Department of Education

Standard of Practice

DELIVERING FOR QUEENSLAND

Queensland Government

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Message from the Director-General

One of the greatest strengths of the Department of Education (the department) is the **professionalism and integrity** our workforce demonstrates every day in serving Queensland communities.

This Standard of Practice (this Standard) applies to all employees and other workers, including those in community-based, outreach, or multidisciplinary programs. It must be read alongside the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service (the Code of Conduct) and any approved program-specific operational guidelines, which provide practical guidance on applying these principles in daily work.

Our ethical conduct is guided by the four principles of the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* (Qld) and the Code of Conduct:

1. **Integrity and impartiality** – act honestly, fairly, and without bias.
2. **Promoting the public good** – put the interests of the community first.
3. **Commitment to the system of government** – respect lawful authority and public institutions.
4. **Accountability and transparency** – be open and responsible for your decisions and actions.

It is mandatory for all employees and other workers to read this Standard of Practice in conjunction with the Code of Conduct and also to undertake public sector ethics training at induction and then regularly as directed by the department. In that way we will ensure our clear understanding of and ability to implement the ethical principles, values and standards of conduct that are to be applied to our daily work for the department.

Sharon Schimming
Director-General
Department of Education

Introduction

At the Department of Education, we serve Queensland communities with integrity, professionalism, and a commitment to ethical practice. Our work is guided by the ethics principles and values in the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 (Qld) (PSEA), as reflected in the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service.

Across our workforce, it is recognised that the PSEA operates as an overarching value-based framework that provides the foundation to support ethical decision making. The PSEA is part of Queensland's robust ethics framework that guides the conduct of public officials at all levels. Together, with operational and compliance mechanisms in other legislation, it helps guide employees how to operate ethically and with integrity. The Standard is intended to support employees to apply the principles and values of the *Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service* in the context of their departmental roles by providing practical guidance, clarifying expectations, acting in the public interest and promoting consistent and ethical decision-making.

This Standard applies to all employees and other workers of the department, consistent with the *Public Sector Act 2022 (Qld)* and other relevant legislation and policy obligations.

In performing our duties, we act in a way that is compatible with human rights and consider human rights when making decisions, in accordance with the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)*.

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring every child has the right to be safe, no matter where they are. Queensland has a multifaceted legislative framework to keep children safe and protect them from harm. The *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)* and the Guide to Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme strengthens this framework, requiring the department and other organisations working with children to demonstrate they

are child safe and implement the Child Safe Standards and reportable conduct requirements.

For the purposes of this Standard, employees and other workers include:

- any employee of the Department of Education, whether permanent, temporary, full-time, part-time or casual
- any volunteer, student, contractor, consultant, or any person engaged in any other capacity by the Department of Education

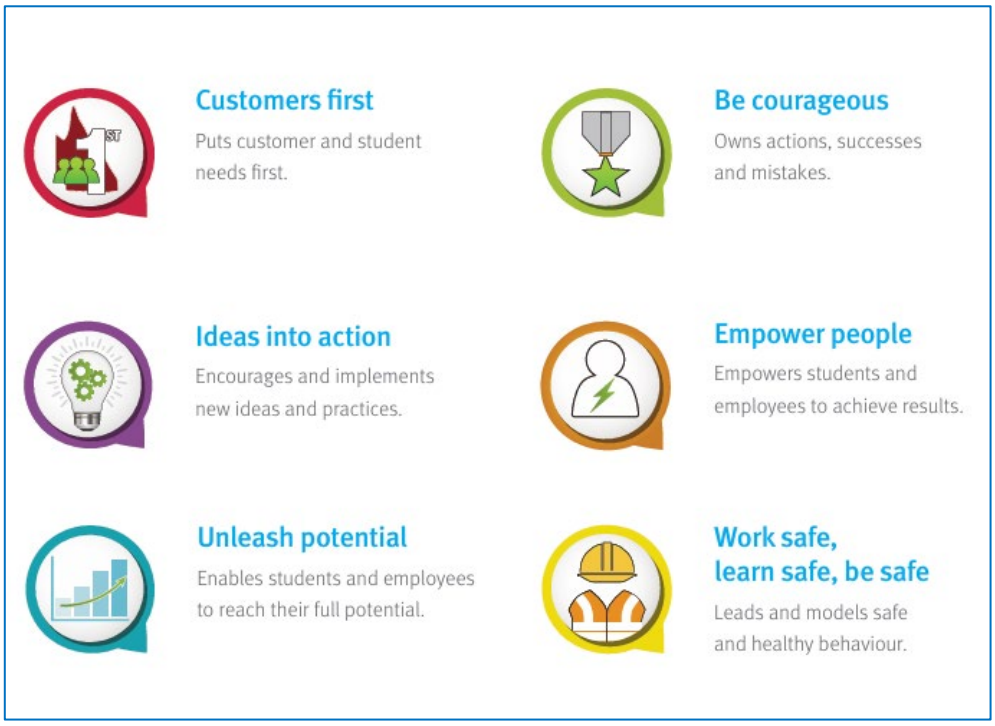
All employees and other workers must comply with this Standard in connection with their work and any conduct that may impact the department.

