

Aware. Protective. Safe.

Keeping children and young people safe from sexual abuse in Queensland schools and early childhood services

The Queensland Department of Education is committed to:

- ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all Queensland children and young people
- providing safe, supportive and disciplined environments for all children and young people across Queensland
- supporting our education partners to keep children and young people safe and well
- responding promptly to allegations of harm or risk of harm to children and young people in our care
- supporting people who have experienced sexual abuse
- providing a child safe environment through implementation of the national principles for child safe organisations.

Our commitment is underpinned by five implementation values



Involve

We will consult with children and young people in the decisions that affect them and listen to what they have to say.



Include

We will reflect equity and the diverse needs, lived experiences and cultural safety of all children and young people in our approach.



Inform

We will work with our families and communities to ensure they are aware and equipped to recognise, prevent and respond to child sexual abuse.



Implement

We will implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and respond to recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.



Improve

We will continuously improve our understanding and approach to preventing and responding to child sexual abuse.

Our approach

Reflect

Respond to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and identify strategies to strengthen our approach.

Strengthen

Implement improvements to our approach and build the capacity of education partners through provision of information and resources.

Embed

Integrate improved strategies into core business for all members of the education community.

Review

Assess the efficacy of our approach and identify strategies to strengthen our approach with evidence-based best practice.




MONITOR AND REPORT ON PROGRESS

Alignment with other strategies

- Advancing Queensland Priorities – Give all children a great start
- Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's Framework to address Sexual Violence
- Every Queenslanders Succeeding – Disability Service Plan
- Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- Not now, not ever: Putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland
- Supporting Families Changing Futures
- Queensland Human Rights Act 2019



Strengthening our approach

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations		Actions to strengthen our approach	
The Department of Education is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and has measures in place to meet the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.		<p>Since the release of Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Final Report, we have been reflecting on our approach to preventing and responding to child sexual abuse and identifying strategies to strengthen our response.</p> <p>The following actions build on the measures already in place to keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse.</p>	
Aware 	Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide prevention education for parents, families and communities • Provide online safety education for parents and community members 	
	Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve support and responses to harmful sexual behaviours displayed by children • Provide guidance to staff and volunteers to support the creation of safe online environments • Refresh guidance materials for teachers and principals on how to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse • Improve recordkeeping policies to help protect and inform prevention activities • Implement an Information Exchange Scheme to better prevent, identify and respond to child sexual abuse • Improve processes for transferring student information between schools and jurisdictions 	
	People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve teacher registration, suitability assessments and disciplinary investigations • Review processes for managing Blue Cards in state schools to ensure people have a blue card before commencing employment • Support the Queensland Government reportable conduct scheme 	
Protective 	Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Australian Government to develop a National Framework for Child Safety and the National Strategy to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse • Monitor and enforce the national principles for child safe organisations within Queensland state schools and early childhood services • Assist in the monitoring and enforcement of the national principles for child safe standards within Queensland non-state schools 	
	Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen processes to respond to complaints and concerns to be more child-centred • Improve processes for responding to complaints about children with harmful sexual behaviours • Improve reporting resources to help teachers and early years educators know what to report and when 	
	Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly review and identify opportunities to strengthen and embed the national principles for child safe organisations • Queensland schools, boarding facilities and early childhood education and care services are supported to adopt the national principles for child safe organisations • Embed the national principles for child safe organisations into the Department of Education Staff Standard of Practice and decision-making processes 	
	Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the National Office for Child Safety to monitor, review and implement best-practice approaches for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse • Update the public register of department policies and procedures 	
Safe 	Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide age-appropriate education for children and young people about the prevention of sexual abuse • Implement online safety education for prep to year 12 	
	Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support schools to create child safe online environments • Continue the successful efforts of the department's Cyber Safety and Reputation Management Unit to work in partnership with relevant entities to remove offensive online content and address other concerns • Establish a cross-sectoral Cyber Safety Reference Group for government and non-state educators • Integrate the national principles for child safe organisations into arrangements for funded services 	
	Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the <i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> is considered and upheld in decision making processes concerning children • Review student protection policies and procedures to ensure approaches are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand for all children and young people 	