

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC



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NEW POWERS TO HELP KEEP STUDENTS SAFE

The Allan Labor Government is helping keep our students, school staff and communities safe by giving principals stronger tools to keep their schools safe.

Effective day one term three of this year, Victorian school principals will have the authority to suspend or expel students when their behaviour outside school or online puts fellow students and staff at serious risk, a power currently restricted to within the school gate.

The changes bring Victoria into line with NSW and South Australia and will address concerns around harmful behaviour that happens outside school hours – particularly online – but affects student and staff safety.

School principals will use these expanded powers only when necessary to protect their school community. With these expanded powers, the Labor Government is putting in place the appropriate framework to ensure school leaders have the authorisation to act where necessary.

The changes strengthen the Labor Government's existing school safety measures, including the nation-leading 2020 mobile phone ban and the Safe Socials resources to help students and families use technology safely.

The new powers build on the \$10.4 million invested in the *Victorian Budget 2025/26* to expand the School-wide Positive Behaviour Support program.

The program helps schools teach students how to behave appropriately, create safe spaces for learning, support students who need extra help with behaviour and ultimately keep teachers and staff safe from violence.

The Labor Government is also investing \$4.2 million to ensure students who have experienced sexual harm and abuse from another student, including online, receive targeted therapeutic support through Sexual Assault Services Victoria, with support also provided to students using these behaviours to prevent further harm.

This builds on the work of the *Education and Training Reform Amendment (Protection of School Communities) Bill 2021*, delivering on a key recommendation from the 2018 Protective Schools Ministerial Taskforce – keeping our schools safe from threatening or abusive behaviour.

These new measures ensure that harmful behaviour – no matter where it happens – doesn't disrupt the safe, supportive environment every student deserves in the Education State.

Quotes attributable to Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll

"In Victoria, community safety comes first. These strengthened powers send a clear message that harmful behaviour outside of school or online has consequences."

"The safety of students, teachers and school staff is our top priority – we're investing in programs that foster more respectful schools and acting to protect school communities."

"This builds on our nation-leading ban on mobile phones in schools and our support of a social media ban for kids – keeping kids safe in the classroom and online."

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