

Strengthening discipline in Queensland state schools



Fact Sheet

While the majority of students come to school ready to learn, a small percentage do the wrong thing and misbehave, which is why the Queensland Government is strengthening discipline in state schools.

Strengthening Discipline in Queensland State Schools is one of 15 strategies introduced under the government's new *Great Teachers = 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.

The *Education (Strengthening Discipline in State Schools) Amendment Bill 2013* provides principals with the authority to develop local solutions to disruptive or challenging behaviour.

Changes under the legislation mean that from January 2014 state school principals will have greater autonomy to manage inappropriate student behaviour through firm responses in a timely manner.

Red tape has been cut, processes have been streamlined and flexibility has been increased so that principals – in consultation with school communities – can determine the best range of consequences for inappropriate behaviour.

Schools want parents and carers to be aware of the behavioural expectations and the consequences for inappropriate behaviour and will talk about these at enrolment and throughout the student's schooling.

From 2014, schools will be given greater flexibility to choose additional behavioural management options.

- *Discipline Improvement Plans* which will be developed by schools with students and their parents to set out expectations for behaviour. These plans will include strategies to support students to change their behaviour.
- *Community Service Interventions* which require students to perform tasks out of school hours that are beneficial to the community. This exposes students to new challenging environments as well as encouraging teamwork, self-respect, commitment and confidence.

The major changes made to detentions, suspensions, exclusions and cancellations of enrolment include:

- removing prescription so that detentions can occur outside of school hours and on weekends
- shifting the suspension period for short suspensions from 1–5 school days to 1–10 school days
- removing written submission provisions against proposed exclusions
- removing the show-cause process prior to cancelling an enrolment
- expanding the grounds for suspensions and exclusions
- expanding the grounds in relation to conduct to include conduct occurring outside school.

Discipline audits will be conducted in all Queensland state schools by the end of 2014. Experienced principals from high performing schools will conduct the audits. They will assist schools to benchmark their progress in strengthening discipline and provide an independent view highlighting where there is room for improvement.

For more information on *Great Teachers = Great Results* visit the DETE website www.dete.qld.gov.au/great-teachers