach showing:

- > consistent reduction in the rates of problem behaviour associated with pre-schoolers at risks for later academic and social and emotional problems;
- > decreases in the overall problem behaviours of primary age students; and
- > increased school engagement and high school completion rates for secondary students^{xvi}.

The Directorate is following a Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) approach to support social and emotional learning in government schools. PBL is an internationally-adopted, evidence-based^{xvii xviii} whole school approach to improve learning, behaviour and social outcomes for all students. PBL facilitates students, teachers and school communities to identify the positive behaviours and values that are expected in their school. The values and expectations are taught, reinforced and celebrated both within and outside a classroom setting.

A whole school approach to improve learning, behaviour and social outcomes for all students.

The PBL approach involves the school community working together with students, families and staff all empowered to participate in decision-making. It also involves developing school-wide expectations and consistent procedures to address negative behaviours. PBL is a structured approach, with a strong focus on data to plan areas of focus in learning, wellbeing and engagement.

government schools began adopting the PBL approach at the end of 2015 with four pilot schools. The ACT Education Directorate has embraced this evidence-based approach, with 51 of 88 schools having started PBL implementation. All government schools will adopt a PBL approach as the PBL framework continues to be rolled out across these schools. The Directorate provides support for implementation through external PBL 'coaches' (experts), and other training and resources as required.

The PBL approach is widely adopted, locally and internationally. Catholic systemic schools in the ACT have also established a School-Wide Positive Behaviour Learning framework. The Victorian and New South Wales governments, among others, have adopted a positive behaviour support approach in their government schools. Overseas, this approach is widely used in New Zealand and the United States of America.

Two case studies at the end of this Submission provide examples of how PBL is used in schools. The Case Study on 'Jack' provides an example of how PBL can be used in school to proactively track and address the needs of a school in relation to positive behaviour support. A second case study illustrates use of PBL as part of a broader whole school approach to cultivating a positive culture within a school and its community. It includes comments from the principals, a teacher, a parent and a student at the schools about their experience of PBL.

The videos in the links below also provide a brief snapshot of what PBL looks like on the ground in schools:

- > [An overview of Positive Behaviour for Learning](https://youtu.be/4_uPgtPzhWM) - https://youtu.be/4_uPgtPzhWM^{xix}
- > [Behaviour in the school library](https://youtu.be/N60Cu7ZSRcE) - <https://youtu.be/N60Cu7ZSRcE>^{xx}

Social and Emotional Learning

The development of personal and social capability is a foundation for learning and for citizenship. The *Australian Curriculum* considers students personal and social capabilities in a range of practices including



recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for others and understanding relationships, establishing and building positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams, handling challenging situations constructively and developing leadership skills (ACARA, 2019). Personal and social capability skills are addressed in all *Australian Curriculum* learning areas and at every stage of schooling. For example, in Health and Physical Education, students work independently and collaboratively to develop personal and social skills as well as an awareness and appreciation of their own and others' strengths and abilities. Students develop a range of interpersonal skills such as communication, negotiation, teamwork and leadership, and an appreciation of diverse perspectives. In the Arts learning area, students develop and apply personal skills and dispositions such as self-discipline, goal setting and working independently, and show initiative, confidence, resilience and adaptability. They also learn to empathise with the emotions, needs and situations of others, to appreciate diverse perspectives, and to understand and negotiate different types of relationships. When working with others, students develop and practise social skills that assist them to communicate effectively, work collaboratively, make considered group decisions and show leadership. Languages curriculum content encourage students to be open-minded and recognise that people view and experience the world in different ways (from ACARA, 2019).

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) may include young children learning through modelling and coaching to recognise their own feelings and the feelings of others, which can assist to develop empathy. For example, lessons may explicitly explore different emotions, when we experience these emotions and how our body reacts when we experience them. Class discussions, structured activities and meetings may teach students to participate and navigate working in a group situation. This helps students practice hearing others' point of view and learning skills such as working in and making decisions as a group. SEL approaches can be used to explicitly teach children and young people skills to navigate interactions and social situations and build resilience to address challenging situations relevant to their age and stage, refer to Figure 2. An example of SEL in high schools may involve lessons that examine, discuss and analyse online behaviour. This may address activities to assist young people to think critically to consider the reliability of information online; to exercise prosocial behaviour, for example using respectful language, communicating in positive ways and assisting student to develop skills to be responsible, for example, supporting others and speaking out about offensive or harmful online content or behaviours.

Figure 2: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) COMPETENCIES

SELF-AWARENESS

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."

- ⇒ IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS
- ⇒ ACCURATE SELF-PERCEPTION
- ⇒ RECOGNIZING STRENGTHS
- ⇒ SELF-CONFIDENCE
- ⇒ SELF-EFFICACY

SOCIAL AWARENESS

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- ⇒ PERSPECTIVE-TAKING
- ⇒ EMPATHY
- ⇒ APPRECIATING DIVERSITY
- ⇒ RESPECT FOR OTHERS

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

- ⇒ IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS
- ⇒ ANALYZING SITUATIONS
- ⇒ SOLVING PROBLEMS
- ⇒ EVALUATING
- ⇒ REFLECTING
- ⇒ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY

SELF-MANAGEMENT

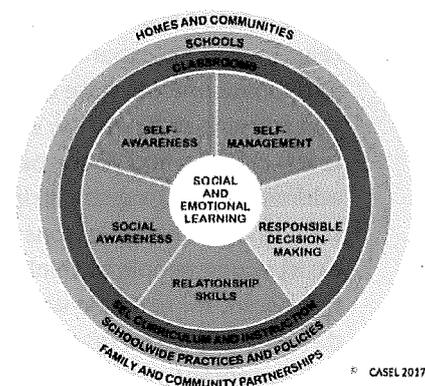
The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

- ⇒ IMPULSE CONTROL
- ⇒ STRESS MANAGEMENT
- ⇒ SELF-DISCIPLINE
- ⇒ SELF-MOTIVATION
- ⇒ GOAL SETTING
- ⇒ ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

- ⇒ COMMUNICATION
- ⇒ SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
- ⇒ RELATIONSHIP BUILDING
- ⇒ TEAMWORK



The Safe and Supportive Schools Policy requires all schools to deliver SEL to students. SEL is the process through which students acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, understand and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive respectful relationships, and make responsible decisions. Durlak et al.'s (2011)^{xvi} meta-analysis of 213 studies of SEL in schools indicates students receiving quality SEL instruction demonstrated: positives such as better academic performance; improved attitudes and behaviours: greater motivation to learn, deeper commitment to school, increased time devoted to schoolwork; fewer negative behaviours: decreased disruptive class behaviour, noncompliance, aggression, delinquent acts, and disciplinary referrals; and reduced emotional distress: fewer reports of student depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal.

