

August 2026

External Signals is a monthly briefing on developments affecting Australian independent schools: regulation, technology, sector incidents, funding and social change, and what they mean for the people running them. Produced by Arvoe for principals, business managers, and board members across the sector.

PERIOD COVERED

1 to 31 August 2026

PREPARED BY

Ryan Speak, Arvoe

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Top 5 signals most relevant this month

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Board signal of the month

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Can we show that our assessment still gives a reliable picture of what students know? NSW has asked its standards authority to consider a moratorium on unsupervised take-home tasks for the HSC, a review of 271 studies says engagement gains are a weak guide to learning, and the Commonwealth has pointed schools to the existing Framework rather than to any new federal rule.

Risk weather this month

PAGE 3

The highest-rated signals were more significant than in July, across a slightly smaller set. AI & Data Governance is the highest-rated area this month, on developments landing now rather than longer-horizon policy.

SECTION 01

At a glance

In June this briefing said AI was arriving in classrooms from both directions at once. In August the question shifted from whether AI is in schools to how it is affecting learning and assessment. NSW asked its standards authority to consider a moratorium on unsupervised take-home HSC tasks. A synthesis of 271 studies found that the engagement and short-term gains AI produces are weak indicators of learning. The Commonwealth's response to the parliamentary inquiry, dated April, commits to no new federal standard and points schools to the Framework that already exists.

The platforms continued to change in the meantime. Gemini in Classroom turned on for students of all ages wherever a school already had it on for them, and eSafety published national data on what children do with AI assistants: most have used one, and more than half of those who have used one use it for personal or social reasons, not only schoolwork.

22

Verified signals this month

10

Need attention within six months

5

High relevance (scored 7 or above)

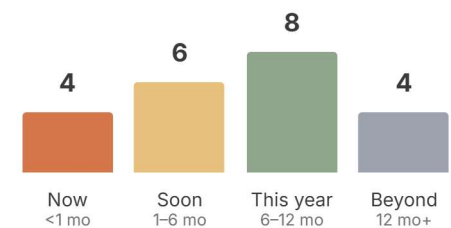
WHERE THE PRESSURE SAT · SIGNALS BY RISK DOMAIN



Bars show how many signals touch each area; one signal can touch several, so they total more than the verified count. The dot shows how hot the area ran.

● Warm, worth watching ● Mild ● Cool

HOW SOON



10 within six months. When each signal is expected to bite. The hero figure is the first two buckets combined.

WHERE FROM



DATES TO WATCH · WHAT'S COMING OVER THE HORIZON

1 Oct 2026	NSW Children's Guardian Amendment Act final provisions commence.	1 Jan 2027	WA public-sector breach reporting begins (non-gov schools excluded).
Term 4 2026	Interim NSW HSC assessment changes expected, possibly a moratorium on unsupervised take-home tasks.	Jan 2027	VIC device-policy registration standard expected to commence.
24 Nov 2026	ACT family violence information-sharing scheme commences; schools included.	Term 1 2027	Compliant anti-bullying policy a condition of NSW registration.
2 Dec 2026	EU AI Act bans 'nudify' and intimate-deepfake systems.	Term 1 2027	Sectors embed the National Framework; schools publish aligned policies.
10 Dec 2026	Children's Online Privacy Code and ADM disclosure commence.	1 Jul 2027	VIC non-gov schools must show a compliant device policy to hold registration.

SECTION 02

Risk weather this month

August was sharper at the top than July. Five signals scored 7 or above, against four last month, across 22 signals rather than 23. AI & Data Governance is the highest-rated area for the first time, and unlike July its signals are decisions and data landing now rather than policy on a long horizon. No signal led on Financial & Operations this month, so the table carries six areas.

The ratings below combine severity with timing, not volume, so a small area can rate higher than a busy one.

