Community must support campaign



The SSTUWA has welcomed Education Minister Tony Buti's new 10-point plan to tackle school violence.

It is especially important that schools experiencing high levels of violent behaviour will be offered targeted assistance.

SSTUWA President Matt Jarman said the union agreed with the Minister's stance that violence was a community problem manifesting in schools.

"The whole community needs to make it clear it will not tolerate violence in schools from students or parents," he said.

"Teachers and principals have the right to be safe at work.

"When teachers and school leaders take action against students engaging in violent behaviour they need to know they will have the unwavering support of the Department of Education.

"Schools have become a flashpoint for community issues. All too often it is teachers and school leaders who are having to deal with situations that have their origins in the broader community.

"These issues can cause danger and distraction from the core intentions of our schools.

"Actions listed in the revised 10-point plan to deal with school violence may not be required if greater community respect for the work of our teachers, school leaders and for the critical importance of education can be achieved."

The SSTUWA acknowledges, as stated by Minister Buti, the overwhelming majority of parents and students show care and respect for our school-based staff.

The SSTUWA supports the revised changes with the caveat that regional, central and ministerial support is provided to those operating in our schools.

Public schools remain underfunded in WA, including the resources needed for support to address the growing level of behavioural issues that require urgent clinical intervention.

The SSTUWA was delighted to secure additional Alternative Learning Settings and school psychologists as part of its previous election campaign demands.

However, the need for these facilities and support will continue to grow across all student age groups.

Minister Buti said schools could not solve problems relating to school-based violence on their own.

“The full support of parents, carers and the wider school community is needed to address the issue of violence, he said.

“Student behaviour is strongly influenced by the way adults conduct themselves. This plan focuses on engagement and encouraging everyone in the school community to play their part, lead by example and contribute to a culture that doesn’t tolerate any form of violence.

“Fundamentally, our schools are a reflection of our local communities. We all share a personal responsibility of how to behave in the community and we equally need to demonstrate the same level of respect and caring in our schools.

“Building trusting and transparent relationships between schools and families is key to preventing school violence. This package strengthens these partnerships and sharing the responsibility of keeping our schools safe.”

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