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Mr Bob Buckley  
A4 Convenor  
Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia  
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10 MAR 2016

Dear Mr Buckley

Thank you for your emails of 29 January and 8 February 2016 regarding bullying of autistic students in schools and the academic expectations for students with a disability.

I can assure you that the Tasmanian Government takes bullying of any student very seriously, as does the Department of Education. The Department's *Respectful Schools and Workplaces Framework* outlines the priorities and strategies we are implementing that contribute to safe and inclusive learning and working environments free from bullying, harassment and discrimination for all.

The Department of Education's *Respectful Schools Respectful Behaviour* teaching resources provide practical information for school leaders and teachers about developing and implementing a whole school approach to respectful behaviour. The resources direct teachers to significant national information including: The National Safe Schools Hub, Bullying. No Way!, Cybersmart, KidsMatter, MindMatters, Racism. No Way!, Stay Smart Online, The National Centre against Bullying, Think U Know.

*Respectful Schools: Supporting Student Need* is an initiative of the Tasmanian Department of Education which provides professional learning for staff through the Department's Professional Learning Institute and targeted support for staff through the Respectful School Support Teams. This initiative seeks to ensure learners requiring educational adjustments are supported through targeted resources and adjustments to learning programmes.

Tasmanian Government schools enable students from all backgrounds and abilities full access to inclusive learning environments. Every school has a Support Teacher dedicated to promoting whole school inclusive practices and individual student planning that encapsulates students' goals and appropriate levels of support. Support Teachers aim to develop and embed school-wide positive behaviour support approaches that take account of meeting diverse students' needs. They also contribute to building staff capacity in making educational adjustments using the *Australian Curriculum* to develop learning programmes that offer rigour and relevance.

The Department's guidelines for Individual Education Planning for students with disability are founded on a collaborative, strengths-based model. This model is integral to forming positive relationships and establishing high expectations that address individual needs.

The Department of Education has Autism Consultants in each Learning Service to provide support to schools and teachers who are working with students on the Autism Spectrum. This work can include working with class groups to develop an understanding of Autistic Disorder amongst a student's peer group where this is seen as a priority to facilitate inclusion for a young person.

Schools also have access to an online learning tool to further build staff capacity and enhance understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder amongst the teaching profession and ultimately amongst the student population.

Staff and parents are also supported to participate in the Commonwealth funded *Positive Partnerships* programme, which has been rolled out in Tasmania very successfully.

Once again, thank you for writing to me on this important matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Rockliff', written in a cursive style.

Jeremy Rockliff MP  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for Education and Training