

Minister for Education  
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Hon Ruth Forrest MLC  
Chair  
Joint Sessional Committee  
Commission of Inquiry Recommendations Scrutiny Committee  
Email: c/- [Jenny.Mannering@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:Jenny.Mannering@parliament.tas.gov.au)

Dear Chair

Please find responses to Questions on Notice raised during the Joint Sessional Committee on Monday 2 September 2024.

#### **Question 1**

Please provide the Safeguarding Lead position description.

#### **Answer**

The focus of the Safeguarding Lead in every school is to build a culture of safeguarding across their community.

The Safeguarding Lead is an essential school-based role, which operates within the school Student Support and Wellbeing Team, as well as a broader, statewide Safeguarding Lead network. Safeguarding Leads are expected to support and guide the development of their school's child-safe culture, with a focus on child sexual abuse. The functions of the Safeguarding Lead align with the important work that the Student Support and Wellbeing Team (SSWT) plays in monitoring and supporting the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in schools.

The role of Safeguarding Lead is assigned to a leadership role of Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) or above, in some smaller schools this is the Principal. The role is defined as follows:

The Safeguarding Lead is to:

- be a member of the School Support and Wellbeing Team (SSWT)
- be the school representative within a network of Safeguarding Leads
- be the schools designated contacted person for Safeguarding Schools and Early Years
- build and maintain their own safeguarding knowledge and skills through participation in relevant professional learning, provided and funded by DECYP

- facilitate the schools safeguarding risk assessments and the development of its risk management plans, focusing on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks of child sexual abuse at a whole of school level
- act as a point of contact for staff who might have questions about safeguarding matters
- collaborate with the principal to provide annual acquittals and other general reports against agreed safeguarding functions and funding
- liaise and work with the principal, school leadership, the SSWT and staff to maintain the visibility and importance of the school's child safe culture aligned with the National Child Safe Standards and DECYP's Safeguarding Framework – "Safe, Secure, Supported"
- support and work with the Principal to ensure all staff know their mandatory reporting obligations.

The Safeguarding Lead is not responsible for:

- any investigations of allegations of child sexual abuse
- mandatory reporting on behalf of other staff
- making referrals to other agencies on behalf of school staff and members of the community
- taking on the duties of Professional Support Staff, i.e. school social workers or school psychologists
- taking on the duties or other roles in child protection or child safety that sit outside the school context.

## **Question 2**

What proportion of DECYP staff working in public schools and colleges have completed mandatory Safeguarding professional learning for each of the following categories including the raw figures and the proportion of the total employee numbers for each category:

- Teachers
- Education Support Personnel
- Relief Teachers on DECYP's HR system
- Relief Education Support Personnel on DECYP's HR system

## **Answer**

The Department is unable to accurately provide a breakdown of where staff who have completed the mandatory Safeguarding Training sit in the organisational structure as the Department's current systems don't allow us to accurately pull this data. It requires data from multiple systems to be combined which is not easily achieved, however this is an area that the Department is actively working on.

Below we have provided the number of staff who had completed the mandatory safeguarding training as at 31 March 2024, and the number of staff employed at that same date.

Completed training: 12 532 (the number provided at the hearing was as at 31 July 2024)

Employee numbers: Whole of agency: 12 492 Relief: 4 542.

There are many factors that must be considered when comparing the staffing numbers with the training numbers, as it is not an accurate representation of the staff on the ground due to those who are on leave or secondment, and many relief staff may not be engaged.

For the training numbers, if a group of staff have completed the training together, such as Teacher Assistants and Education Facility Attendants, this will be under-represented as only one version of the training will have been completed.

It is the Department's view that there is a low risk that a person who has not completed their required training would be working with children and young people on a school site as the following mitigation measures are in place:

- It is a manager's responsibility to ensure that all of their staff have completed this mandatory training.
- In each school and Child and Family Learning Centre (CFLC), the School Principal and CFLC leaders, along with the Safeguarding Lead are accountable for ensuring all staff in schools and CFLCs participate in required training.
- Training takes place in the first weeks of the year for all staff. For staff joining after the start of the year, the training is expected to take place as soon as possible upon commencement of duties, as outlined in the Department's staff induction training.
- The Department's staff induction training includes a module on Safeguarding Children and Young People, and it outlines the requirement to complete the mandatory safeguarding training.
- All relief staff (including but not limited to Teachers, Teacher Assistants and Education Facility Attendant) are required to provide a hard copy of their completed training certificate to the site where they are employed.
- At the end of 2024, Principals and CFLC Leaders will be required to submit an acquittal confirming that all of their staff have completed the mandatory safeguarding training.
- All schools are required to complete a Safeguarding Risk Management Plan (S-RMP) to address four different types of risks:
  - Propensity Risk: risks arising from a disproportionate clustering of adults with an inclination to commit child abuse or harm, or children with harmful sexual behaviours.
  - Vulnerability Risk: factors related to a child's identity or situation that may increase the risk of a child being abused or harmed.
  - Situational Risk: circumstances provide opportunities that may allow a potential offender to be alone with a child or to develop and exploit an emotional relationship with the child.
  - Institutional Risk: characteristics of the department/school that may influence the risk of child abuse occurring.

The Department is committed to a robust safeguarding risk management process to continuously identify, prevent and reduce risks of child sexual harm. This approach ensures a safe environment where every child and young person can thrive and grow.

### Question 3


Please provide the establishment and actual figures for the following positions, comparing prior to the COI-related additional recruitment since 2022 and most recent figures (i.e. to show net gain):

- School psychologists
- School social workers

### Answer

Employee Group	2022 Paid FTE	2022 Budget FTE	2024 Paid FTE	2024 Budget FTE	Paid FTE Variance	Budget FTE Variance
School Psychologist	73.44	72.75	80.70	79.45	7.26	6.70
Social Worker	84.46	81.90	109.48	100.30	25.02	18.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>157.90</b>	<b>154.65</b>	<b>190.18</b>	<b>179.75</b>	<b>32.28</b>	<b>25.10</b>

Yours sincerely



Hon Jo Palmer MLC  
**Minister for Education**