TACKLING BULLYING TO HELP STUDENTS BE THEIR BEST

The Andrews Labor Government is providing government schools with the tools and resources they need to tackle bullying, improve the mental health of students and help them achieve their best in the classroom.

Minister for Education James Merlino today announced the Victorian Anti Bullying and Mental Health Initiative – a $7 million plan to address bullying in schools, support every students’ mental health and wellbeing, and reduce the rate of suicide.

A $4.8 million boost will go towards mental health services for government schools to respond to complex issues – including addressing depression, anxiety and trauma. This is the equivalent of up to 40,000 hours of mental health support services.

By improving access to mental health workers and assistance, students can get help as soon as they need it. As part of the new push, schools will also have access to training and resources that help reduce the risk of suicide and manage a student’s recovery in the immediate, short and longer term.

The Labor Government’s Initiative also brings together a range of existing resources including Bully Stoppers, Safe Schools, e-Smart and Respectful Relationships, as well as new initiatives to tackle racist bullying.

This will ensure parents and school communities can access a single website for all information, advice and support on combatting bullying and harassment. The extra funding comes on top of existing strategies and programs to help schools put a stop to all forms of bullying and unacceptable school behaviour.

Around one in five young people experience bullying, affecting their academic performance and self-esteem, leading to anxiety, depression and self-harm. Right now, suicide is the leading cause of death for Australian children aged 5-17 years.

This plan will be backed by evidence-based, practical advice which will empower principals, teachers, parents and students to prevent and respond to bullying in schools.

The Victorian Anti-Bullying and Mental Health Initiative will also partner with the Alannah and Madeline Foundation to deliver a fun run in 2018 to support social inclusion, respect and taking a stand against bullying.

Quote Attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

“This is a silent tragedy, and it’s hurting families across our state. Our kids simply can’t be their best if they don’t feel happy, supported and included at school.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Equality Martin Foley

“We have an obligation to every child to make sure our schools are bully-free. This program, which includes safe schools, provides the tools and mental health support to help young people be their best.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Multicultural Affairs Robin Scott

“Kids are not born racist. They tend to repeat what they hear from others. This initiative is about reducing bullying and harassment in all its forms across our schools.”

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