RISK AREA	WHAT IS DRIVING IT	THIS MONTH	VOL.
AI & Data Governance	Gemini in Classroom turned on for students of all ages wherever a school already had it on for them, and the Commonwealth's response to the AI inquiry commits to no new federal AI-in-schools standard, leaving the school's own policy as the operative instrument. Alongside them, a new WA privacy statute for the public sector.	WARM	3
Workforce & IR	Victoria's government-school dispute went to the brink of a third strike and reached an in-principle deal, with pay rises of 28.3 to 32.4 per cent over four years as the state benchmark once approved. In NSW, the union opened bargaining for Christian schools with a seven-step pay model and a workload-transparency claim.	MILD	3
Regulatory & Compliance	Victoria made a device-restriction policy a condition of school registration, with compliance due by mid-2027. Updated evidence guidance for the NCCD audit, a clarified disability duty for outside-hours care, and a Queensland deepfake offence announced in April with a bill to follow.	MILD	4
Safety & Wellbeing	eSafety's national data on children and AI assistants, a Tasmanian parliamentary inquiry into discrimination and bullying, WA lockdown figures more than double those of 2017, and Royal Commission evidence on violent extremist content reaching young people through gaming.	MILD	4
Teaching & Curriculum	NSW moving on HSC assessment, evidence that AI's short-term gains are a weak guide to learning, NAPLAN results with reading down, and an organised parent campaign to remove generative AI from schools. Most of it lands over months, not weeks.	MILD	7
Cyber & Data Security	A US federal resource package for school cyber programs, and nothing else. Nothing Australian and nothing binding. The area was not quiet in May, June or July; it was quiet in August.	COOL	1

HOW TO READ THIS

This month

Each area's rating combines how serious its signals are with how soon they land. Warm means watch now; mild means real but not pressing; cool means a longer horizon.

Volume

Signals in the area this month; areas sum to the month's 22. Separate from the rating: a busy area can read mild, and a thin one warm.

EXTREME	severe
HOT	act now
WARM	watch now
MILD	not pressing
COOL	longer horizon

SECTION 03

Top 5 signals most relevant this month

01

SIGNAL

NSW asks NESA to consider a moratorium on unsupervised take-home HSC tasks

■ TEACHING & CURRICULUM

NSW

10 AUGUST 2026

SCORE 8 / 10

On 10 August the NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, Prue Car, asked the NSW Education Standards Authority to urgently examine measures to protect student learning and maintain the integrity of the HSC as AI use grows. NESA has been asked to consider a "moratorium on unsupervised, take-home assessment tasks" while it conducts a broader review of AI's effect on students' cognitive development and learning, and of how assessment methods, including major projects and creative works, safeguard authentic student work. NESA has also been asked to develop a common approach for schools and teachers to identify inappropriate AI use.

Half of an HSC result comes from school-based assessment, some of it completed outside the classroom. Subject to NESA's advice, interim changes would apply "by the beginning of Term 4 this year", so that the HSC Class of 2027, their schools and their parents have certainty. Major art, design and technology projects are expected to be exempt, with subject-specific guidance to follow. The Minister's stated test: parents deserve confidence that HSC results reflect a student's own knowledge, effort and achievement.

WHY THIS MATTERS

A state has asked its curriculum authority to change the conditions of a senior credential because of AI, and any change binds every school that delivers the HSC. The immediate effect is practical: current Year 11 assessment schedules were written for a rule set that may not exist in October. The wider effect reaches every jurisdiction. NESA's review will produce an official position on what an assessment must look like to count as evidence of learning when AI is freely available, and other certificate authorities will have a reference point they did not have before.

Worth checking: *How many of our current Year 11 assessment tasks are completed unsupervised, and could each be converted to supervised conditions by the start of Term 4 without breaching our assessment policy? Who at the school will read NESA's advice when it lands, and who briefs families? Outside NSW, if our certificate authority followed, what would it mean for us: which tasks would have to change, what supervision capacity would we need, and how much notice would we want? On that answer, is this a watch item or a prepare item for us?*

SOURCE NSW Government, ministerial media release

PRIMARY

SECTION 03 · CONTINUED

02 Gemini turns on for students of all ages where a school already has it on in Classroom

SIGNAL

■ AI & DATA GOVERNANCE

GLOBAL

10 AUGUST 2026

SCORE 7 / 10

Google announced on 4 August that Gemini in Google Classroom would be extended to school and university students of all ages, with the web rollout starting on 10 August and mobile from 17 August. Student access had previously been limited to those aged 18 and over. Students get a Gemini tab that turns class materials into flashcards and practice quizzes, starter prompts that draw on the assignment title, instructions and curriculum materials for a selected class, and, where Gemini Notebook is enabled, study guides, audio overviews and infographics built from what the teacher has provided.

