



## Student protection fact sheet: Information for parents

There is no higher priority for the Department of Education than the safety and wellbeing of students attending Queensland state schools.

This fact sheet provides information for parents about how schools respond to student protection concerns, including mandatory reporting responsibilities of Queensland state school staff.

### Reporting student protection concerns in Queensland state schools

All school staff members must report reasonable suspicions of sexual abuse to the Queensland Police Service (QPS). Teachers, registered nurses and early childhood education and care professionals must also report reasonable suspicions of physical or sexual abuse to Child Safety when the child may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm. These responsibilities are known as mandatory reporting obligations.

The department's [Student protection procedure](#) provides clear instructions to school staff on how to report student protection concerns in a way that meets their mandatory reporting obligations. On becoming aware of, or reasonably suspecting harm to students, school staff members must submit a written report to the principal.

It is the principal's responsibility to determine if the report meets the threshold for forwarding to Child Safety and/or QPS. The principal may make limited enquiries to determine if there is a reasonable suspicion of harm, and therefore that the threshold for reporting has been reached. However, it is not the role of schools to undertake investigations, or substantiate allegations of harm against a child.

If the principal determines that a report does not need to progress to Child Safety and/or QPS the school may offer a range of support options to a child and their family. One of these may be to refer the family to local support services such as [Family and Child Connect](#) (FACC), to assist them to receive any support they may need.

### What happens after the school submits a report to authorities?

After the school has submitted a student protection report, Child Safety and/or QPS will investigate and assess the suspicions of harm and may take action to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing. During this time the school will monitor the child and report any new suspicions of harm to Child Safety and/or QPS. It is not the school's role to undertake investigations, or substantiate allegations of harm against a child.



Sometimes the school is notified of the outcome when Child Safety and/or QPS make a decision about whether to take action. If Child Safety and/or QPS do not take action (that is, if the report does not meet their threshold for intervention) the school will continue to monitor and support the child. School staff may also consider referring the child and their family to external local support services such as FACC.

### **What if you suspect a child is being harmed?**

If you are a volunteer or visitor in a state school, and you suspect a child is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, you are required to discuss your concerns with the principal. All parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns regarding the possible abuse and neglect of students with the principal, guidance officer or the child's teacher. A report will be forwarded to Child Safety and/or QPS if the information meets the threshold for reporting under mandatory reporting obligations.

Any person has the right to make a report directly to Child Safety or the QPS.

### **Confidentiality**

The identity of a notifier (a person who notifies Child Safety of suspicions of harm to children) is protected under the Child Protection Act. Any person who becomes aware of the identity of a notifier must not disclose the identity of the notifier to another person (with a few exceptions). Notifiers are also protected from liability for notification of, or information given about, alleged harm or risk of harm.

### **Further information**

Members of the public can access information about child protection on [Child Safety's website](#).