Public sector ethics principles and values	
Principles	**Values**
1. Integrity and impartiality	1.1 Commit to the highest ethical standards 1.2 Manage conflicts of interest 1.3 Contribute to public discussion in an appropriate manner 1.4 Manage participation in external organisations 1.5 Demonstrate a high standard of workplace behaviour and personal conduct
2. Promoting the public good	2.1 Commit to excellence in service delivery 2.2 Ensure appropriate community engagement 2.3 Work as an integrated service
3. Commitment to the system of government	3.1 Commit to our roles in public service 3.2 Maintain appropriate relationships with Ministerial staff 3.3 Ensure proper communication with Members of Parliament
4. **Accountability and transparency**	4.1 Ensure diligence in public administration 4.2 Ensure transparency in our business dealings 4.3 Ensure appropriate use of official resources, public property and facilities 4.4 Ensure appropriate use and disclosure of official information 4.5 Commit to innovation and continuous performance improvement

Department's core values

The department has adopted the five Queensland government core values, adding a sixth for '*Work Safe, Learn Safe, Play Safe*'.

The core values are:



This Standard provides guidance on applying the principles and values in everyday work to support a safe, respectful, inclusive and effective workplaces. While the Standard covers a number of ethics related issues, it cannot provide guidance on every possible scenario. If you would like further advice or support, please refer questions to your supervisor, manager, principal, Regional HR team (Department of Education (DoE) employees only) or the department's Integrity unit (DoE employees only).

All departmental policy instruments are available to staff and the public from the department's Policy and Procedures Register (PPR).

Principle 1 - Integrity and impartiality

Under the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 (Qld), and to uphold the public's trust, we commit to:

- Acting with integrity and the highest ethical standards
- Providing advice that is objective, independent, non-partisan, and impartial
- Treating colleagues, clients, students and their families, carers or kin and the community with respect
- Placing the public interest first and managing any conflicts of interest transparently and appropriately
- Engaging honestly and fairly with the community.

Managing conflicts and private interests (Code of Conduct 1.2)

Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest happens when interests could influence—or appear to influence—our duty to act in the public interest. These interests might include, but are not limited to, our personal relationships, other employment, memberships, or ownership of shares in companies, or property.

Complete the Conflict of interest declaration and management plan to disclose conflicts and private interests.

- **Actual conflict** – A direct conflict between an employee's current duties and their interests
  Examples:
  - Being in a position to approve a contract for a company owned by a close family member
  - A teacher accesses their own child's academic records using OneSchool.
- **Perceived conflict** – Where it could appear that a private interest might improperly influence the performance of duties, whether or not this is actually the case.
  Example:
  - Participating in a decision about funding for an organisation where your friend is a volunteer
  - A teacher involved in marking or reporting on a class that includes their own child, creating the appearance of bias.
- **Potential conflict** – No conflict exists now, but circumstances could create one in the future.
  Example:
  - Being involved in recruitment planning while intending to apply for a role in the same team later
  - A teacher who is involved in decisions about class allocations or resource distribution knowing they are planning to enrol their child at the school.
  - Having a dual relationship where your professional role is focused on the education of the child and your personal point of view is to help a family in need. This could create a challenge of being "too close" to a situation and may intersect with your professional boundaries as an objective educator or education support.

We must identify, disclose, and manage all conflicts to maintain public trust.