The precise control matters. Google states that access to the Gemini tab is "On by default for teachers and students of all ages" wherever an administrator already has Gemini in Classroom enabled, and that it is managed through the Gemini in Classroom setting. Where a school has it turned off for students, it stays off, including for under-18s. A school that wants it off for younger students only can put them in their own organisational unit and disable it there. It is available on the Education Fundamentals, Standard and Plus editions.

WHY THIS MATTERS

June carried both of the platforms most schools already run making AI moves in the same week: Microsoft adding free AI tools to Microsoft 365 Education, including a student learning coach that stays off until an administrator enables it, and Google launching Gemini in Classroom, teacher-facing at the time. August is the same platform reaching students, by a different route. This is not a new decision for the school; it is a vendor default that changes the effect of a decision the school has already made. A school that enabled Gemini for teachers may now have it in front of every student, with their coursework as context. The governance question is not whether the tools are good. It is whether the school knows which of its platforms have AI features available to students, who those features are on for, what they can see, and whether a change to any of that reaches the people accountable for learning and wellbeing before students do.

Worth checking: *Do we have a current register of the platforms we run that have AI features available to students, Google Workspace and Microsoft 365 among them, recording what is on, for which year levels, and what school data those features can draw on? Was each of those settings a decision someone made and recorded for students specifically, or a default we inherited? How would we learn that a vendor had changed one, and who would that reach? And where students can now generate quizzes and study guides from their own class materials, does our position on assessment and academic integrity account for it?*

SOURCE [Google Workspace Updates](#)

AUTHORITATIVE

SECTION 03 · CONTINUED

03

SIGNAL

eSafety: most children use AI assistants, and many of those who do use them for personal reasons

■ SAFETY & WELLBEING

AU

3 AUGUST 2026

SCORE 7 / 10

On 3 August the eSafety Commissioner released *Talking to machines: Children's experiences with AI assistants and companions*, a survey of almost 2,000 Australian children aged 10 to 17. It found **78 per cent had used an AI assistant**, ChatGPT most commonly. Of the children who had used one, one in five used it daily or more often, and more than half, 54 per cent, had used it for personal or social reasons, including advice about situations in their lives, physical health, mental health and emotional support, or simply having someone to chat with. Around one in three of those users, 32 per cent, had shared personal or sensitive information with an AI tool, including photographs and secrets, and one in five, 20 per cent, reported a potentially harmful or inappropriate interaction: controlling behaviour, harmful advice, bullying or hateful content. About 8 per cent of children had used a dedicated AI companion.

The Commissioner, Julie Inman Grant, said: "AI is not a trusted adult and cannot replace those key human interactions when children need advice, support or help with their wellbeing."

WHY THIS MATTERS

Earlier editions carried AI companions reaching students. This is the empirical basis for treating that as a live wellbeing matter rather than an emerging one, and it shows that for students the distinction between a dedicated companion app and an ordinary AI assistant may matter less than it does in product design. When a student takes a personal concern to a general assistant, it can play a companion-like role, even though it was not designed or marketed as one. Only 8 per cent of children used a dedicated companion app; 78 per cent had used an assistant, and more than half of those had taken something personal to it. For a school, two things follow. The first is that the wellbeing conversation about AI covers the tools students already carry, not only companion apps or what the school provides. The second connects to July: students who take a mental health question to an assistant before an adult are not triggering any of the school's safeguarding pathways. What the school tells students about the difference between an assistant and a trusted adult is now part of the wellbeing program, whether or not it is written down.

