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|  | Principal Practice Leader (Education)  Fact Sheet | October 2015 |

As part of the Special Needs Plan for Victorian Schools, a new Principal Practice Leader (Education) reporting to the Senior Practitioner (Disability) has been appointed to work exclusively with the Department of Education and Training.

**Role of the Principal Practice Leader (Education)**

The Principal Practice Leader will visit and work with government schools throughout Victoria to gain an understanding of current processes and staff knowledge and provide advice related to best practice approaches and processes for supporting and responding to students with challenging behaviours, including least restrictive practices. The Principal Practice Leader will work with schools to build understanding and expertise in protecting the safety of students and all those who work in our schools.

The PrincipalPractice Leader will:

* examine and assess existing legislation, policies and guidelines;
* advise the Department on how to improve and align policy and processes with best practice;
* assess how the Department collects and reports on data;
* advise on the need for professional learning and training;
* identify trends and opportunities to reduce the use of restraint, using the Department’s data; and
* provide reports summarising data and advice, including recommendations for how the Department and schools could improve approaches to challenging behaviours.

**About the Senior Practitioner (Disability)**

The dedicated Principal Practice Leader will work for the Department of Education and Training and schools under the direction and guidance of the Senior Practitioner (Disability).

The Senior Practitioner (Disability) works in the Office of Professional Practice in the Department of Health and Human services in accordance with the *Disability Act 2006*, to protect the rights of people with a disability in disability services, including by:

* working with staff to find out why a person may be hurting themselves or others, or damaging property;
* working with staff to find better ways of supporting a person with a disability instead of using restrictive interventions;
* helping staff understand the person’s needs better; and
* helping staff to find better ways to listen to people with a disability who may be at risk of hurting themselves or others.

For more information about the Senior Practitioner, visit: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/our-organisation/organisational-structure/our-groups/office-of-professional-practice>

If you have enquiries or suggestions you can email the Principal Practice Leader at: [Mandy.Donley@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:Mandy.Donley@dhhs.vic.gov.au)