Schools have the flexibility to select SEL approaches that suit their school community and how these are delivered. For example, some schools use the Friendly Schools Plus Program which draws on thirteen years of extensive and rigorous research by the Child Health Promotion Research Centre (CHPRP) into best practice to build social skills and reduce bullying in school communities. It also includes current cyberbullying research conducted by the CHPRC and is based on eleven major research projects, involving over 27 000 Australian school-age students from pre-primary to Year 10, their teachers and families. Another SEL approach widely adopted by schools is the KidsMatter framework, an Australian mental health and well-being initiative developed using a well-researched evidence base to optimise children's mental health and wellbeing holistically. Schools using the KidsMatter framework are currently transitioning to the national education initiative, *Be You*. The Directorate has a working alliance with Headspace, the ACT delivery partner for *Be You*,



to roll out the national education initiative in ACT government schools. The Directorate has representation on the ACT Be You Implementation and Engagement Group and has been providing input on an ongoing basis to ensure that the wellbeing needs of students in the ACT schools are fully captured. Programs such as Friendly Schools Plus align with the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework and link to the General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum under Personal and Social Capability.

Safe and Inclusive Schools: valuing and supporting student diversity

Students can absorb prejudices from the wider society about the value of diversity in a community. The Safe and Supportive Schools Policy supports schools in creating inclusive environments through positive behaviours approaches that model inclusive behaviours and explicit teaching of social and emotional skills. Same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse people report school as a significant site where they experience or have experienced bullying, discrimination and isolation. Research has shown that bullying, discrimination and isolation of young people who are same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse often occurs in schools and this seriously impacts on student wellbeing. These experiences can negatively affect students' sense of belonging, safety and engagement at school, with subsequent impacts on education participation, achievement, health and wellbeing. While the data identifies young people report experiencing high levels of homophobic and transphobic bullying at school, research also demonstrates that supportive and inclusive schools can make a significant and positive difference to student outcomes. ACT's *Safe and Inclusive Schools Initiative*^{xxii} specifically supports schools to build respectful relationships school cultures where prejudice, discrimination, harassment and violence on the basis of gender presentation/identity, intersex status or sexual orientation is unacceptable. This initiative enables schools to seek assistance to develop their practice in areas such as supporting individual student need and welcoming and celebrating community and family diversity.

Respectful Relationships Education

With the assistance of evidence based Respectful Relationships Education resources developed by Our Watch, ACT government schools are working to change student attitudes towards and tolerance of violence. Respectful Relationships Education (RRE) is sometimes confused as being important only for students who have experienced domestic and family violence. However, RRE is a universal level intervention which is important for all students, if as a society we want change attitudes that condone disrespect and violence and reduce the prevalence of this issue in the future. The prominence of RRE programs has increased in Australian schools in recent years, with the link between this curriculum area and primary prevention of gender-based violence becoming more widely understood. RRE's universal approach ensures all students are exposed to and have the opportunity to learn about attitudes to gender equality, respectful behaviours to effect generational change to target the drivers of violence. Many ACT schools have engaged with the White Ribbon, Breaking the Silence Program which builds on existing initiatives to strengthen a culture of respect and equality at all levels of the school community – through curriculum, role modelling from staff, policies and procedures, domestic violence education programs and strengthened family and community partnerships.

Parental Engagement

Parents and carers play an important role in developing positive attitudes towards learning for children and young people. They can also play an important role in strengthening schools' approaches to prevention of bullying. ACT government schools are committed to establishing and maintaining respectful, collaborative relationships with parents and carers, with significant efforts being made to strengthen parent engagement in ACT government schools.

This is exemplified through a number of key partnerships including with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) to develop resources for parents and schools, (<https://bit.ly/2H01shB>) and the ACT Parents and Citizens Association to develop a series of workshops about preventing bullying and other violent behaviours in government schools.

The Directorate acknowledges parents as their child's first educator. Schools engage with their communities to develop anti-bullying policies, plans and activities in their school such as the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence. Parents and carers play an important role in the establishment of Positive Behaviour for



Learning (PBL), a framework that many ACT schools have adopted. Parents are engaged in the development and articulation processes of school values during the establishment phase of PBL. Once PBL is established, schools communicate regularly to parents and carers about school behavioural expectations which strengthens the family-school partnership.

Many schools also employ a dedicated community liaison officer (or similar role), to develop relationships with on and off-site community organisations, create a welcoming environment and actively seeking ways to improve parental communication, participation with schools and access to services and supports. Apps such as SeeSaw, Story Park and Facebook provide platforms for engagement and communication. Parents and schools use these effectively to build understanding in real time of student learning and engagement in school activities. Schools will at times engage experts in parenting, wellbeing and child development to present to parents, often in collaboration with the Parent and Citizens Association of the school e.g.: cybersafety, the Kindness Project, physical and emotional development, mindfulness.

To build on the nation-leading parent engagement work developed in partnership with ARACY, the Directorate is in the process of developing a digital repository to support schools to communicate with parents and carers across all stages of schooling. This resource will be complemented by two parent engagement contact officers who will work with schools to strengthen parent engagement. In addition, \$1.6 million over four years has been committed to fund grants to schools and parent groups for activities and programs designed to enhance parent engagement at schools and support strong parent communities.

Student Voice

Students are central to preventing bullying and violence and creating a school climate of respect and inclusion. Authentic student participation is one of the five key elements of the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework, with the key principle that 'students are active participants in their own learning and wellbeing, feel connected and use their social and emotional skills to be respectful, resilient and safe^[1]'. As such, student agency is a key principle underpinning the Future of Education Strategy.

Student opinion guides the Education Directorate in how it supports student voice. In 2017, the Education Directorate worked with the Youth Coalition of the ACT to research and deliver the *Student Voice in the ACT* project. The project developed and provided school leadership teams and teachers with a resource for how they can better listen, take into account, and act on the opinions of children and young people, through gathering the views of primary and secondary school students through an online survey and a forum. The project engaged with more than 3,600 students from 66 schools. Students participating in this engagement identified the following mechanisms through which student voice occurs in their schools:

- > Leadership group such as School Captains, House Representatives and Year Coordinators;
- > Student Representative Council (SRC) and Student Body;
- > Class meetings;
- > Voting;
- > Leadership Day;
- > Surveys;
- > Ideas Box;
- > Student Forums; and
- > Buddies and Transition Mentors.

Three additional key mechanisms for incorporating student voice in addressing violence in schools are: the Minister's Student Congress, the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence and through the Positive Behaviours for Learning Framework. The Minister's Student Congress, comprised of government school student leaders who discuss contemporary issues and give advice to the Minister. The Congress is a mechanism for student voice to the Minister and provides a unique opportunity for student perspective on the underlying drivers of bullying in all its forms. The Congress is currently examining the topic of bullying. ACT schools take

part in the annual National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence. In 2019, 74 government schools participated, involving more than 35,000 students. Schools using the PBL framework provide their students with opportunities to contribute their input in many and varied ways: suggesting behaviours for the PBL behaviour matrix; developing implementation resources such as videos; and designing and voting on a school mascot or logo that embodies the school's expected positive behaviours. For example, Charnwood Primary involved students in designing the school logo to include the phrase "Safe Respectful Learner".

