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Physical violence against principals must stop

Source: NZ Principals Federation

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"The latest statistics from the Primary School Leaders' Occupational Health and Well-being Survey are worrying," said Whetu Cormick, President of the New Zealand Principals' Federation (NZPF).

Cormick said principals are now 11.79 times more likely to be subject to physical violence at work than the rest of the population compared with 7 times more likely in 2016.

"This upward trend in physical violence against principals in schools is disturbing and indicates an urgent need to address the underlying causes. These include the increasing number of mentally unwell children in our schools," he said.

The special education system has been dysfunctional for years. Cormick applauds the new Learning Support Plan developed by Minister Martin but it cannot be implemented fast enough.

"We know that to fix years of neglect in this area will cost millions of dollars and we can't just do it all overnight. What we must address immediately though is the safety and well-being of our principals, our teachers and our children," he said. "That means a further injection of funds for Teacher Aides, specialist teachers and alternative education right now," he said.

Another matter requiring urgent attention is the 'Guidelines for Restraint.' "It is ridiculous that we cannot restrain a child who is trashing a classroom or principal's office," said Cormick. "The Crimes Act and the Education Act are at odds on this issue and schools need this mess sorted quickly," he said.

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For further commentary contact Whetu Cormick, NZPF President
Mobile: 0273322398

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For more information contact:

Liz Hawes | Communications Manager, NZ Principals Federation

Email: esm@nzpf.ac.nz, Tel: +64 (0)4 471 2338, Mobile: +64 (0)21 847780