



Department of
Education



LET'S TAKE A STAND TOGETHER

Minister's Statement on School Violence



From the Minister

Every parent rightly expects that when their child is at school they will be safe, nurtured and supported to learn. Similarly, teachers and school staff should feel safe in their workplace.

It is however, a sad reality that some students come to school with the attitude that hurting other students or staff is alright. They choose to upset the good order of school life with intentional acts of physical aggression that create unsafe situations for others.

This type of attitude must change. We all know violence adversely impacts those directly involved - with physical and psychological harm a very real risk.

These acts also indirectly affect people in the wider school community; disrupting the school routine for many and impacting their sense of wellbeing, confidence and trust.

Reducing violence in our schools is a priority for the McGowan Government and we are taking action to address this growing community issue.

We have consulted stakeholders from across the community and considered their advice on the most effective ways to bring about change.

It is clear that we need to work together to address this issue in a united way. Schools alone cannot solve this problem and they need support from families and communities.

A plan has been developed to support school staff so they are clear about what is expected, and confident that their actions to maintain orderly learning environments for students will be backed by the Department of Education. The plan will also create a safer workplace for our teachers and other school staff.

Physical aggression has no place in our schools and the plan signals serious sanctions will be automatically imposed where students choose to hurt others.

The plan focuses on the intentional physical aggression and intent to harm others. Policy changes will not apply to students with a disability who either cannot control their behaviour or do not intend to harm others.



The response to violent behaviour is a shared responsibility and the plan includes actions that call for the broader community to be involved in real solutions.

Programs and resources will be available for parents to support their children, young people will have their voices heard and there will be ongoing discussion with community leaders and stakeholders.

There are no simple solutions to this complex community issue, but we must do better. This plan is the foundation for change - to take a stand together - and to ensure our schools are safe places for learning.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Ellery".

Hon Sue Ellery MLC
Minister for Education and Training

Actions:

ACTION

1

Principals to suspend students who attack other students or start fights

- Automatic suspension for students who attack other students or instigate fights.
- Automatic suspension for students who decide to film a fight rather than seek help.
- Principals to develop a behaviour plan for the student's return to school.
- Principals to work with families wherever possible.

ACTION

2

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

- After an incident, principals will immediately start an exclusion process.
- 'Exclusion' means student is removed from a particular school permanently or for a specified period of time.
- Exclusion orders approved by the Director General of the Department of Education.
- Department of Education to support principals moving to exclude a student.

ACTION

3

New alternative learning settings for the most violent students

- Every student has the right to an education – but they do not have the right to attack other people.
- New settings where they can continue their learning until they are ready to return to mainstream schools.
- Effective support programs to change the behaviour of violent students.
- Trial in 2019.

ACTION

4

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

- From 2019, new guidelines for school staff on responding to aggression.
- School staff to get clear advice on what actions are expected, appropriate and considered reasonable.
- This includes guidance on when physical contact is reasonable.

ACTION

5

Provide training and support for school staff

- Range of training programs to be delivered to school staff.
- Training options will include how to build positive behaviour, how to de-escalate aggressive behaviour, and in emergency situations how to appropriately restrain.
- From 2019, every public school graduate teacher will be trained as part of the induction program.
- More follow up support for school staff affected by incidents.

ACTION**6****New 'good standing' requirements to be added to school behaviour policies**

- Every public school to add 'good standing' requirements to its behaviour policy.
- Students who do the wrong thing will have privileges removed – such as being banned from school social activities.
- Students can earn back 'good standing' by making amends and behaving well.

ACTION**7****Free parenting program for parents of young children**

- Internationally-recognised Triple P – Positive Parenting Program offered free to all Western Australian parents of Kindergarten children.
- Program equips parents with skills to manage family issues, develop positive relationships and improve child behaviour.

ACTION**8****Review critical incident reporting and monitoring**

- Review to clearly define what is a school 'critical incident'.
- Principals' reporting responsibilities to be clarified.
- Support for schools to report more consistent, reliable and useful incident information.

ACTION**9****Spark a community conversation about violence in schools – with community leaders and others**

- New resources to help people from across our communities foster a new attitude to violence.
- Consultation with young people, parents and school staff will inform the development of resources.
- Inspire a new way of talking about violence – work together to make it socially unacceptable to everyone, including all of our young people.

ACTION**10****Premier's Youth Forum to give young people a voice and let them identify actions they believe could address violence in the community**

- Students to share their views on violence.
- Young people to make recommendations on solutions.

© Department of Education Western Australia 2018
This material is available in alternative formats on request.

Department of Education
151 Royal Street
East Perth WA 6004
T: 9264 4111
W: education.wa.edu.au