Support for student wellbeing

At the centre of responding to violence in schools is providing support for students. Bullying requires schools and families to look beyond the observable behaviour of students to what is going on behind the scenes. When children and young people can access what they need for their wellbeing, this leads to a stronger, deeper engagement in learning. School communities operate best when there is a shared understanding of appropriate and respectful behaviour. Each student enters schools with differing skills and abilities, just as schools explicitly program and teach literacy and numeracy, they also take a role in teaching the skills and understanding of respectful behaviour.

When children and young people can access what they need for their wellbeing, this leads to a stronger, deeper engagement in learning.

Skilled teachers and school staff are central to ensuring student and staff safety. This starts with ensuring Initial Teacher Education (ITE) delivers coursework of theoretical and practical relevance to support new educators in effectively teaching students with complex needs. As part of the Schools for All program, the ACT Teacher Quality Institute worked with the University of Canberra and the Australian Catholic University to ensure inclusive education is integrated into both the undergraduate and graduate programs. Teaching students in the ACT are also provided with opportunities to spend time in specialist school settings or schools with specialist disability programs.

The ACT Government invests in the professional development of its teachers through initiatives such as the Canberra University Affiliate Schools program and the Empowered Learning Professionals initiative, and a range of targeted professional learning for teachers and school leaders, as well as support staff. This investment in professional development equips staff with the knowledge and skills they require to support children and young people with complex needs and behaviours of concern. Learning support assistants are also able to develop their skills by participating in the Certificate IV in Education Support.

There is considerable investment in building capacity of teachers and school staff through professional learning across a range of topics that assist them with meeting their own wellbeing needs and the needs of the students in schools. These programs are detailed in the table below and support the capacity of schools to provide support for students at the universal, selected and targeted levels.

Course	Description
Protective Behaviors	Protective Behaviors training provides resources to teachers on safety promoting messages to imbed in their teaching and learning in classrooms. The messages empower children to speak up and speak out their safety to other identified safe adults in their lives whether they are home, at school or in the community.
NeuEd	The focus of this training is neuroscience and what it has to offer us in terms of creating rich school environments that maximise healthy brain development and subsequently successful school engagement. Neuroscience principles are explored and applied to teaching practice. It also imparts understanding of NeuEd and its relationship to students who have experienced abuse and neglect as well as other adversities.
Be You	Beyond Blue was appointed to lead <i>Be You</i> by the Australian

	Government in June 2017. This professional learning provides individual educators with content that is focused on mental health and wellbeing for students.
Trauma Informed Practice	Trauma Informed Practice supports teachers to develop trauma sensitive understanding, apply NeuED guiding principles and improve access to and increased use of classroom trauma sensitive strategies. Facilitated by senior psychologists using a variety of reflection, discussion, activities and brain breaks the course also provides access to an online trauma sensitive resource library.
Wellbeing Workshop – The Healthy Mind Platter	The Healthy Mind Platter is designed to promote psychological well-being for staff based on current neuroscience research. This workshop also covers strategies that can be used with students to promote their own well-being that protects them against chronic stress and provide them with resources they can apply in the classroom.
Circle Time	Circle Time equips teachers to implement effective Circle Time with their students. The course focuses on developing positive relationships through development of emotional literacy. It is highly practical, exploring ideas for building and strengthening relationships, developing student social and emotional wellbeing and increasing student engagement.
Team Teach	Team Teach supports schools in safely responding to challenging student behaviour. Team-Teach promotes a holistic approach to behaviour management and interventions through the delivery of school wide skills to support positive teacher student interactions.
Essential Skills for Classroom Teachers	Essential Skills for Classroom Teachers is crucial for effective behaviour management resulting in more time teaching and learning, ultimately improving student outcomes. Effective classroom management strategies establish quality environments where high levels of intellectual quality and significance are generated improving academic and social outcomes for students.
Coaching Teachers in Essential Skills	This strengths-based approach shows how to introduce coaching into a school to support effective classroom management skills and to develop a common language in dealing with student behaviour.
Everyone, Everyday: A Toolkit for Inclusion	Training for teachers to deliver Everyone, Everyday - a comprehensive social and emotional learning program that targets mainstream primary schools and focuses on the concept of 'inclusion'. This training provides teachers with up to date information on current concepts relating to disability and inclusion, and to introduces them to the main themes of the program.

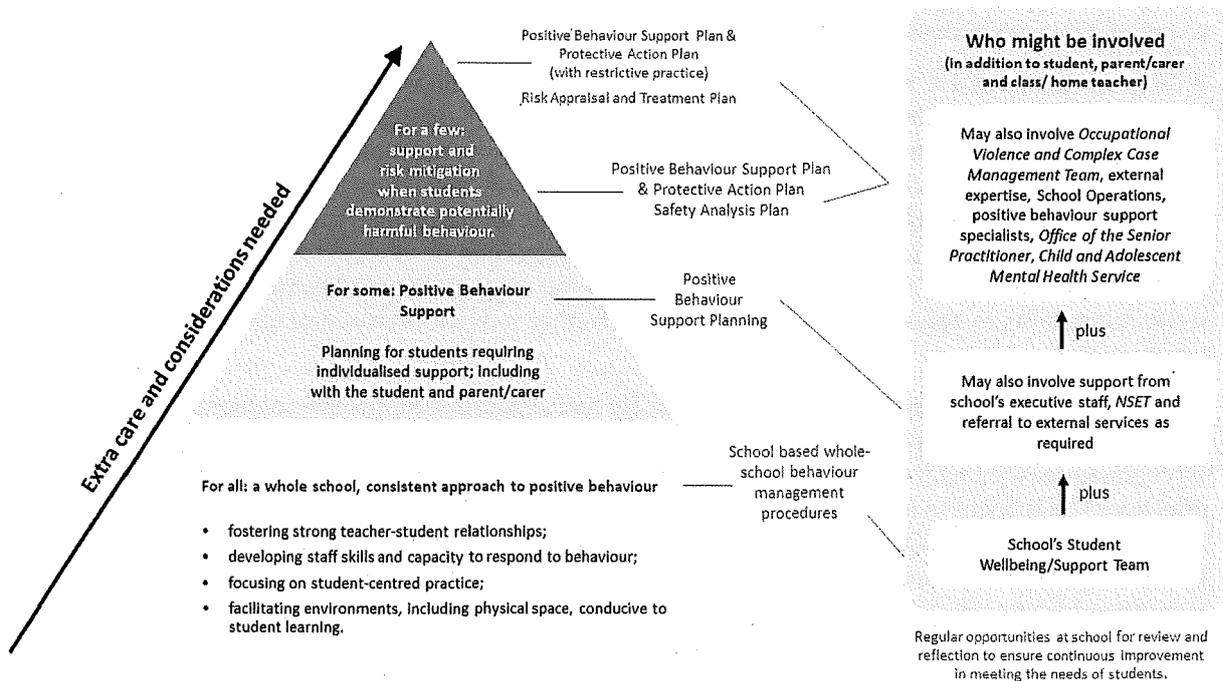
Promotion of student wellbeing in the ACT, as illustrated in Figure 2, is a contemporary model based on a range of people working collaboratively, using a range of knowledge, resources and skills to support the diverse needs of students and their families. A strong foundation of support from skilled teaching staff is further strengthened through the input of executive staff, including year coordinators, school psychologists and in secondary school's pastoral care/wellbeing coordinators and youth workers. Some schools also employ community coordinators and Indigenous Education Officers who play a particular role in ensuring schools are inclusive and understanding of the needs of their local community.