Worth checking: *Where in the year do we tell students what an AI assistant is and is not for, in words a 12 year old would recognise? Do our pastoral staff know that a third of the students using AI tools may have shared something personal with one, and what they would do with a disclosure that started there? Does our acceptable-use policy distinguish schoolwork from personal use, or treat them as one thing?*

SOURCE eSafety Commissioner, media release and research report**PRIMARY**

SECTION 03 · CONTINUED

04
SIGNAL

Canberra notes the inquiry's AI recommendations and points schools to the existing Framework

■ AI & DATA GOVERNANCE

AU

APRIL 2026

SCORE 7 / 10

The Australian Government has tabled its response to *Study Buddy or Influencer*, the House of Representatives committee inquiry into generative AI in the Australian education system. The response is dated April 2026. Of the committee's 25 recommendations, the Government supports one: Recommendation 2, funding schools to 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard, which is delivered through the existing Better and Fairer Schools Agreement rather than any AI measure. It "notes" Recommendations 1 and 3 to 25, which is every AI-specific recommendation, including minimum standards for AI products, AI literacy and assessment integrity. "Notes" is neither support nor rejection; it commits the Government to nothing beyond what it already has under way.

The response, coordinated by the Department of Education across ten agencies including eSafety, ACARA, AITSL and AERO, points instead to what already exists: the National AI Plan, the National AI in Schools Taskforce, the Australian Framework for Generative Artificial Intelligence in Schools, and the Children's Online Privacy Code due by December 2026. It records that education ministers provided \$1.8 million to Education Services Australia to establish product expectations for generative AI technology, calls supporting teachers and school communities with the technology "a national education priority", and places delivery with states, territories and existing national bodies.

WHY THIS MATTERS

For two years a school could reasonably expect that a federal position would eventually settle what an acceptable AI product or practice looks like. The response does not establish a new national standard, and sets no new requirements for schools. The Framework remains the reference, the product-expectations work at ESA is the nearest thing to a national standard and is not yet one, and assessment integrity sits with the curriculum authorities, which is exactly where NSW has just started moving. The practical consequence is that the operative instrument is the school's own formal position on AI, wherever it sits, in an AI policy, or across assessment, acceptable use, privacy and child safety, read as its interpretation of the Australian Framework for Generative AI in Schools. The Framework sets out what good looks like; it does not tell a school how to do it. The practical work sits with each school: translating the Framework into policies, decisions, controls and evidence that fit its context and its other obligations.

Worth checking: *Could we show a board member, or a parent, how each element of the Australian Framework is actually met here, pointing to what we do rather than to what we have written? Where the Framework says what good looks like without saying how, who at the school has decided our how, and what support or expertise did that decision draw on? If the answer to "what rules govern the AI tools our students use" is "ours", are we resourced to hold that standard, and is the board satisfied that we are?*

SOURCE Australian Government, Department of Education, government response

PRIMARY

SECTION 03 · CONTINUED

05

SIGNAL

Victoria makes a device-restriction policy a condition of school registration

■ REGULATORY & COMPLIANCE

VIC

4 AUGUST 2026

SCORE 7 / 10

The Education and Training Reform Amendment Act 2026 received Royal Assent on 4 August. It creates a new prescribed minimum standard for school registration in Victoria: every non-government school must have a policy restricting student use of personal electronic devices during school hours, with the policy's required content to be set by a Ministerial Order. The Government's announced intent, carried since April, is that the policy covers mobile phones, wearable devices such as smartwatches, and personal audio devices such as earbuds. The standard is due to commence in January 2027, and schools registered, or with an application pending, at that date have until **1 July 2027** to demonstrate compliance. It is a condition of registration, so it applies to every non-government school in the state, not only new applicants: a school without the required policy is not eligible to be registered.

The Ministerial Order had not been made as at mid-August. It is expected to specify device categories, exemptions for health, learning and safety, and how compliance is shown. Victorian government schools, already under the existing phone policy, have the wearable and audio extension applied from 28 January 2027. May's edition carried this as an announcement; it is now law with dates.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Victoria has put a device restriction into a registration standard rather than guidance, and registration is the one instrument that reaches every independent and Catholic school in the state. The scope is what to read closely. The Government has said it intends the Order to cover wearables such as smartwatches and personal audio devices such as earbuds, not only phones, and a registration standard is tested on what a school can demonstrate: the policy, the exemption process, and the records behind both. The date is a year away, but the Order is not out yet, so the sequence is: review the policy and the exemption process against the Act now, and finalise the wording once the Order and the registration standard requirements are available. Other states will watch whether the registration route works.

