

Schools urged to be cautious on expulsions

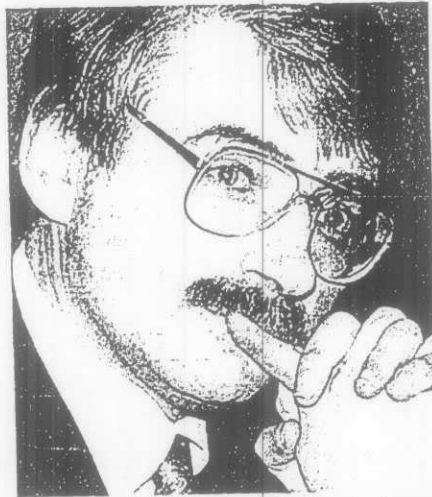
By LAURA RYAN

SCHOOLS have to be extremely wary of the effect that an expulsion can have on the life-long educational standards of students, Minister of State Willie O'Dea has warned.

Deputy O'Dea made his comments in light of new research published in the UK which reveals that more than two thirds of students expelled from secondary schools never return to mainstream education.

He said he is in full agreement with the recent decision by the Minister for Education and Science, Dr Michael Woods, to amend the Education Bill to allow schools retain the right to expel pupils if discipline and student safety are threatened.

He continued; "Schools have the right to expel pupils in order to maintain discipline and student safety, schools



Minister of State Willie O'Dea: warning of the effects of an expulsion from school on students

should be extremely wary of the effect that an expulsion can have on the

life-long educational prospects of the students concerned."

According to research published by Include, a UK charity campaigning for the re-integration of expelled children, more than a third of children expelled from primary schools and two thirds expelled from secondary schools never return to mainstream education.

The research found that only 62 per cent of those permanently expelled from primary schools and only 31 per cent expelled from secondary schools made their way back to mainstream education.

Deputy O'Dea concluded that it would be "extremely worrying" if the comparative Irish statistics were even a fraction of the UK figure.

"In any event, the new Education Bill—which stipulates that any decision to expel a pupil must be explained to the new education welfare officers—is a welcome development," he pointed out. "This and other measures contained within the Bill will help to ensure that children get at least a minimum education."



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