All ACT government schools have access to a school psychologist who work across behavioural, social, emotional and learning domains to support a student's wellbeing and learning. The ratio of school psychologists to students in ACT government schools compares favourably when compared to other jurisdictions and the ACT Government has funded 20 additional school psychologists to be delivered by 2020. As at 2019, government schools are supported by a total of 76.6 FTE school psychologists between those providing direct, indirect and universal supports.

In addition to psychologists, the Network Student Engagement Team (NSET) is available to provide specialists and targeted services to support schools. Four inter-professional, multidisciplinary teams are drawn from over 100 educators and allied health professionals. These teams build capacity and support staff within schools through broad support, for example assisting to review school wellbeing and attendance procedures and processes; to more tailored support, for example observing students' behaviour and engagement in the classroom and providing advice and strategies for teachers and other staff to implement. NSET also provide more individualised support, including individual student assessment and assisting with the development of positive behaviour support plans for individual students. Additionally, NSET delivers a range of professional learning opportunities for teachers and school staff on topics such as: managing complex behaviours of concern; restorative approaches; neuroscience for education; trauma informed practice and wellbeing.

Schools and NSET also work with other government and community agencies to support students with complex needs and behaviours of concern. This includes needs relating to physical and mental health, homelessness, care and protection, developmental needs and disability supports.

Figure 2: Wellbeing and behaviour support for students and staff



Responding to incidents of bullying and violence in schools – applied and practical

At school, students are encouraged to seek support from teachers, school psychologists, youth support workers and other staff who are able to provide support to students experiencing, engaging in, or witnessing bullying. As a requirement of the policy, Safe and Supportive Schools Contact Officers (SASSCOs) are in each school and are trained to provide support to students who have experienced bullying, sexual harassment and racism. The policy requires every school to have at least one male and one female SASSCO who typically work with the school executive team to use restorative justice approaches to address bullying, violence and harassment between students.

Schools are required to provide appropriate and prompt responses to incidents of bullying and violence, sending a clear message that such behaviours are not acceptable. The Directorate reviews reports of occupational violence incidents at schools to support school and systemic approaches to responding to the incidents.

The Directorate provides information to parents/carers about bullying and cyberbullying on the Directorate web site via the Safe and Supportive Schools page and the Being Safe Online page. The *Communities Online: Acceptable use of ICT – Parents and Students Policy* and related guidelines define acceptable use of ICT



resources provided by the Directorate for students and parents. All students sign an *Acceptable Use of ICT Statement* agreeing to the conditions of this policy and to accept the consequences of any breach. This Communities Online policy details how appropriate use of ICT resources relate to school-based behaviour management policies and procedures and the relationship to online behaviour. Schools also use their code of conduct, student welfare procedures and school values to provide a platform for embedding discussions about appropriate behaviour, respect and treatment of others. Briefings are also provided to schools and families in relation to the acceptable use of information and communications technology.

Parents/carers are encouraged to firstly speak to the school if they have concerns about bullying or safety and if after speaking to their school there are still concerns, contact details for the Education Directorate's Liaison Unit are also on these pages. Practical illustrations of support provided to students, staff and families are provided through three case studies at the end of this document. These case studies demonstrate the important interplay between policy and practice in schools to address bullying and violence.

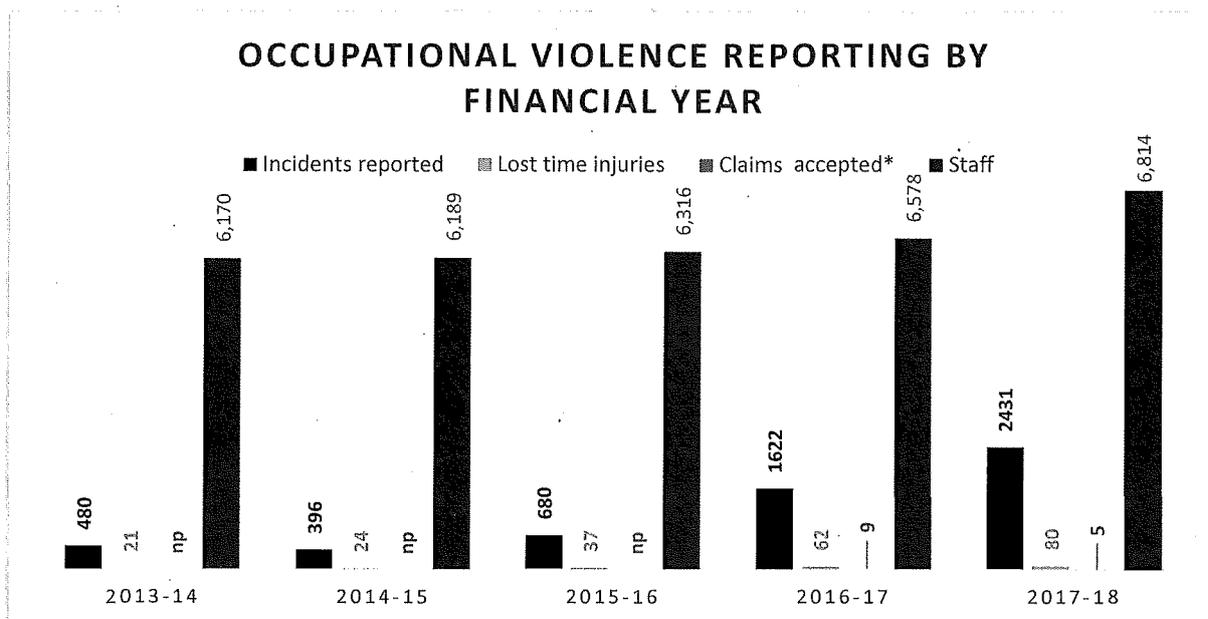
Equally no staff member should feel unsafe, or be subjected to unacceptable behaviour from any persons including parents and carers. The Directorate values teachers and staff as people and behaviour that is harassing or distressing impacts on teachers ability to do their job. Teachers and staff can only give their best to our children when the Directorate provides for their safety and wellbeing.

