



Mr Bob Buckley
Convenor
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RML16/336
RML16/454

Dear Mr Buckley

I write in response to your emails of 29 January and 8 February 2016, to the Hon Adrian Piccoli MP, Minister for Education, regarding students with disability and bullying. The Minister has asked me to respond on his behalf.

Thank you for taking the time to write about this important issue.

Bullying behaviour is not acceptable in NSW public schools. The NSW Department of Education is committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments that respect and value diversity and are free from all forms of violence, bullying, discrimination and vilification.

All NSW public schools are required to develop anti-bullying plans that incorporate prevention, early intervention and response strategies. These plans are designed to support all students, particular those who have experienced bullying, those who have witnessed bullying, and those who have displayed bullying behaviour. The best outcomes are achieved when the school and the wider community work together to develop approaches that suit the local context.

The Department has undertaken considerable work in recent years through the Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy which assists schools in the implementation of proactive approaches when responding to bullying behaviour. You may be interested in the Department's policy and related resource materials which can be accessed at https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_serv/discipline/bullying/PD20100415.shtml

The Department also supports its teachers to extend their knowledge and skills in meeting the needs of students with disability including autism, through professional learning.

Teachers in all NSW public schools have access to accredited training to support their understanding of obligations to students and parents under the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. More than 67,300 training courses have been completed by school personnel.

This training supports teachers in their obligations:

- to treat students with disability, including those with autism on the same basis as those students without disability;

- make reasonable adjustments to a student's learning program and/or learning environment where needed to enable a student to participate on the same basis as their peers, in consultation with the student and their parents/carers and;
- to develop and implement strategies and programs to prevent harassment and victimisation on the basis of disability.

In addition the Department provides accredited specialist professional learning courses to support teachers in responding to the diverse additional learning and support needs of students, including courses in autism, behaviour, language and communication, and personalised learning and support. Feedback from participants in these courses demonstrates a positive impact on teachers' knowledge, skills and confidence supporting students.

The Department also acknowledges that schools play an important role in supporting, enhancing and building the wellbeing of every child. That's why the Department developed a Wellbeing Framework for Schools which is currently being implemented. More information about the Wellbeing Framework for Schools can be found at <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing>

The NSW Government's Supported Students, Successful Students Package will, over five years, provide an increased investment of \$167.2 million and enhance by 45 percent wellbeing services already being provided in public schools across NSW.

If you would like to discuss the educational reforms and specialist programs and services for students with disability, including autism in NSW public schools, please contact Mr Neale Waddy, Leader, Support and Development on telephone number 9244 5860 by email at Neale.Waddy@det.nsw.edu.au

Yours sincerely


Brian Smyth King
Executive Director, Learning and Wellbeing
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