




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mental Health; Education Queensland, Safe Work Strategy

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.54 am): As we approach nearly two years of living through a world health pandemic, the mental health of Queenslanders is of paramount importance to the Palaszczuk government. This week marks Mental Health Week and we are urging Queenslanders to focus on their mental health, not just this week, of course, but every day of the year.

Not only is mental health a priority for this government, but so is the health and safety of workers. October is Safe Work Month. Every year Safe Work Month reminds us of the importance of work health and safety and that every worker has a right to go to work and return home safe and healthy every day of the year—nothing is more important.

Queensland's schools are also workplaces and we have zero tolerance for abuse or violent behaviour towards any staff member or student in any setting. That is why I am proud today to launch the Department of Education's Occupational Violence and Aggression Prevention Strategy to tackle this issue head on. It has been shaped by extensive input from key stakeholders, including principal associations, union representatives, school based staff and experts in the fields of safety and wellbeing. Building on our previously announced Safe and Respectful Communities social media campaign, the strategy includes 20 targeted initiatives, including psychological first aid training, supporting staff after dealing with a stressful incident, an online resource hub to help staff who have been cyberbullied and abused online, strengthening school security and a new parent and community code of conduct outlining how parents, carers and visitors must conduct themselves on school grounds.

Our focus is on the role that schools play, but we also know support from the wider community is essential. We cannot do it alone. The strategy not only looks at how we can better support staff, but also how we can build a culture within our schools to prevent this kind of behaviour to begin with. We want Queensland schools and education department workplaces to be as safe as they can be and that is what this strategy launched today is all about.