A range of resources are available to schools to assist them in dealing with parent behaviour. The *Safe Workplaces: Managing Unreasonable Parent/Carer Behaviour*^{xxiii} assist schools to recognise and safely respond to disruptive, aggressive and potentially violent behaviour. Resources supports schools to respond before an incident occurs and maintain safety of all parties in the event behaviour escalates to violence. This document includes advice on how schools can seek immediate support for parent and carer behaviour that is not manageable. The Directorate also has a brochure outlining a code of conduct to promote respectful interaction on Directorate premises. This code of conduct outlines the responsibilities of community members, Directorate staff and students to behave appropriately and positively to prevent or minimise non-compliant and aggressive behaviours.

As discussed in the previous section, developing safe and supportive school environments with positive school climate is essential to prevent and minimise bullying and violence. This concept is important to understand to be cognisant of the fact that short-term fixes such as punishing a student who has bullied another is not effective. This is because it does not improve the relationships and social factors which allow the bullying to happen. Although the bullying behaviour may stop temporarily, unless the conditions that allow bullying to happen are considered and addressed, it is likely the behaviour will reoccur or become hidden (covert). Punishment as the only intervention is not effective in preventing bullying. Interventions need to be matched to the particular circumstance of the bullying. No single approach to bullying is appropriate or effective in all circumstances or for all people. If the school's response to bullying further disempowers students who have been bullied or fosters a negative school culture, this can make the situation worse^{xxiv}.

Incidence of occupational violence in ACT government schools

Over recent years, the Education Directorate has had a strong focus on improving the reporting culture of the organisation to better inform responses to safety and wellbeing issues at the school and individual level. Through this focus, workplace health and safety RiskMan reports have increased significantly. For example, reports of incidents of occupational violence rose from 480 in 2013-14 to 2,431 in 2017-18. While the Directorate continues to see an increase in these reports (some reports may be duplicate reporting of incidents) occupational violence related claims accepted and lost time injuries (1 day or more) have not seen a corresponding increase. In 2013-14 less than five claims were accepted and in 2017-18 five claims were lodged.



np numbers greater than zero and less than five are not published due to privacy reasons

The Education Directorate advises staff that all experiences of occupational violence must be reported, no matter the severity of the incident’s impact. Education expects that this positive reporting culture will continue to see increasing numbers of incidents reported over coming years.

Supporting staff wellbeing and responding to occupational violence

The Education Directorate is committed to the safety of all workers, students and visitors to ACT government schools. Early in the term of the Ninth Legislative Assembly, the government initiated a system-wide review of the Directorate’s occupational violence approach, leading to improvements in organisational culture, specific training, and a recalibration of risk management. The Directorate’s work was recognised and built upon through an enforceable undertaking agreed with the WorkSafe ACT. The undertaking details the significant work that preceded it and strategies agreed as part of it^{xxv}. The government’s engagement with and response to occupational violence in schools is nation-leading, which has been reinforced through an inter-jurisdictional forum hosted by the ACT.

This work has led to the strengthening of the Directorate’s architecture to support occupational violence with a focus on two main areas:

1. Improving organisational culture and training specific to occupational violence; and
2. Recalibrating the Directorate’s risk management strategy in relation to occupational violence.

In particular:

- > In August 2016 the Education Directorate commenced work to identify and treat risks associated with occupational violence in ACT government schools. The program of work included a joint Australian Education Union/Education Directorate working group, formed on 30 August 2016, to progress a program of agreed work. Products from this collaboration include an Occupational Violence Management Policy and Plan, support documents and products for use in schools and classrooms throughout the ACT government school system;
- > In November 2016, the Director-General of the Education Directorate hosted three workshops where the key risks and treatments associated with occupational violence in schools were explored and mapped. The Director-General also wrote to Principals (and all staff) regarding work health and safety responsibilities and obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*; and

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- > The Education Directorate has continued to implement team teach training, which provides a whole setting holistic approach to behaviour management, including the importance of de-escalation strategies. Team teach training supports staff to use positive and protective personal safety skills to minimise risk to all involved. Since the commencement of 2016, 2678 staff have participated in training.

The response to occupational violence and challenging student behaviours is being strengthened at a systemic level through the formation of the Occupational Violence and Complex Case Management team. This team was established in late 2018, bringing together health and safety expertise with allied health practitioners skilled in managing complex behaviour in schools to further the work of implementing the Directorate's Occupational Violence Policy and Management Plan.

The team's role is to minimise harm to staff and others within the Directorate that may arise from behaviours exhibited by students, parents or carers and other members of the community. Work undertaken by the team is focused on the school environment. Responding to occupational violence, while directed at managing risks to staff safety, also addresses issues contributing to student safety.

The team supports staff safety by:

- > analysing data to identify where staff may be at risk of harm due to the behaviour of students or parents/carers;
- > making recommendations about effective student behaviour management in circumstances where a risk to staff health and safety has been identified;
- > reviewing incident reports;
- > facilitating the development, and regular review, of school-based risk management plans where the level of risk of harm to a worker resulting from behaviour of a student or other non-staff school community member has been assessed at a high level; and
- > providing advice to schools on actions that should be taken to mitigate against risk of injury.

Work health and safety policy and program implementation support for staff

The Education Directorate recognises that work health and safety policy, with detailed guidance provided in supporting procedures, is a key control in a systemic approach to the effective management of safety risk. A suite of Health safety and Wellbeing procedures has been developed as part of the Health Safety and Wellbeing Safety Management System Framework^{xxvi}. The framework and procedures align with the ACT Public Sector's commitment to the health and safety of its workers and other persons outlined in the *ACT Public Sector Work Health and Safety Policy Statement*^{xxvii}. Additionally, the *Education Directorate Safety and Wellbeing Statement*^{xxviii} specifies the core principles to guide the conduct of school leaders in ensuring everyone has a safe, healthy and supportive work environment.

To further implement and emphasise the importance of addressing work health and safety risk, the Directorate continues several initiatives to support its workers' health, safety and wellbeing including:

- > providing targeted occupational violence induction training to all staff in 2018, and for new staff at the beginning of 2019;
- > development of specific risk management guidance material to assist design and technology staff;
- > ongoing revision of the Safety Management System to remove duplication, simplify content and to adopt changes in ACT legislation including the Global Harmonising System for classification of hazardous substances; and
- > providing work health and safety training to key groups across the Directorate including Business Managers, Health and Safety Representatives, Building Service Officers, Building Service Officers and Health and Safety Representatives.



Over the past year, all Directorates have been working closely together on developing a new whole of government Occupational Violence Strategy. This work has looked at how consistent, evidence based preventative approaches that utilise expertise and learning from across the ACT Public Service can be used to drive better practice. Development of the strategy has focussed around supporting a risk management approach, designing work and workplaces to minimise risk, enhancing the skills of senior leaders, building on the capabilities of managers, boosting the skills of worker to minimise the risk and fostering a reporting culture. Importantly, ACT government schools have already commenced this healthy reporting culture journey as part of their desire to ensure classrooms that support both safety and learning.

