

School safety to be improved

Students who commit violent acts on campus will be severely punished, according to the central government, which introduced a number of measures to ensure safety in schools at the most recent executive meeting of the State Council, China's Cabinet.

Ensuring safety in primary and middle schools and kindergartens should be a public security priority, according to a statement released after the meeting, presided over by Premier Li Keqiang.

"Campus safety concerns the healthy development of millions of students and the happiness of their families. Schools must be solidly built, like those in areas of post-earthquake reconstruction, and they should also be the most secure places when it comes to safety," Li told the meeting.

The statement said principals are responsible for campus safety, while students should be taught to value life and the rights of their classmates. It added that schools must employ the "necessary personnel" and use closed-circuit TV to keep a close watch on potential dangers and safeguard students' safety.

School buildings must comply with national safety and quality standards, while builders, designers and supervisors will hold lifelong liability for any failures, it added.

In addition to classes related to safety, schools will be required to conduct drills to alleviate the dangers posed by earthquakes, fire and stampedes, and more police officers should be deployed near schools.

Security risks on campus must be closely scrutinized, and the education and health authorities have been ordered to monitor and check sanitation, disease prevention and food safety in educational establishments for younger students.

A number of incidents of campus violence and bullying have put school safety firmly in the spotlight. The latest occurred on April 1 in Luzhou, Sichuan province, when a student surnamed Zhao killed himself by jumping from the top of a building at Taifu Middle School. Despite an official announcement to that effect, the incident aroused suspicions among members of the public that the boy had been beaten to death by five other students, who were believed to have bullied him.

The incident led to heated online debate about an investigation into the cause of death conducted by the local police and the untimely disclosure of information by the authorities.

At the State Council meeting, Li called for an effective mechanism to be established to curb bullying, especially acts of violence, by disclosure, intervention and prevention. He added that the relevant departments should respond to public concerns by disclosing the results of investigations in a

timely manner.

In the Government Work Report he delivered in March last year, Li added “safety” to the chapter about education, and stressed “families, schools, the government and society should help to cultivate a secure and healthy environment in which children can grow up and make a contribution to the country”.

The meeting sent a warning to “naughty children”, who either bully their peers or take advantage of children who are less developed physically or come from deprived families, said Zheng Zonggen, a teacher at Wenfeng High School in Huoshan county, Anhui province.

Surveillance equipment is necessary because teachers cannot watch students 24 hours a day, he said, adding that a punishment mechanism should be established to discipline bullies and allow students to understand the consequences of beating or mistreating their peers, he added.

Xiong Bingqi, vice-president of the 21st Century Education Research Institute, said that in addition to the equipment outlined at the meeting, more money should be spent to help schools eliminate risks, such as bullying and unsafe food.

Bullying and campus safety require more effective implementation of the law, and violators should be subject to police action, rather than punishments handed out by their principals or teachers, he said.

Teachers and schools often conduct investigations into bullying but many perpetrators escape punishment, setting a bad example and giving the impression that violators can escape severe penalties, which further encourages bullying, he added.

Zheng said: “Lessons will be learned to reduce the likelihood of these incidents occurring. Anyone who bullies their peers will be punished in accordance with the law.”

Statement by the Spokesperson on the latest developments in Libya

The clashes and escalation of violence in the south of Libya endanger the political process and put Libyan citizens’ lives at risk.

Libyans deserve peace and stability, and expect all sides to refrain from violence and take measures to de-escalate the tense situation. Libya’s political crisis can only be solved through negotiation between all

stakeholders based on a willingness to compromise and by putting the interests of Libyans first.

The United Nations remains the framework through which the international community continues to support Libya's political settlement. The European Union is determined to continue supporting this process, including through the Libya Quartet with the United Nations as well as the African Union and the Arab League.

[The Tories are living up to nasty party reputation](#)

The last few days have exposed the full horror of [the rape clause](#), the wider issues around the cap on child tax credits and the complicity of Scottish Tories in the utterly immoral policies of their Westminster colleagues.

[Big regional disparities in net job creation across the UK since 2010](#)

Labour analysis of Government figures shows:

- London and the South-East have accounted for almost half of all net jobs created in the UK since 2010, despite accounting for only a quarter of the population

.

The rest of the country has lagged behind with just one net job in 200 created in the North East under the Conservatives.

Rebecca Long-Bailey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, commenting, said:

"New figures show that seven years of failure under the Conservatives is holding most of this country back. Boasts about job creation will ring hollow when there are few jobs being created across most of the country and even then too many are poorly paid and insecure.

"The reality of Conservative failure is that with investment falling and real wages still lower than before the crash, but chief executive pay up 24% to over £5m since 2010, it's the wealthy elite who are winning out in the Tories' rigged economy.

"Only Labour has the ambition needed to deliver investment across the whole country and create decent, well-paid jobs so that people in every part of our country can live richer lives."

Tory failure on living standards sees real earnings fall by £1,200

Labour analysis, using House of Commons Library endorsed modelling, shows that:

Average real earnings are set to fall by £1,200 as a result of rising inflation and lower wage growth

At the Budget last month we saw inflation forecast up this year and average earnings forecasts lowered next year and for the next two years.

The combination of higher prices and lower wages is that living standards are set to be squeezed.

This time last year, at the Budget 2016, the OBR was forecasting real average earnings growth of 9 per cent between 2015 and 2020 (average earnings adjusted for CPI inflation). However, at this year's Budget, this was revised down to growth of 5 per cent between 2015 and 2020.

Converting this to income values, Budget 2016 was forecasting that real average earnings would be almost £2,500 higher in 2020 than in 2015. However, at Budget 2017 this was revised down to £1,300. This is a difference of £1,200.

Today's analysis comes on the back of IFS analysis last year which showed that the "outlook for living standards has deteriorated rather sharply", describing the prospects for real earnings growth as "dreadful".

The Resolution Foundation has also said that the "outlook for living

standards in 21st century Britain does not look promising” and that “weak and regressive nature of income growth in the years ahead should concern us all”.

This analysis looks at the effect on living standards resulting from changes to OBR forecasts at this year’s Budget.

Tax and benefit changes, as well as previous OBR forecasts will impact on living standards; however, this analysis focuses just on inflation and earnings outlook.

John

McDonnell MP, Labour’s Shadow Chancellor, commenting, said:

“Today’s analysis shows the impact of seven years of Tory economic failure.

“Living standards are being squeezed and working people are being hit hard. This is despite the Tories promising at the last General Election that they would raise living standards.

“The truth is that Theresa May has failed working people and the Tories are taking the country backwards. Labour would make different choices and stand up for ordinary working families.

“Only Labour will take the action needed to end the Tories’ economic failure by introducing a Real Living Wage of £10 an hour by 2020 and by investing in our regions and our local communities.”