

Australian Capital Territory

# Education (Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee) Determination 2019

made under the

Education Act 2004, Chapter 4A (School education advisory committee)

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**1 Name of instrument**

This instrument is the *Education (Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee) Determination 2019*.

**2 Commencement**

This instrument commences on 18 March 2019.

**3 Establishment of advisory committee**

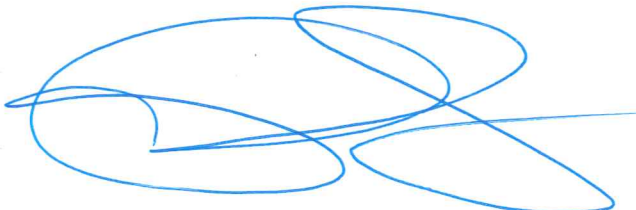
For the Act, section 126, I establish the Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee as an advisory committee for the period from 18 March 2019 until 13 September 2019.

**4 Appointment of members**

For the Act, section 127, I appoint the people named in schedule 1, column 2 to the role mentioned in column 1 for the Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee to represent the interest or expertise mentioned in column 3.

**5 Determination of terms of reference**

For the Act, section 127B, I determine the terms of reference at schedule 2 for the Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee.



Yvette Berry MLA  
Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development  
18 March 2019

## Schedule 1 Appointment of members

column 1 role	column 2 name	column 3 interest or expertise
Chair	Sue Chapman	Independent chair
Deputy Chair and Member	Chris Redmond	Community sector
Member	Dr Sue Packer	Child health and wellbeing The needs of vulnerable families
Member	Dennis Yarrington	School principals
Member	Nick Maniatis	School teachers
Member	Kirsty McGovern-Hooley	School parents and citizens
Member	Barbara Causon	Families of children with special needs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
Member	Philippa Godwin	<i>Schools for All</i> independent oversight committee

# Schedule 1      Terms of reference

## 1      Preamble

The government is committed to providing inclusive education that meets the needs of every child and young person that seeks a place in a government school. The government is equally committed to ensuring that government schools are safe and supportive for every student and school worker.

The Education Directorate is continuing an ambitious and evidence-based journey of systemic cultural change to deliver on the government's commitment to the community. Reviews and reports such as the *Schools for All Children and Young People – Report of the Expert Panel on Children with Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour* from 2015 and the Work Safety Commissioner's findings on occupational violence have focused on ensuring all children and young people in ACT schools are engaged in learning in a way that acknowledges their diverse, changing needs and varying backgrounds and circumstances. While significant improvements in managing and responding to students with complex needs and challenging behaviours are evident, significant systemic change takes time.

One important component is the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy which has been implemented in a staged approach since April 2016. The Policy provides guidance for ACT government schools on promoting safe, respectful and supportive school environments. The Policy supports the work that has been undertaken through the Schools for All program to create safe school environments for all students, including those with complex needs and challenging behaviours. The Policy reflects the guiding principles outlined in the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework which assists school communities with developing student safety and wellbeing practices.

However, the Policy has not been examined in light of its alignment to the government's *Future of Education Strategy* which was launched in August 2018. The *Future of Education Strategy* is underpinned by the principles of equity, access, inclusion and student agency.

The Policy requires government schools to have processes and procedures in place to address and prevent bullying, harassment and violence. The Policy promotes embracing diversity as a core value which underpins all ACT government schools.

The Policy and associated procedures encourage critical evaluation of the effectiveness of Social and Emotional Learning approaches and the implementation of local school processes and procedures to address bullying, harassment and violence.

The Policy and associated procedures provide direction for schools in managing complex and challenging behaviour. The use of preventative and early intervention measures is promoted in the Policy to lessen the need for more intensive interventions such as protective actions to manage behaviour.

The Policy encourages schools to seek additional support and expertise through making appropriate referrals when they are working with students with complex and challenging behaviour.

The Policy and associated procedures encourage critical evaluation of the effectiveness of Social and Emotional Learning approaches and the implementation of local school processes and procedures to address bullying, harassment and violence.

The Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) approach supports schools to implement the Policy. It is an international evidence-based approach for creating safe and supportive school environments. A summary of research evidence for PBL is available from the United States Office for Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at <https://www.pbis.org/research>.

PBL is a whole school culture changing approach to creating a positive behaviour environment through:

- leadership and school-wide support
- common language, vision and experience
- clearly defined set of expected behaviours (expectations and rules)
- procedures for teaching and practising expected behaviours
- continuum of procedures for acknowledging expected behaviours
- continuum of procedures for responding to problem behaviours
- procedures for record keeping and decision making and ongoing monitoring of data.

The government has determined that all government schools will adopt this approach. The Directorate is part way through implementation of PBL in ACT government schools.

There is no place for bullying or violence in schools but there will always be a need for deliberate effort to make school communities safe, supportive and inclusive. A literature review prepared by the Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group for the COAG Education Council and published on the *Bullying No Way!* website highlights that ‘Australian research suggests that up to one in four students has experienced some level of bullying face-to-face and one in five has experienced bullying online’. Additionally, ‘Australian researchers have suggested we are more aware of the potential impact of ignoring bullying, and willing to take the necessary positive action, rather than bullying actually increasing’.

The government is seeking assurance that its response to bullying and violence in schools is robust and that the occurrence of instances is minimised to the extent possible.

Under *Education Act 2004*, chapter 4A, the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development may establish a School Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) as required to advise the Minister about school education or a related matter, for a specified period. The Minister, Yvette Berry MLA, has established the Safe and Supportive Schools Advisory Committee as an advisory committee for the Act.

## 2 **Role and functions**

Broadly, the advisory committee will provide advice to the Minister on opportunities for strengthening safe and supportive school culture in every ACT government school. The advisory committee will advise on opportunities to strengthen practises in schools and the Education Support Office that give effect to the Policy. The advisory committee will focus on PBL and other targeted interventions that support the implementation of the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy in ACT government schools.

Specifically, the advisory committee will:

- assess the Policy against evidence and approaches in other education jurisdictions
- provide advice on the currency of the Policy against national practice and relevant benchmarks
- provide advice on the barriers and impediments to effective implementation of the Policy (including the social and emotional needs of families that impact on student behaviours at school)
- provide advice on appropriate lead indicators and system level data that will improve early intervention
- provide advice on opportunities to strengthen escalation and complaint management about student violence and bullying in ACT government schools
- provide advice on the appropriateness of school vs system level accountability and how this interacts with features of school-based management in the government school system
- consider findings of the *Schools for All* Report and the work being done to address occupational violence issues related to students in government schools with complex needs and challenging behaviours
- identify best practice and advise on how to promulgate best practice across all school settings
- consider opportunities for strengthening the implementation of the Policy through PBL
- consider opportunities for strengthening the implementation of the Policy through investment in educators and other proven measures
- provide advice on opportunities to strengthen targeted services that respond to the management of student violence and bullying in ACT government schools.

## 3 **Reporting**

The advisory committee will provide a summary status update to the Minister by 22 May 2019.

The advisory committee will address the Terms of Reference and present a final report to the Minister by 23 August 2019.

## 4 **Membership**

The membership of the advisory committee is as appointed by the Minister.

Members will uphold the ACT Government code of conduct for members of boards or committees.

The advisory committee will engage the following external advice in fulfilling its role and functions:

<b>entity or person</b>	<b>interest or expertise</b>
Chairs of Minister's Student Congress	School students
Various	Experts in educational psychology, child behaviour and trauma
ACT Policing	Community policing
Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth	Parental engagement, child and youth wellbeing
Various	Experts in child trauma
University of Canberra, Faculty of Education	Initial and ongoing teacher education
Australian Education Union, ACT Branch	School teachers in ACT government schools
ACT Principal's Association	School leaders in ACT government schools
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Advisory Group	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff.

The advisory committee may engage additional external advice as required.

The Education Directorate will provide administrative and technical support.