

## Question on Notice

No. 9

Asked on 11 February 2014

**Mr Shuttleworth** asked the Minister for Education, Training and Employment (Mr Langbroek) –

### QUESTION:

With reference to the government's moves to increase principal's autonomy in schools—  
Will the Minister outline what protections will be in place to protect students and ensure parental engagement in disciplinary process?

### ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his question.

My Department is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. A school's partnership with parents is vital in building a successful school community.

Strengthening discipline in Queensland state schools is one of 15 strategies introduced under the Queensland Government's *Great Teacher's = Great results* initiative to lift standards of teaching and give schools more autonomy so they can get on with the job of providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students. The *Strengthening Discipline in State Schools Amendment Bill 2013* amended the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* giving principals more autonomy and greater flexibility to manage inappropriate behaviour.

I have been advised by my Department that there are a number of protections in place to protect students and ensure parental engagement in the disciplinary process. The *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, and departmental policies and procedures offer protections for students and ensure there are opportunities for parental engagement in the process.

Principals are required to develop their Responsible Behaviour Plans for Students in consultation with the school community. The Plan outlines the expected behaviours and the range of disciplinary consequences that may be applied for inappropriate behaviour. The Plan must be endorsed by the principal and the President of the P&C/Chair of the School Council. Schools are also encouraged to offer short information sessions for families once the Plan has been finalised. These sessions provide an opportunity for families to have face-to-face discussions.

Section 330 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* requires a notice to be given to the parents if the student is under 18 years of age. My Department's Safe, supportive and disciplined school environment procedure requires that when a suspension, exclusion or cancellation of enrolment is applied to a student under 18 years of age, the parent is contacted and provided an opportunity to respond to the allegations. The only exception is if the student is living independently, in which case it is not appropriate for parents to receive the information.

Additionally students and their parents can make a submission to the Director-General, or his delegate, to have a principal's decision reviewed when a long suspension, charge-related suspension, exclusion or cancellation of enrolment is applied to the student.

There are also a range of consequences that may be applied in response to a principal's failure to comply with legislation and departmental procedures. Non-compliance will be addressed under the Code of Conduct procedures. Responses will be reflective of the nature of the non-compliance and would range from performance management conversations with the principal's supervisor, a requirement to undertake training and in the most serious circumstances dismissal.