Worth checking: *Does our current device policy cover wearables and personal audio devices, or only phones? Do we have a written exemption process for health, learning and safety cases, with records? Outside Victoria, setting compliance aside: with device restriction moving from guidance into regulation, do we have a formal position of our own, held somewhere it belongs, in student safety and wellbeing or acceptable device use, and is our call on it watch, prepare, or act now?*

SOURCE *Education and Training Reform Amendment Act 2026 (Vic), Victorian legislation register*

PRIMARY

SECTION 04

For your next board meeting

We read the month's signals as evidence of governance questions the board already owns. One matter this month.

A Can we show that our assessment still gives a reliable picture of what students know?

THE STANDING QUESTION

Every board relies on the school's academic results as evidence: in the annual report, in the registration return, in what it tells families the school delivers. That reliance rests on an assumption so ordinary that it is rarely stated, that a student's assessed work is the student's own and that a good result means something was learned. In June this briefing put the question of whether the board had assessed the AI tools already in use and those arriving through vendor updates. The August signals raise a narrower question: whether existing assessment methods still provide reliable evidence of learning.

THE EVIDENCE THIS MONTH

NSW has asked its standards authority to consider a moratorium on unsupervised take-home HSC assessment tasks, with interim changes expected from Term 4 and the HSC Class of 2027 the first affected. Half of an HSC result is school-based assessment. The Minister's stated test is that parents can be confident results reflect a student's own knowledge, effort and achievement.

A synthesis of 271 studies by The Barker Institute and the University of Sydney found that generative AI is commonly associated with higher engagement and can produce short-term performance gains, but that those gains are "weak indicators of learning". The report argues that learning should be judged by evidence of students' understanding, reasoning and transfer, not by AI-assisted output.

The Commonwealth's response to the parliamentary inquiry supports no AI-specific recommendation and notes all 24. It says nothing that would take assessment out of the hands of the states and their curriculum authorities, and nothing in it commits the Commonwealth to a federal rule that would settle this for schools.

Google has meanwhile made it possible, by default where Gemini in Classroom is enabled, for students of any age to generate practice quizzes and flashcards from the materials their teacher provides, and study guides where Gemini Notebook is also on. And eSafety's national survey found 78 per cent of 10 to 17 year olds had used an AI assistant.

THE POSITION WORTH PUTTING TO THE BOARD

Our position should be that the school can defend its assessment as evidence of what students know, and can show it: which senior tasks are completed unsupervised, what each is evidence of, and what we would change if our certificate authority moved as NSW has asked NESA to consider.

The board's role is to ask the question clearly; management's role is to provide evidence-based assurance in response. The broader risk is not simply academic misconduct, which schools have always managed. It is that reported results may overstate learning if the school cannot distinguish a student's understanding from AI-assisted output in the assessments that matter most. That gap may become visible when a regulator, a university or a parent asks how the school assures assessment integrity, and the NSW review makes the question more immediate. A school outside NSW has the advantage of watching, though not of assuming its own certificate authority will not follow.

A STARTING POINT FOR THE BOARD PAPER

A paper that allows the board to test that position with evidence should cover four areas. A register of senior assessment tasks by subject, marking which are completed under supervision and which are not, and what each is designed to evidence. The school's current position on AI in assessment, as written, against the Australian Framework for Generative AI in Schools. An account of what the school would do if its certificate authority moved as NSW has, including the lead time it would need, and whether the school treats this as watch, prepare or act. And a note on how the school currently distinguishes a student's understanding from a student's output in the assessments that matter most. The last is where the Barker report is useful: it gives a published basis for raising the question without implying anyone has done anything wrong.

Received this as part of a board pack? The monthly briefing is free to school leaders at arvoe.ai/external-signals.

