



Student protection

Fact sheet for contractors, volunteers and visitors to state schools

For Queensland state schools, there is no higher priority than the safety and wellbeing of their students. This fact sheet provides information about your responsibility to report all suspicions of harm or risk of harm to students, what you need to know in relation to your own behaviour, and the reporting obligations of school staff members.

Contractors, volunteers and visitors include people who have contact with students online or away from a school site to provide services to the school.

What are your student protection responsibilities?

You are required to:

- complete student protection training as directed by the principal at each school you visit and/or provide services to
- report all suspicions of harm or risk of harm to a student, formed in the course of your duties, to the principal without unreasonable delay
- discuss any suspicions relating to student sexual behaviours or sexual relationships, including sexting, with the principal.

What is harm?

Harm is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a student's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm can be caused by sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect.

Harm can be caused by a person known to the student, a stranger, an employee of the Department of Education, another student or through self-harm.

When do you need to report?

You must report to the principal when, in the course of your duties, you become aware or suspect a student has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

In the course of your duties means when you are performing paid work or volunteer duties for the Department of Education. This includes during activities on school sites, during excursions, camps and other extracurricular activities, and online.

You must also discuss with the principal if you become aware of, or suspect, any sexual behaviour or sexual relationships involving students, including sexting.



How do you contact the principal?

Each school will have a different process; however, in general you can contact the school office and ask to speak with the principal about a confidential matter. If you cannot contact the principal, ask to speak with the deputy principal or contact the relevant regional office (details below).

What if your concerns relate to the principal?

If you suspect the principal or another departmental employee has caused, is causing, or presents a risk of causing harm to a student, refer to the [Allegations in the area of student protection procedure](#) for guidance on reporting your suspicions.

What do you need to remember in relation to your own behaviour?

- **ALWAYS** interact professionally with students, including outside school hours
- **NEVER** intentionally harm a student, either physically, psychologically or emotionally
- **NEVER** touch a student in a sexual way, or engage in any other inappropriate interactions with a student.

What if you have online safety concerns for a student?

Online safety concerns could include, but are not limited to, unwanted online contact, cyberbullying and exposure to violent or inappropriate content.

If you suspect a student has been harmed or is at risk of harm as a result of online activities you must report your suspicions to the principal.

To keep up to date with online safety issues and advice refer to the resources provided by the eSafety Commissioner at <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>. The eSafety Commissioner has a guide which covers some of the key online safety issues for young people and includes a range of practical tips and advice on what to do if things go wrong. The resource [Online safety: A guide for parents and carers](#) contains a list of services that can offer extra support.

How do school staff members report student protection concerns?

All school staff members must report reasonable suspicions of sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse through the principal to the Queensland Police Service (QPS).

School staff members must also report reasonable suspicions of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect through the principal to Child Safety when the child may not have a parent able and willing to protect them from harm.



The department's [Student protection procedure](#) and [Allegations against employees in the area of student protection procedure](#) provide clear instructions to school staff members on how to report student protection concerns in a way that meets their reporting obligations.

For further information

If you have any further questions or concerns about student protection matters, discuss them with the principal or contact the relevant regional office. A list of regional offices can be found at <https://education.qld.gov.au/contact-us/state-schools-regional-contacts>.

For questions or concerns regarding the conduct of departmental employees, contact Intake & Assessment on (07) 3055 2950 or by email at intake@qed.qld.gov.au.