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COLLABORATION AND RESPECT TOP PRIORITY IN NEW SCHOOL COMMUNITY CHARTER

A new School Community Charter will be introduced in to NSW public schools to reinforce the importance of collaborative and respectful learning environments.

Education Minister Rob Stokes said the new Charter will help students, staff and parents clearly understand how they can contribute to building positive school communities.

"School community charters have long been a feature within independent and Catholic school systems and public school deserve the same," Mr Stokes said.

"Quality education requires everyone in a school community to work together.

"That means relationships built on honesty and mutual respect, and on timely, polite communication.

"It's a question of developing a genuine partnership to support students, in which everyone is treated fairly and diversity is fully respected."

Mr Stokes said the Teachers Federation and principal and parent associations helped develop the Charter, which provides a clear focus on communication, highlighting:

- school staff will take the time to speak to parents and carers when they can give their full attention;
- schools will ensure written communication is appropriate, fair and easy to read; and
- parents' appropriate use of email and social media to connect with their school.

The Charter also provides a clear statement of the types of behaviours that should not be part of school communities to ensure respectful and collaborative communication, including:
- Aggressive or intimidating actions, such as violence, threatening gestures or physical proximity;
- Aggressive or intimidating language, including the use of obscenities, making sexist, racist or derogatory comments or using a rude or angry tone;

- Treating members of the school community differently due to aspects such as their religion or disability; and
- Inappropriate and time wasting communication.

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