SECTION 05

Signals by risk theme

Teaching & Curriculum

7 SIGNALS

SIGNAL	EVENT	STATE	SOURCE	SCORE
NSW asks NESA to consider a moratorium on unsupervised take-home HSC tasks, interim changes by Term 4	10 Aug 2026	NSW	NSW Government PRIMARY	● 8
NAPLAN 2026: Years 5, 7 and 9 numeracy highest since 2023, reading down, Year 3 numeracy lowest since 2023	5 Aug 2026	AU	ACARA AUTHORITATIVE	● 6
Barker Institute and University of Sydney synthesis of 271 studies finds AI's short-term gains are weak indicators of learning	Aug 2026	AU	The Barker Institute AUTHORITATIVE	● 6
Heads Up Alliance petition calls on ministers to remove generative AI from schools and suspend 1:1 devices	6 Aug 2026	AU	EducationHQ CREDIBLE	● 5
New Zealand announces a standalone senior-secondary AI subject, Applied Intelligent Systems, taught from 2029	6 Aug 2026	NZ	NZ Ministry of Education PRIMARY	● 2
Federal consultation on a national First Nations Education Policy closes 26 August; final policy to follow	5 Aug 2026	AU	Department of Education PRIMARY	● 2
US Department of Education urges districts to judge edtech on learning outcomes rather than screen time	20 Aug 2026	US	US Department of Education PRIMARY	● 2

PATTERN. Four of these seven are about the same thing from different sides: whether technology in the classroom is producing learning, and who gets to decide. A state authority is moving on assessment, a research synthesis is cautioning against reading engagement as learning, a parent campaign wants the tools out, and a US department wants procurement judged on outcomes. NAPLAN sits behind them with reading down in Years 5, 7 and 9. New Zealand is the outlier, adding AI as a subject rather than restricting it as a tool.

Regulatory & Compliance

4 SIGNALS

SIGNAL	EVENT	STATE	SOURCE	SCORE
Victoria's Education and Training Reform Amendment Act 2026 makes a device-restriction policy a registration minimum standard from 2027	4 Aug 2026	VIC	Victorian legislation register PRIMARY	● 7
Independent Schools Victoria issues updated NCCD post-enumeration audit guidance: student-specific evidence, and ten consecutive weeks in one term at the Extensive level	undated	VIC	Independent Schools Victoria AUTHORITATIVE	● 5
Queensland announces a criminal offence for AI deepfake intimate images, naming students and teachers; bill not yet introduced	12 Apr 2026	QLD	Queensland Government PRIMARY	● 3
Disability Standards for Education extended to early-childhood services and Child Care Subsidy-funded outside-hours and vacation care from 1 August	1 Aug 2026	AU	Department of Education PRIMARY	● 3

PATTERN. One of the four creates a new obligation and it is the one with the longest lead time. The NCCD guidance is the one most likely to be tested this year: evidence must be student-specific rather than whole-school, adjustments at the Extensive level must be shown across ten consecutive weeks in a single term, and from 2026 a missing parent consultation needs a recorded reason. The disability standards change clarifies a duty that already existed. The Queensland offence was an announcement in April, with the bill to follow.

SECTION 05 · CONTINUED

Safety & Wellbeing

4 SIGNALS

SIGNAL	EVENT	STATE	SOURCE	SCORE
eSafety 'Talking to machines': 78% of children aged 10 to 17 have used an AI assistant; of those, 54% for personal or social reasons and 32% have shared personal information	3 Aug 2026	AU	eSafety Commissioner PRIMARY	● 7
Tasmanian parliamentary inquiry into discrimination and bullying in schools tables 33 recommendations, finds Catholic Education Tasmania discriminated against staff	19 Aug 2026	TAS	Parliament of Tasmania PRIMARY	● 5
WA public schools recorded 1,327 lockdowns last year, 1,107 from violent threats, more than double 2017	16 Aug 2026	WA	ABC News CREDIBLE	● 5
Royal Commission hears nihilistic violent extremism is reaching vulnerable young people through online gore spaces and gaming platforms	11 Aug 2026	AU	The Canberra Times CREDIBLE	● 5

PATTERN. Three of the four describe harm reaching students through channels adults do not see: an AI assistant, a gaming platform, a threat that closes a school for the afternoon. The WA figures come with a caveat the minister made herself, that stricter reporting from 2020 explains part of the rise. The Tasmanian report is different in kind. Its finding against a system employer on sexual orientation and marital status has not been tested in court, and its call to resolve the ambiguity between state and Commonwealth anti-discrimination law over employment in faith-based schools is the item most likely to travel.

