

# Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP  
Acting Premier  
Minister for Education  
Minister for Mental Health



Tuesday, 4 May 2021

## NEW LAWS TO MAKE SCHOOLS SAFER FOR EVERYONE

The Andrews Labor Government is giving Victorian schools the power to ban aggressive and violent parents from entering school grounds, to protect students and staff.

Minister for Education James Merlino today introduced the *Education and Training Reform Amendment (Protection of School Communities) Bill 2021*, delivering on a key recommendation from the 2018 Protective Schools Ministerial Taskforce.

The Bill will help empower authorised persons, such as school principals, to issue School Community Safety Orders to parents, carers and other people who engage in harmful, threatening or abusive behaviour.

The new laws will also allow schools to ban parents that engage in threatening or abusive communication through social media and other channels.

Schools will be able to impose requirements on the way parents, carers or other adult members of the school community interact with the school or school community – including stopping them from entering school grounds or other locations where school events are occurring, if reasonably necessary.

Schools must ensure people issued with the new Orders are still able to communicate with the school and be informed about the child's education, and make arrangements to ensure the child's attendance at the school and school activities.

The changes build on existing legislation and will provide greater procedural fairness to parents, carers and other adult members of the school community. This includes internal merits review, and external review at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal if the person doesn't agree with the outcome.

If a person fails to comply with a School Community Safety Order, an application can be made to the Magistrates' Court for an order requiring compliance, a civil penalty of up to 60 penalty units, or any other order that the Court considers appropriate.

The Bill is part of a broader strategy targeting the small minority of parents, carers and other members of school communities who engage in such inappropriate behaviour. It will also include an ongoing school-based communications campaign to address parent and carer aggression,

The Government has undertaken targeted consultation with stakeholders including teacher unions, school associations, parent associations, Victoria Legal Aid, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Foundation House, Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, and the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

*"No one should be threatened or intimidated at work or at school – that's why we're introducing these new laws to protect staff, students and their families."*

*"These vital new measures will empower our senior school leaders to take necessary actions when inappropriate behaviour is being levelled towards people in the school community".*

**Media contact:** Matthew Dixon 0438 190 148 | [matthew.dixon@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:matthew.dixon@minstaff.vic.gov.au)