Further information

Refer to:

- Conflict of Interest (Integrity) (DoE employees only)
- Conflict of Interest (Procurement) (DoE employees only)
- Conflict of Interest policy
- Conflict of Interest procedure
- Conflicts of interest, gifts, and benefits (Qld Government)
- Conflict of interest declaration and management plan (DoE employees only)
- Gift and benefits procedure
- Gifts and benefits (DoE employees only)
- Manage conflicts of interest of the Code of Conduct Section1.2
- Manage conflicts of interest in the public sector – guidelines and toolkit (DoE employees only)
- Public Sector Commission 'Declaration of interests - public sector employees excluding chief executives (Directive 03/24)
- Queensland public service: Complaints at a glance

Other (secondary) employment

Employees and other workers may undertake secondary employment whilst an employee of the department.

If secondary employment creates a potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest, employees and other workers are required to declare the conflict of interest to their principal/manager to ensure it is managed in the public interest.

When engaging in secondary employment, employees and other workers have an ethical obligation to ensure:

- their ability to perform departmental duties is not compromised

- their secondary employment does not compromise the department's integrity.
- public resources, facilities, intellectual property, or their official position are not used to advance personal interests, whether financially or otherwise.

Employees must not engage another employee nor allow themselves to be separately engaged by the department, including in a private capacity, to provide goods or services to the department where:

- those services would reasonably be expected to be performed as part of their normal paid employment
- they have not been authorised to be engaged in their private capacity by the Director-General or delegate under section 89 of the *Criminal Code Act 1899* (Qld).

Managers/principals should be consulted if there is any uncertainty regarding these obligations.



Moura State High School

Example – Employee Performance concern (fatigue)

An employee working full-time for the department was also volunteering with the State Emergency Service (SES) doing overnight shifts responding to a flood. The employee's fatigue from extended SES duties began affecting their focus and decision-making at work. When the supervisor raised the concern, the employee explained their commitment to supporting the community. The supervisor supported the employee by discussing options to manage workload and safety-critical duties including considering special leave under the directive. Together, they agreed the employee would access immediate special leave and after the immediate disaster response limit SES shifts to reduce fatigue, balancing their volunteer responsibilities with work performance and wellbeing.

Example – Private capacity activities with school clients

An employee working full-time as a teacher was also employed as a youth worker on weekends. The employee occasionally worked with young people who were students at their school, creating a potential conflict of interest between their teaching role and their external position. When the principal raised the concern, the employee explained their commitment to supporting the community. The principal supported the employee by discussing ways to manage boundaries and maintain impartiality including not using privileged or confidential information gained in either role to inform actions in the opposite role. Together, they agreed the employee would avoid, as much as possible, working with school students in their youth work role, ensuring boundaries are in place and professional responsibilities and wellbeing were maintained.

Example – Contracting back

A Principal wishes to engage a teacher in the teacher's private capacity to prepare work programs for implementation in the school. As preparing work programs is part of the teacher's normal paid duties, the teacher must not be engaged or paid separately for this work. Additionally, the teacher would be holding a private interest in a contract with the department, and this would require them to be authorised by the Director-General or delegate under section 89 of the *Criminal Code Act 1899* (Qld).

Further information

Refer to:

- Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service
- Conflict of interest procedure
- Conflict of interest policy
- Conflict of interest declaration and management plan (DoE employees only)
- Copyright procedure
- Declaration of Interests for Chief Executives - Directive 05/24
- Employee leave entitlements guideline (DoE employees only)
- Employee Leave procedure
- Leave policy
- HR Delegations (DoE employees only)
- Declaration of Interests – Senior Executives and Equivalent Employees
- Declaration of Interest for public sector employees (excluding Chief Executives) Directive 3/24

Contracting back to the department

When an employee of the department enters into a contract or agreement with the department in a private capacity, this is called contracting back to the department. This includes any agreements with schools or business units within the department.

Under Section 89 of the *Criminal Code Act 1899* (Qld) employees must obtain approval before holding any direct or indirect private interest in a contract or agreement with the department ('contracting back'). This requirement also applies to situations where an employee has an indirect interest such as a close personal associate, a spouse or partner, enters

into an agreement with the department or interest as part of another entity, such as a trust.

The department will only approve contracting back in exceptional circumstances where there is a genuine need. To request approval, employees must complete the contracting back to the department form.