AI & Data Governance

3 SIGNALS

SIGNAL	EVENT	STATE	SOURCE	SCORE
Google extends Gemini in Classroom to students of all ages, on by default where already enabled for teachers	10 Aug 2026	GLOBAL	Google Workspace Updates AUTHORITATIVE	● 7
Federal response to 'Study Buddy or Influencer' supports only the funding recommendation and notes all 24 AI-specific ones	Apr 2026	AU	Department of Education PRIMARY	● 7
WA Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act in force from 1 July; public-sector breach reporting from 1 January 2027	1 Jul 2026	WA	Government of Western Australia PRIMARY	● 5

PATTERN. Google's product change and the Commonwealth's decision not to introduce a new standard leave schools to translate the Framework into local decisions. Gemini's default is a governance decision made in an admin console, usually by someone outside the leadership team. The federal response commits to nothing that would make that decision for the school. The WA statute binds public-sector schools only, but a state building its own privacy and breach-reporting law is worth noting in every jurisdiction.

Workforce & IR

3 SIGNALS

SIGNAL	EVENT	STATE	SOURCE	SCORE
AEU Victoria calls a statewide 24-hour stop-work for 19 August after members reject the government's offer	31 Jul 2026	VIC	EducationHQ CREDIBLE	● 6
AEU Victoria members accept a revised deal of 28.3 to 32.4 per cent over four years; 19 August strike cancelled, Fair Work approval pending	17 Aug 2026	VIC	ABC News CREDIBLE	● 5
IEU opens 2026 bargaining for NSW Christian schools: seven-step teacher pay model, parental leave and workload transparency	12 Aug 2026	NSW	Independent Education Union NSW/ACT AUTHORITATIVE	● 5

PATTERN. The Victorian dispute that ran through July ended in August, and the number it ended on is the one non-government schools in the state will be measured against. The settlement still needs an all-staff vote and Fair Work Commission approval. The NSW round is the more direct signal for independent schools: the claims on the table, a seven-step pay scale and workload transparency, are a preview of what the union will bring to other independent bargaining tables.

Cyber & Data Security

1 SIGNAL

SIGNAL	EVENT	STATE	SOURCE	SCORE
US CISA releases a K-12 Cybersecurity Foundations Resource Package: guides, video series and eight objectives for school cyber programs	12 Aug 2026	US	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency PRIMARY	● 3

PATTERN. A quiet month in an area that was not quiet in May, June or July. The US package is worth a look for one reason: Australia does not appear to have a single nationally adopted, school-specific cyber baseline comparable to it, and this is a template for what one would contain, written for leaders who are not IT staff. A school could audit itself against its eight objectives now without waiting for an Australian body to adapt it.

SECTION 06

How this briefing is made

THE SCANNING

Every month we scan the full policy, technology, social, economic, legal and environmental landscape affecting Australian schools, across all sectors rather than only independent. From that, we surface only what clears verification. Fewer, higher-confidence signals beat a large scan count. This month, 22 signals cleared the bar. Signals are included by the month they belong to, by discovery or event; the event date shown may fall either side of the period.

THE SCORING

Each signal is scored for relevance to schools and placed on a horizon (how soon it lands) and a set of risk domains. The risk weather combines severity and immediacy into a single read per area, so you can see where the pressure sits and track it month to month.

VERIFICATION

Every signal is checked against its source, and load-bearing claims are read off the primary where one exists. Every source is shown with its authority: primary is the instrument or the body itself, authoritative is a sector or expert body, credible is established reporting. So you can see what a claim rests on. We do not name schools involved in adverse incidents. The lesson travels without the name.

WHAT THIS IS AND ISN'T

This is a briefing to help you see what is coming and ask better questions. It is not compliance advice, and not a substitute for your own legal, IR or child-safety processes.

GOING DEEPER

Want a signal read against your school's specific profile? Arvoe helps schools turn signals like these into a clear, evidence-based position for the board. If the board question above raised something the school cannot yet answer with confidence, our quick interactive assessment is a free place to start. To have a signal in this edition read against your school's specific profile, reply to the email this briefing arrived with, or visit arvoe.ai



**We help schools unlock AI with confidence, so our
kids can thrive in an AI world.**