The Caple Review

The *Caple Review*, commissioned by the Education Directorate in December 2016, focused on the requirements of a systems approach for the prevention of physical and psychological injury to school staff arising from incidents of occupational violence within ACT schools. This review recommended further professional development for staff working with students with complex needs; work health and safety risk assessment processes and a student case management approach; improving data capture for occupational violence incidents; and closer working relationships with pre-service universities to ensure new educators have experience and knowledge to teach students with complex needs. The four main recommendations of the review were accepted by the Directorate in April 2017 and the recommendations from this review are well advanced in their implementation.

The Occupational Violence Management Policy and Management Plan

In 2016, the Directorate worked with staff and the Australian Education Union in designing the *Occupational Violence Policy and Management Plan* that focussed on staff safety in the workplace. The Policy and Management Plan strengthens the Directorate's approach to prevent and reduce violence in schools and responses to occupational violence. During this time, the Work Safety Commissioner initiated a review of occupational violence incidents that occurred from 2016, ultimately supporting the approach set out in the Policy and Management Plan. The Commissioner's review led to the Directorate agreeing to an enforceable undertaking that expanded on the work already underway. Implementation of these documents is a Directorate priority as is focusing on promoting a culture of safety, delivering training targeting appropriate responses to occupational violence, an enhanced reporting culture, and adopting a risk management approach to prevent or reduce the occurrence of incidents of violence

Enabling and improved infrastructure

In addition to facilitating supportive school environments through policy implementation, increasing the diversity of support in schools and continually building the knowledge and skills of staff; the ACT Government is investing in infrastructure improvements that will provide a range of benefits to proactively develop and sustain positive school environments.

New School Administration System

In the 2016 Budget the government allocated \$10 million to upgrade the school administration system. Implementation of the new system is occurring in stages. Its introduction began in 2017 in a pilot group of school, with all schools adopting the system in 2018 for attendance data. Other modules that record, for example incidents and behaviour reporting, are being gradually introduced.

The Education Directorate's legacy administration system (called MAZE) consisted of a database for each school. A limited dataset was centrally held for system backup and manual data extraction for annual and national reporting. Most schools also held most student behaviour data on paper-based records, and another database was maintained for insurance and compliance purposes.

The government's investment in a new school administration system, will provide both school and system level data to ensure evidence-based decision making and opportunities for early intervention both respond to emerging concerns and improve practice.

The new school administration system, when fully implemented, will provide both school and system level data to both respond to emerging concerns and improve practice. Business intelligence tools will allow users to identify trends and access reporting across all schools. The system will also allow improved communication with parents through automated notifications, and automated notifications directed to the Education Support Office when particular information is submitted.

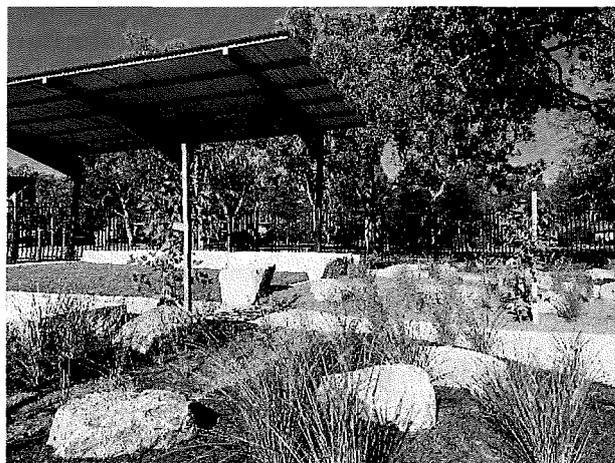
Inclusive physical spaces and learning environments

Since 2015, professional learning and resources have been developed for schools to support them to create appropriate physical environments such as sensory spaces to assist students who need this resource to assist with self-regulation. The ACT Government has invested \$5.6 million across 53 ACT government schools for the development of safe and inclusive environments. This has included the development of sensory gardens, outdoor courtyards and playgrounds; classroom modifications to support sensory play and accommodate appropriate withdrawal spaces; and the establishment of spaces for small group learning. These areas have been carefully designed and established in collaboration with schools and allied health experts to ensure they are safe and appropriate.

Examples of these works are provided below:



Alfred Deakin High School - Quiet seating area for student withdrawal or small group work



Campbell Primary School - Sensory garden and small group learning space



Kingsford Smith School - Sensory Space



Lake Ginninderra College - Student seating area

SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS ADVISORY GROUP

The ACT Government is committed to ensuring all possible measures are being taken to prevent, minimise and manage bullying and violence and any opportunity for strengthening safe and supportive school cultures in ACT government schools is considered.

On Monday 18 March 2019, the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Yvette Berry MLA, established the Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee. Under chapter 4A of the *Education Act 2004*, the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development (the Minister) may establish a School Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) as required to advise the Minister about school education or a related matter, for a specified period. The SEAC draws together eight eminent people with expertise and interests from a range of perspectives, chosen for their broad and extensive expertise and knowledge and is chaired by Ms Sue Chapman.

The SEAC has been given discretion on how it conducts the review but will consider the findings of the Schools for All Report and other relevant and contemporary reviews and reports. The SEAC will also draw on the advice of other experts and stakeholders and will review the implementation of the Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) and other targeted programs and interventions that support the Safe and Supportive Schools policy.

The SEAC is independent of the Directorate and, within its Terms of Reference will provide independent advice to the Minister and government. It may, within its Terms of Reference, conduct its proceedings as it considers appropriate. The Terms of Reference and further information on the Committee can be accessed on the Education Directorate website at www.education.act.gov.au/about-us/minister/school-education-advisory-committees.

The purpose of the SEAC is to ensure that the government is doing all it can to manage bullying and to provide comprehensive advice to the Minister on opportunities for strengthening safe and supportive school culture in every government school. The SEAC will provide advice to the Minister on opportunities for strengthening safe and supportive school culture in every government school. Additionally, the SEAC will advise on opportunities to strengthen practices in schools and the Education Support Office (ESO) that give effect to the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy. The Terms of Reference also require the SEAC to engage external expert advice in fulfilling its role and functions.

The advisory committee will address the Terms of Reference and present a final report to the Minister by 23 August 2019. The SEAC will seek out various expertise throughout the process as required. Advice and presentations from a variety of internal stakeholders and external organisations and agencies will form a key part of the approach to the project. Given the short timeframe of the project, the SEAC will also consider papers out of session as required.



Additionally, the SEAC will look at issues that have been brought to the Minister's and Directorate's attention over recent months. The SEAC will examine a number of incidents to ensure the focus is on strengthening the system as a whole. An initial literature review will be conducted externally to the Directorate and will provide the SEAC with a report that outlines the elements of key policy and practice being implemented in other countries and Australian jurisdictions which aim to respond to student violence and bullying in the context of inclusive schools. The findings of the literature review will determine what further information and advice is required by the SEAC.

The Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development will provide the final SEAC report to the Committee shortly after it is received and considered by the Minister.



CASE STUDIES

The following case studies have been included as practical illustrations of how ACT government schools respond to incidents of bullying and violence. Details from real examples have been changed and merged so case studies are not identifiable.

Jane (Year 2)

Jane is 8 years old in year 2. She started at the school at beginning of the year, having attended two other schools across preschool and year one. Jane, her mother Karen, and two younger siblings (twins) have recently moved into crisis accommodation. The children have supervised access visits with their father once a fortnight on a Sunday afternoon. Jane has a diagnosis of Specific Language Disorder and ADHD. Although the community paediatrician has recommended medication, Karen has decided against this as she is concerned about the paternal family history of substance abuse. Jane's twin siblings, who are attending preschool, both have global developmental delay. The three children are eligible for the NDIS. The Speech Language Pathologist and Occupational Therapist supporting the children deliver therapeutic support to the children during school hours as prior to the family's relocation their home was considered unsafe.

Jane is in an open plan classroom accommodating 68 students, three teachers, and two learning support assistants. Separating from her mother at the start of each day is difficult for Jane, particularly following time spent with her father. The school's sensory space is used as a transition space for Jane when she arrives in the morning, providing a quieter space for Jane and her mother to separate. A school executive teacher supports the morning arrival/farewell and transition to Jane's classroom. The school also ensures another member of staff is available to support Karen to farewell and leave the school.

Jane is hypervigilant, watching who comes in and out of the classroom. She constantly asks to see her mother and siblings. When her siblings are at preschool Jane actively seeks them out, frequently leaving the classroom and running across to the preschool. Jane becomes very distressed, hitting out and kicking when staff redirect her back to the classroom. Her personalised learning plan includes: frequent scheduled movement breaks, access to the sensory space, small group social skills program, visual support for all transitions and breaking down of tasks and expectations.

The school works with Jane's NDIS funded therapists to embed communication and sensory regulation across the school day. Together they have developed a Positive Behaviour Support Plan and a Risk Assessment is currently underway. The Network Student Engagement Team social worker is supporting Karen to develop community connections, including longer term housing. The school has employed a learning support assistant to support Jane to participate in tasks, break down tasks into manageable chunks and ensure the Jane's therapy goals are addressed throughout the day.

Maya (Year 6)

Maya is in year six. On the walk home from school with friends, Maya had a fall when trying to jump down a retaining wall. Jack, a classmate, took a photo of her with mud on her face and her midriff and bra straps visible. Jack and his friend laughed while they walked away and later that afternoon sent the photo of Maya to her friend and said he was going to share it with his friends because it was hilarious. Maya's parents noticed she was upset that evening and she reported feeling unwell, expressing she couldn't go to school. Later on, Maya told her mum what had happened and mentioned Jack had been rough during playground games for a while, often knocking her over and laughing to his friends. Maya's father rang the boy's parents who did not see this as a serious issue, saying, "it was just a joke, just boys being boys".

The next day, after Maya refused to go to school, her father went to the school and met with the Deputy Principal. The Deputy Principal listened carefully to Maya's dad and agreed that although the incident had occurred outside of school, it was something that would be addressed at school. She also agreed to discuss the behaviours that had been raised with the students.

The Deputy Principal worked with other members of the school team to implement the school's behaviour management procedures, supported by the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) framework. The Safe and



Supportive Schools Contact Officer (SASSCO) and Deputy Principal worked with the students involved to ascertain concerns and raise awareness of the seriousness of the incident and the impact on those involved. The school psychologist met separately with Maya and Jack on several occasions. This assisted Maya's confidence when returning to school and helped Jack to understand the impact of his behaviour. A restorative approach was used to facilitate a discussion between Maya and Jack, once the school thought Jack was in a good position to understand how his actions had impacted Maya. The Deputy Principal continued to check in with Maya's class teacher and parents over a period of several weeks. She also checked in with Jack and spoke to his parents, which included involving them in a discussion about the impact of recent events and how home and school could support Jack to change this behaviour.

The school organised a range of social emotional learning (SEL) activities for students in years 3-6 with a focus on responsible social media use. Years 5-6 also participated in activities focussed on the topic of sharing images without consent, the law and seeking support. The eSafety Commissioner and Bullying. No Way! website resources were utilised, and relevant content was provided to the school parent community through the school's newsletter. Think U Know cyber-safety and digital citizenship sessions were held for upper primary students, families and teachers. The SASSCO and team leader also provided an update at the staff meeting about resources and support available to assist with building student knowledge and skills in SEL, respectful relationships and digital citizenship. Data was entered onto the school administration system which was visible to the student wellbeing team during routine reviews. This helped the school identify trends and issues to assist planning and strengthen proactive approaches.

David (Year 8)

David is a year 8 student at an ACT public high school. David lives with his mother, brother and 3 half-sisters. There is a court order in place preventing him from seeing his birth father. David's birth father has re-partnered and has step children. One of those step children, Marcus, is the same year at school. David misses his father and resents that Marcus gets to see him every day. David's literacy and numeracy skills are below benchmark and he has developed a self-concept that he is not able to learn. He excels at hands on subjects such as woodwork and cooking and is also quite athletic.

Within weeks of starting year 8, David starts to demonstrate behaviours of concern in classes, refusing to complete work and being verbally abusive towards both other students and the teacher. He starts to regularly leave class and wander around the school. He is quick to put other student down in class and starts to be physically aggressive towards other students. He has also started to bully Marcus at school, starting rumours about him and getting his friends to harass him. Within the first term, David has already been suspended twice and spent many sessions in lunchtime detentions. There have been several meetings with his mother, she is supportive of the school, but David does not appear to respect her parenting and she reports he is displaying similar behaviours at home.

The year coordinator at the school works closely with David to try and build a relationship with him. This includes checking in with him each morning and getting to know his interests. The student shares that he really enjoys working with scooters and bikes, pulling them apart and fixing them.

The year coordinator is part of the school's wellbeing team and raises his observations with the team. The team identifies the maths teacher as a mentor for the student. A couple of lunchtimes each week, the maths teacher meets with David to work on a bike maintenance program, David really enjoys this program and the teacher is able to provide him with mentoring during the sessions, and it appears a really positive experience. However, David's behaviour still continues to escalate, and he becomes more isolated from his peers. He engages in several significant physical fights and has been physical threatening towards school staff.

The wellbeing team plan a range of supports for David. A positive behaviour support plan is developed with all staff being given specific scripts to use during escalation. A range of staff ensure they do daily check-ins with David. An alternative education plan is put in place, with David attending specific lesson in the Wellbeing Hub of the school, focusing on areas to assist his confidence. The team also works with his Mum to put in referrals to Onelink and PCYC, where David starts to engage one day a week anger management program. The Wellbeing team also liaise with the Police, as several incidents have resulted in them becoming involved. The School also refers to the Network Student Engagement Team to request support for the school to develop



learning plans for David. The Senior Psychologist also works with the student and helps link them the student with Menslink mentoring program and Headspace to consider David's mental health.

