

# Education Act reform

## Information sheet for non-government schools

A new Bill has been drafted to reform and update the Acts of Parliament that form the basis of our public education and care system here in South Australia. Education and early childhood services will now come under a single Act.

The State Government has been progressively reforming our education system to ensure children get the best start in life. In recent times, an independent regulator for schools and early childhood services such as preschool and long day care facilities was introduced and, as part of a \$548 million investment in education in the 2016-17 State Budget, the SACE is set to be modernised to ensure the general capabilities, innovation and entrepreneurship are strongly promoted to students.

The draft Education and Children's Services Bill 2016 aims to bring about a number of changes to provide students with the support services they need, further increase autonomy in schools and share information more effectively with parents and other schools.

### The Bill at a glance

- New powers and increased penalties to ensure schools are safe environments for all staff in government and non-government schools
- Tougher penalties for people who behave in an offensive manner on school premises and use abusive, threatening or insulting language – up to \$2500
- New penalty for people who trespass on school sites and the ability to bar individuals – up to \$2500
- Stronger penalties for student non-attendance (truancy) including new family conferences and requiring parents to provide valid reasons for a child's absence within 5 days
- Updating the way schools share information about student progress and development with parents and each other
- Explicitly prohibiting corporal punishment and ensuring that the best interests of children are the paramount consideration in schools and preschools.

### Reasons for change

- When students move between government and non-government schools the process should be smooth and seamless so that each child's learning is not hindered and new schools are informed about developmental progress.
- Everyone has a right to feel safe at school, free from abuse and threatening behavior. We are increasing the maximum penalty for people who behave in an offensive manner from \$500 to \$2500, prohibiting a broader range of misbehavior and increasing penalties for trespassing on a school site.



- For every day that a child misses school, it puts them further behind and it becomes harder to catch up – by significantly increasing the penalties from \$500 to \$5000 for non-attendance and giving schools greater ability to engage parents in the process, rates of absenteeism in schools will improve.

## What this means for non-government schools

- Non-government schools will have access to more information, more often, as students move between schools.
- Non-government schools will benefit from tougher penalties for poor behavior of adults on school sites.
- Non-government schools will have greater powers to address truancy.