Workplace behaviour and personal conduct (Code of conduct 1.5)

The department is committed to a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace that is free from bullying and unlawful discrimination.

All employees and other workers have a responsibility to foster a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for colleagues, students, their families, and members of the public. Employees and other workers are expected to ensure their personal conduct upholds both the integrity of the public service and their ability to perform their duties effectively.

This includes actively supporting inclusion and wellbeing, refraining from all forms of discrimination, harassment, and vilification (including, but not limited to, racism, antisemitism, religious intolerance, sexism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice), and complying with anti-discrimination and work health and safety legislation, relevant Codes of Practice, and all applicable policy requirements.

The department upholds integrity by implementing robust governance processes, identifying, and addressing risks, applying appropriate control strategies and providing avenues for employees and other workers, students and their families and members of the public to report behaviours that do not meet the department's expectations or legal requirements.

Employees and other workers must ensure they are fit for duty and able to work safely and effectively. While on department premises, employees and other workers must not smoke, vape, or consume or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

If a medical condition or disability affects an employee's or worker's ability to perform their duties, they are encouraged to inform their manager or principal. This allows the department to consider workplace adjustments and provide appropriate safety and support measures to assist employees and other workers in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Tips for Employees and other workers

✓ Plan ahead if taking medication—check side effects.

✓ Speak up early if you need adjustments.

✓ Use the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential support: TELUS Health 1800 604 640.

✓ If struggling with alcohol or drugs, seek help before it impacts your work.

✓Plan your journeys and travel arrangements before you leave

Tips for Supervisors

✓ Watch for signs of impairment (e.g., fatigue, confusion, changes in behaviour, or wellbeing).

✓ Have a private, respectful conversation if concerned. (eg Foster a psychologically safe workplace where employees feel comfortable discussing concerns and seeking support)

Example: Compliance with driver safety risk management processes

Jimmy drives a department fleet vehicle to a meeting at the regional office 3 hours from his base location in western Queensland. He plans his journey to avoid driving between dusk and dawn and to include a 15-minute stop after driving for 2 hours. This reduces the dangers of fatigue and animal strikes.

Example: Non-compliance with driver safety risk management processes

Julia drives a department fleet vehicle to undertake work at a school and does not comply with road traffic regulations e.g. speed limits. This increases Julia's risk because it affects reaction time and stopping distance. It also increases the risk of injury and fatality in the instance of a crash.

Further information

Refer to:

- Driver safety (DoE employees only)
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (DoE employees only)
- Staff wellbeing (DoE employees only)
- Physical wellbeing (Tobacco smoking and vaping) (DoE employees only)
- Reasonable Adjustment Procedure
- Workplace adjustment
- Workplace Rehabilitation Procedure
- Working on department facilities

Conflict resolution

Employees and other workers are to actively manage workplace conflict they become involved in. Those in a supervisory role also have the responsibility to manage workplace conflict between employees and other workers under their supervision to create positive and constructive outcomes.

Example: Managing conflict resolution — appropriate response

In a team of three, a new team member shares strong views about a topic under discussion, and a colleague offers an alternative perspective during the discussion. The team member with the strong views refuses to see any alternative, leaving the discussion unresolved. The colleague withdraws, affecting further collaboration and resolution of the discussion. This has occurred against a backdrop of previous failures to engage.

As this discussion is important to progressing the work, the manager/supervisor addresses the issue by facilitating further open discussion, encouraging respectful listening, clarifying expectations for professional behaviour, and providing guidance to rebuild positive team relationships. This approach restores communication and supports an inclusive, respectful workplace.

Workplace bullying or workplace harassment can arise out of disagreement (particularly where it remains unresolved), but workplace bullying can also exist where no disagreement has occurred. Workplace bullying is defined as repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers, that creates a risk to health and safety. The department encourages establishishing and maintaining a respectful workplace culture that is free from bullying. All employees are expected to take a stand against all forms of workplace bullying by speaking up, taking action and reporting inappropriate behaviours. The Individual employee grievances procedure details the process for reporting.

