The importance of keeping schools safe for everyone

The Department of Education and Communities is committed to ensuring a safe environment for students, staff and visitors in our schools.

To achieve this goal, it is important that schools have appropriate and relevant information pertaining to known risks associated with the environment, students and staff.

From time to time parents may be asked to provide information to the school regarding their child’s behaviour or special needs. This information enables schools to provide a supportive learning environment for students and ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone at the school.

Managing health and safety

Responding to the health and safety concerns of our schools is a complex task. There are many issues faced in keeping both students and staff safe.

Schools develop management plans to address health and safety concerns and provide an opportunity for parents and staff to work together to identify how students can be best supported and receive the highest quality education.

Supporting students

Behaviour involves words and acts that communicate need. Schools recognise this and aim to support individual student needs.

Parents provide vital information on the type of support that individual students require and schools value this knowledge and understanding. This information is important in ensuring that parents and schools work together to support the needs of the student and other students and take the learning environment into consideration.

Valuable information that parents can share include how the child behaves in familiar and unfamiliar environments, strategies that are effective in supporting appropriate behaviour and approaches to avoid.

Parents are asked to provide this and similar information on the Application to Enrol form to help facilitate a smooth transition for the student into the new school setting. If it is identified at this time that a student’s participation will be enhanced by Personalised Learning and Support, including a Behaviour Support plan, it will be developed upon enrolment.

Some behaviour of individual students potentially pose a challenge to effective teaching and learning.

Generally, the Personalised Learning and Support process begins when it is identified that there is a need for ongoing support for the student. Occasionally it may not be until after enrolment that the need for support is identified as being beneficial.

The Personalised Learning and Support Process

Parents and schools need to work together throughout the Personalised Learning and Support process.

The Department is aware that there are often complications associated with growing up which have an impact on a student’s behaviour. There are also environmental factors that could impact on a student’s behaviour. It is important that all relevant information is shared to ensure effective support is provided.

A member of the school executive will discuss the process with parents and work closely with all involved. The Personalised Learning and Support process will focus on providing strategies to ensure the best possible outcomes for the student.
This process of well defined steps ensures that everyone involved clearly understands the process, leading to improved decision making.

1. Behaviour and trigger identification

Parents and staff working with the student will identify the triggers that could possibly be causing the behaviour. This could include discussing any incidents concerning behaviour, medical needs or other environmental issues which appear to be impacting on the student’s behaviour.

Questions may take into account the frequency of incidents, their duration and the impact on the student and others.

2. Management strategies

Personalised Learning and Support uses strategies to promote effective learning, value participation and to manage factors that may impact on behaviour.

During the process, strategies will be developed based upon the triggers and causes identified as contributing to the behaviour.

The strategies used in the Personalised Learning and Support process provide appropriate guidance to those working with the students in understanding how best to support the student’s needs. The Personalised Learning and Support process is overseen in schools by the principal.

3. Communication

Parents will be given opportunities to be involved and will be consulted in the development and implementation of Personalised Learning and Support. A copy of the Personalised Learning and Support documents will be provided to parents.

4. Plan reviews

Review of Personalised Learning and Support ensures that it continues to be effective and is only used for as long as it is required. A scheduled review time for parents and schools is included in the Personalised Learning and Support process.

If it is identified that the Personalised Learning and Support process is not effective, local Department of Education and Communities personnel can provide further assistance to schools by facilitating a review. They can engage additional support including learning and engagement officers; and/or any other personnel nominated by the local Department of Education and Communities office, as required.