Jack (Year 9 Coordinator, Positive Behaviour for Learning Implementation Team Member)

Jack is a high school science teacher who has worked at his school for six years. He teaches four lines, including advanced chemistry, and is a mentor for a new educator. Jack also holds the position of Year 9 Coordinator. His responsibilities include student services, monitoring the academic and social progress for year 9 students, attending weekly student services meetings and organising extra-curricular activities for students.

Jack is a member of the school Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) team. The school has been implementing the PBL framework for two years, and Jack is a foundation member. The team meets fortnightly for one hour on a Wednesday. Jack's current role on the PBL team is Data Manager. Before each meeting Jack spends 45 minutes creating reports from the School Administration System to extract data on student behaviour, both positive and negative; and student attendance.

During each PBL team meeting Jack presents data reports and the team evaluates current interventions to make informed decisions. The PBL team decides what information will be presented at whole staff meetings. During a previous PBL team meeting, data identified there had been a significant increase of major behaviours; physical aggression and abusive language from year 7 students. Teachers on duty identified this may be linked to students fighting over who will sit in the back seat of the school bus. The usual PBL process is to enact proactive lessons to address emerging issues. Accordingly, year 7 teachers were asked to re-teach the school bus expectations lesson during roll group. A video demonstrating these expectations was also provided as a resource for staff to use. In addition, the teachers on bus duty were asked to increase the number of positive acknowledgements for students demonstrating the correct behaviour.

The most recent data shows there has not been a decrease in the problem behaviour. Jack sought feedback from the year 7 teachers and 80% identified they had been unable to deliver the lesson due to year 7 camp and the annual school swimming carnival being held in the last fortnight. He also identified from the data that the rates of positive acknowledgements for the bus had not increased. The team decided to allow one more week for the year 7 roll group teachers to deliver the lesson and to inform staff on bus duty to increase the rate of positive acknowledgements.

Jack is also responsible for presenting data during whole staff meetings. This information includes the total number of positive acknowledgements for the fortnight, the teacher who has given out the most positive acknowledgements and in which locations these have occurred. Jack also shares data for negative behaviour, including which behaviours are most prevalent, in what location, student groups involved and the time these behaviours occur. This ensures all staff who access these locations have a clear understanding of problems that need to be addressed, and how best to support students to use the correct behaviours.



Charnwood-Dunlop Primary School: Cultivating positive culture within the school and community

Charnwood-Dunlop School is a government school situated in the Belconnen suburb of Charnwood and caters for children from preschool to year 6. Charnwood Dunlop has cultivated a strong community of staff, students and families who value diversity and respectful relationships. A strong component of how Charnwood Dunlop created this culture was through the implementation of the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) approach. This is a well-researched framework for teaching school-wide expected positive behaviour and expectations. PBL was introduced across the whole school in late 2015 by focusing on the behaviours that promote all students to be safe and respectful learners. The community, staff and students were consulted and had input into the explicit behaviours the school wanted to achieve, and the consistent responses students could expect when they were unable to demonstrate these behaviours. In consultation with the students and the school community the school redesigned the school emblem/logo to incorporate the three PBL expectations – safe, respectful, learners. Posters reflecting these expectations were created and displayed in all shared areas of the school.

Staff worked collaboratively to develop lessons to explicitly teach the expected behaviours across all areas of the school. Students are taught these lessons on a regular basis to ensure a shared understanding of the behaviours. Staff and students worked together to create videos as resources to support teaching and learning. 'The Burrow' was set up as a sensory space for students who require assistance with emotional regulation. Students are supported to calm and return to learning in their classrooms when they are ready. In 2016 the school celebrated the launch of PBL with the students, their families and wider community. The schools collect and regularly analyse data to inform improvements to teacher support and student interventions.

The success of the implementation of the PBL framework at Charnwood-Dunlop School stems from a holistic approach to student wellbeing and learning within the school. The school has strong emphasis on restorative practices and the value of restoring relationships. At Charnwood Dunlop School, students are supported to be held accountable for their behaviour and work together to listen to each other's perspectives, build empathy, repair harm and find ways to move forward. To help students choose a positive attitude, the school promotes REACH values. These reflect staff and community values and are informed by the National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools. The REACH values are: Respect, Excellence, Acceptance, Commitment and Honesty. These values are embedded in their SEL program which complements/reinforces the school's PBL values and expectations. A core component of the restorative approach is the HUB which supports students when they become dysregulated and may need additional support. The HUB is a safe space where students can self-refer or be supported by their teacher to access a safe space. In the HUB, students are supported and guided by a trained staff member to regulate and reflect on their behaviour. As part of the SEL program at the school, Neuro Science Informed Education and trauma informed practice has become a core component, with student being supported with regular brain breaks which not only support their regulation but assist in achieving optimal learning outcomes.

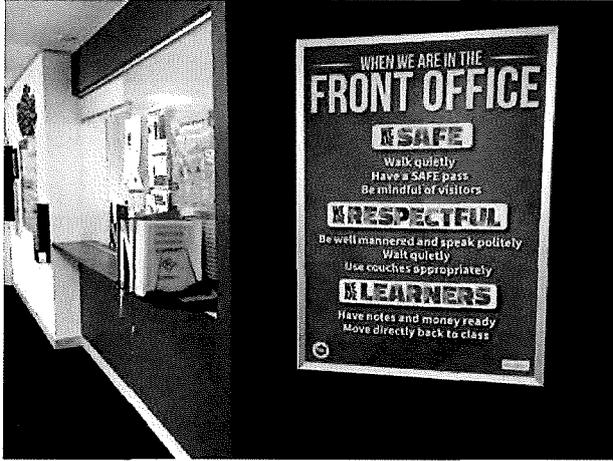
"We wanted to create an environment that allowed the best opportunity for our students to learn and our teachers to teach. We recognised the value and strength of our traditional relational/restorative approach to behaviour management and wanted a model which utilised this. PBL gave us a framework for addressing this. - Principal

"Parents/carers, family and community are more involved in the school and have built stronger relationships because staff, students and parents/carers now have clarity about the behaviour and learning expectations." - Teacher

"If someone was doing something wrong in the past teachers would just say 'stop!'. Now with PBL they talk about the expectation that kids should be showing and then congratulate them when they show the expectation." - Student

"The student body is more unified in their understanding of the expectations of them whilst at school. As parents/carers become more educated on PBL they notice students doing the right thing more and more." - Parent

An example of how Charnwood Dunlop values and connects with their community is the ABC Café which is open every morning between 8.30am and 9.30am. This initiative supports the strong connection between the school and community by creating a welcoming and informal space for staff and parents to connect over breakfast.



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