

# RESPONSE TO CONSTITUENT

ASKED BY: Dr Shane Broad MP

ANSWERED BY: Minister for Education

## QUESTION:

My constituent question is from a Devonport primary school teacher. In what other job would you get verbally abused, bitten, spat on, hit, punched and kicked, all whilst you are trying to keep yourself as safe as well as 27 or so others also teaching these students the curriculum? This is the reality many teachers face every single day. Behind classroom doors educators are not only developing lessons, but they're also managing escalating behaviours, de-escalating conflict and protecting students from themselves and from harm. What should be a safe environment for learning can quickly become unpredictable and, at times, dangerous. Teachers are expected to remain calm under pressure and respond with empathy while they are being physically hurt and continue teaching as though nothing happened, but they also carry the emotional weight of these incidents long after the bell rings, often without time resources or the support they truly need. When is the minister going to get serious about violence in schools?

## ANSWER:

Thank you for your question on 24 March 2026 regarding violence in schools.

There is no place for violence anywhere in our community, including in our schools. Schools should be safe and respectful places where everyone feels valued, supported, and able to participate fully. As society changes, schools are increasingly impacted by issues originating beyond the school gate, and unacceptable and unsafe behaviour is rising. This has had a significant impact on both staff and students.

The Tasmanian Government has been taking action to address this issue and support schools. Our initiatives and actions have been informed by the voices of students, principals, teachers, families, and unions, alongside insights from national and state-level stakeholders and relevant research.

In 2025, the Tasmanian Government established the School Staff Wellbeing Response Team, the first of its kind in Tasmania. This initiative has been well received by schools and provides an additional layer of support for staff operating in more complex settings. The team brings together a wealth of knowledge from diverse backgrounds, including frontline and emergency services, staff wellbeing, mental health, and critical incident response, providing practical, empathetic, and informed support to schools facing complex challenges.

Staff wellbeing is further strengthened through the enhanced *Wellbeing Connect* service. This initiative delivers a more comprehensive range of supports, including individual counselling, traumatic incident response and recovery, and proactive workplace mental health and wellbeing programs. It also includes a Wellbeing Check-in for new employees within their first six months, along with access to an additional counselling session. These measures are designed to support the transition into the education workforce and reduce barriers to early help-seeking.

In 2025, a Psychosocial Safety Taskforce was established to build workforce awareness and capability in psychosocial safety, with a focus on the prevention of harm. Most schools have now developed psychosocial safety risk management plans, and additional support for schools is planned for this year. An online Psychosocial Hub is also available, offering information and providing a platform for staff to report incidents and hazards.

On 3 February 2026, I released our Violence in Schools – Keeping Staff Safe Action Plan (the Action Plan). This plan focuses on preventing violence where possible and responding clearly and consistently if an incident does occur, supporting any staff member who is affected. Feedback indicates the Action Plan represents a firm commitment by the Tasmanian Government, underpinned by resourcing, accountability, and timelines.

The Action Plan identifies five key priority areas that will guide work over the next three years:

- Targeting effort where it is needed most , including with the establishment of learning and support hubs in two primary schools and professional learning networks for approximately twenty schools.
- Increasing training and support for staff in preventing and responding to violence, including funding professional learning days for Teacher Assistants.
- Improving flexible learning options for students who struggle in traditional classroom settings.
- Strengthening systems and data collection to deepen understanding of violent incidents and identify effective interventions.


- Enhancing system-level support and policy responses to violence in schools

This work is already underway, with immediate actions being implemented alongside the foundations for long-term, sustainable change.

While significant efforts are being made to prevent violence and respond appropriately when it occurs, it is also important to recognise that respectful and safe behaviour is a shared responsibility. Families, students, school staff, and the broader community all have a role to play in promoting respectful behaviour and ensuring Tasmania is a safe and inclusive place for everyone.

Thank you for raising this important question.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jo Palmer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

Hon Jo Palmer MLC  
**Minister for Education**

Date: 27 April 2026