



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2023-2024

Mr Mark Parton MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair),
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA: To ask the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs

Ref: Budget Statement F, Budget Outlook

Hearing Date: 21 July 2023

In relation to: **Output Class 1: Public School Education and Violence in ACT Schools**

- 1) In the situations of violence in schools from students to other students, or from students towards teachers, what is the current policy on suspensions for students who commit an act of violence in the school?
- 2) How many students are suspended each year?
- 3) How long are suspensions for?
- 4) What happens after a student is suspended?
- 5) Are there patterns of suspensions in particular schools or areas?
- 6) Is there a process of warnings before a student is suspended?
- 7) Are students ever completely expelled?
- 8) Can the department provide the most recent statistics, including the departmental report, of 'reportable incidents' within ACT schools?

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

- 1) The *Interim: Suspension, Transfer or Exclusion of a Student in ACT Public Schools Policy 2023* can be found at:
https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/2169574/Suspension,Transfer-and-Exclusion-Policy-2023.pdf
- 2) The number of students suspended each year varies. Suspension data is publicly available on the Education Directorate website here: [Suspension data](#). This data is updated in the month of August the following year.
- 3) This information can be found in the *Interim: Suspension, Transfer or Exclusion of a Student in ACT Public Schools Policy 2023*. The policy details that the length of a suspension is determined based on the period of time required to restore a safe and effective learning environment but should be no longer than 20 days, in accordance with s 17J of the *Education Act 2004*.

- 4) This information can be found in the *Interim: Suspension, Transfer or Exclusion of a Student in ACT Public Schools Procedure 2023* at:

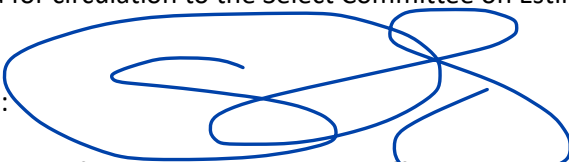
https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/2169577/Suspension,-transfer-and-exclusion-procedures-2023.pdf

The procedure details that during a suspension, the school takes steps to restore a safe and effective learning environment on the student's return to school.

- 5) The Education Directorate monitors suspension data however there is no analysis of system suspension patterns available.
- 6) Warnings are not part of the *Interim: Suspension, Transfer or Exclusion of a Student in ACT Public Schools* policy or procedure as suspension is not punitive. As defined in the policy, suspension is the process of temporarily withdrawing a student from school, placing them in the care of their parent/ carer when: (a) they have engaged in behaviour which is unsafe or noncompliant or (b) it is reasonable to suspend the student after considering all the circumstances, including any views of the student and their parents.
- 7) The *Education Act 2004* only allows for expulsion from Catholic system schools and independent schools.
- 8) This information can be found in the Education Directorate's annual reports. Page 138 of the [2021-22 Education Directorate Annual Report](#) shows that during 2021 – 22 there were 7,106 incident reports lodged across the Education Directorate using the RiskMan Work Incident Reporting System. In accordance with Part 3 Section 38 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, 33 events/incidents were notified to WorkSafe ACT.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024

Signature:



Date:

3/8/23

By the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Yvette Berry MLA