

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 or children
- what you need to remember about your own behaviour
- the reporting obligations of school staff members.

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

What are my student protection responsibilities?

The responsibilities of visitors to state schools are outlined in the Department of Education's [Student protection procedure](#). You need to:

- complete student protection training as directed by the principal of every school you visit or provide services to
- report all suspicions of harm or risk of harm to a student or child, formed in the course of your duties, to the principal as soon as possible
- discuss any suspicions of concerning student sexual behaviours or sexual relationships (including sexting) with the principal.

What is harm?

Harm is any significant detrimental effect on a student or child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm can be caused by:

- sexual abuse
- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect.

A student or child can be harmed by someone they know, a stranger, a Department of Education employee, another student or themselves.

When do I need to report?

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

'In the course of your duties' means whenever you're performing paid work or volunteer duties for the Department of Education. This includes activities:

- on school sites
- during excursions, camps and other extracurricular activities
- online.

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

Any adult in Queensland who believes a child is being or has been sexually abused by another adult must report it to the Queensland Police Service (QPS). If you form this belief in the course of your duties, you must report it to the principal. If your information meets the threshold for reporting, the principal will forward a report to the QPS and/or Child Safety.

How do I contact the principal?

Every school has a different process. However, you can usually contact the school office and ask to speak with the principal about a confidential matter. If you can't contact the principal, either ask to speak with the deputy principal or contact the relevant regional office.

What if my concerns relate to the principal?

If you suspect the principal or another departmental employee has harmed, is harming, or could potentially harm a student or child, you must report it. Refer to the [Allegations against employees in the area of student protection procedure](#) to find out how to report your suspicions.

What do I need to remember about my own behaviour?

- **Always** interact professionally with students - even outside school hours
- **Never** intentionally harm a student or child - physically, psychologically or emotionally
- **Never** touch a student or child in a sexual way, or engage in any other inappropriate interactions with them whether in person, online or through other forms of communication.

What if I'm concerned about a student's online safety?

While the internet can be a great learning resource for students, it can also potentially expose them to:

- unwanted online contact
- cyberbullying
- violent or inappropriate content.

If you think a student or child has been harmed or is at risk of harm from these or other online activities, you must tell the principal as soon as possible.

A great way to stay up to date with online safety issues and advice is to visit the [eSafety Commissioner website](#). There you'll find a guide on the key online safety issues for young people, as well as practical tips and advice on what to do if things go wrong. And if you need extra support, the resource [Online safety: A guide for parents and carers](#) has a list of services that can provide it.

How do school staff members report student protection concerns?

All school staff members must report reasonable suspicions of sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse to the principal, who will then report it to the QPS.

School staff members must also report reasonable suspicions of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect to the principal, who will then report it 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.

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>.

If you have any questions or concerns about the conduct of a departmental employee, contact the Intake & Assessment team on (07) 3055 2950 or by email at intake@qed.qld.gov.au.