



2 July, 2021

JOINT STATEMENT REGARDING THE DEPARTMENT'S NEW STUDENT BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY

Parents, teachers and principals have always maintained a commitment to the highest standards of educational achievement for all students across all public schools whilst insisting and maintaining a high standard of student behaviour.

This requires the NSW Government and its Department of Education to ensure provision of appropriate and adequate staffing, curriculum, support programs and infrastructure requirements so that all schools have the resources to meet the needs of every child.

Teachers and parents expect schools to be safe, calm learning environments. The proposed Student Behaviour Strategy procedures will reduce the authority of schools to achieve this and will impose significant increases in workload in schools, further distracting schools from the core business of teaching and learning.

Despite numerous meetings and repeated attempts to strengthen system support for schools, there are indications the Department may again seek to announce a revised student behaviour strategy, including new suspension and expulsion procedures, which fail to:

- acknowledge the fundamental need to protect the health and safety of all students and teachers, let alone articulate the means to achieve that outcome
- protect the right of teachers to teach and students to learn in a classroom environment free of persistent and sustained disruption
- acknowledge the strength, clarity and superiority of the current suspension and expulsion procedures that is underpinned by a commitment to maintaining high standards of student behaviour
- maintain the authority of principals and teachers to manage non-compliant students as is clearly articulated in the current suspension and expulsion procedures
- provide the additional specialist staffing, support programs, therapeutic services and alternate settings to assist schools in meeting the needs of all students
- provide additional school counsellors in schools to support the mental wellbeing of students and the necessary interagency support to schools including medical expertise from the NSW Department of Health
- articulate the need for adequate public pre-schooling and early intervention programs
- provide support to all impacted stakeholders including the student, peers, all school staff and families
- commit additional funding to underpin the necessary systemic support.

It is on this basis that we call on the NSW Government and Department of Education to:

- cease any further developments regarding the proposed Student Behaviour Policy and suspension and expulsion procedures until the Department has engaged in deep and authentic consultation and collaboration with the NSWP&C, NSWTF, NSWPPA and NSWSPC
- maintain the current suspension and expulsion procedures and work with parents, teachers and principals should improvements be necessary to these procedures
- address the outstanding matters listed above.

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