Further information

Refer to:

- About domestic and family violence (DoE employees only)
- Domestic and family violence Employee support (DoE employees only)
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (DoE employees only)
- Performance and development (DoE employees only)
- Positive performance management (Directive 02/24)
- *Section 40* 'Work performance and personal conduct principles' of the PSA outlines expectations of public sector employees
- Support for employees affected by domestic and family violence (Directive 03/20)
- Health, safety and wellbeing (DoE employees only)



Examples of behaviour, but not limited to, whether intentional or unintentional, that may be work-related bullying if it is repeated, unreasonable and creates a risk to health and safety includes:

- abusive, insulting or offensive language or comments
- unjustified criticism or complaints
- deliberately leaving someone out of work-related activities
- withholding information that is vital for effective work performance
- setting unreasonable timelines or constantly changing deadlines
- setting tasks that are unreasonably below or beyond a person's skill level
- not giving someone the information, supervision, consultation or resources they need to get the job done
- spreading misinformation or mean rumours
- changing work arrangements, such as rosters and leave, to deliberately put particular workers out.

For further information refer Managing the risks of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022

Further information

Refer to:

- Code of Conduct for the Qld Public Service
- Complaints and grievances management policy
- EFI training– Facilitating conflict resolution between adults (DoE employees only)
- How to make a complaint (DoE employees only)
- Individual employee grievances procedure
- Managing unreasonable complainant conduct procedure
- Preventing and responding to sexual harassment and related conduct at work policy
- Preventing and responding to sexual harassment and related conduct at work procedure
- Preventing workplace bullying and unlawful discrimination policy
- Principal hotline and conflict resolution (DoE employees only)

Social media

This section outlines expectations for employees and other workers when using social media, including private commentary, interactions with students, and official departmental use.

This section applied to:

- private commentary on social media
- social media interactions with students and children
- prohibited and inappropriate use of social media

Private commentary on social media

The department recognises that employees and other workers have a right to lawful private expression, including on social media. The right to 'freedom of expression' is not absolute, it interacts with an employer's interest in regulating workplace conduct and, for the public service, maintaining public trust and confidence.

Employees and other workers must ensure their online commentary does not compromise public confidence in the department, conflict with departmental policies or operational requirements, or breach legislative obligations relevant to their role.

Public sector employees are bound by the behavioural standards under the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* (Qld) and the work performance and personal conduct principles in the *Public Sector Act 2022 (Qld).*

The *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* (Qld) operates consistently with the *Human Rights Act 2019 (*Qld*)*, including the right to freedom of expression.

Under the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld),* rights may be subject to reasonable and demonstrably justified limits in a free and democratic society (s13).

To maintain these standards, employees and other workers are expected to:

- act responsibly online by recognising the personal and professional risks of social media activity
- maintain professional boundaries and separate personal views from official duties
- ensure personal opinions are not presented, or likely to be interpreted as departmental policy or endorsement.

Commentary and activity

Any public commentary, debate, political activity or views expressed in a private capacity must:

- avoid negative or derogatory posts about students, families or colleagues
- not be represented as official departmental comments
- not compromise our ability, or another employee's ability, to perform official duties
- not constitute an unwarranted attack on the character or integrity of another employee or other worker or person
- be clearly expressed as private views and remain consistent with departmental values, expectations and the professional standards of the role and profession they represent
- not be disparaging of the department, the Queensland Government or its agencies where the employee or other worker is, identified as a departmental employee, government employee or other worker.

Directions on public comment

There may be instances where employees and other workers are to comply with directions about public comment, for example:

- complying with any directions issued by the Queensland Public Sector Commissioner in relation to public comment or political activity
- ensuring any directions regarding public comment or political activity are applied consistently with protections under the *Industrial Relations Act 2016* (Qld) and *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld).

Prohibited and inappropriate use of social media

Employees and other workers must not use personal social networking sites, including, but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X (Twitter) or similar platforms, to contact, interact with or access students enrolled in any state educational facility.

Inappropriate use of social media includes, but is not limited to:

- **Accessing or interacting with students online**
  - Accepting friend request from students
  - Searching for students (current or former) on social media platforms, including viewing student profiles or stories
- **Referencing or identifying students**
  - Tagging or mentioning student usernames or profiles in posts, comments or images
  - Posting content that identifies students by name, image, school uniform, location or context.
- **Publishing student images or content**
  - Posting photographs or videos of students on personal social media accounts.
  - Photographing students using personal cameras or mobile phones without prior approval from a principal or manager (Specifically for State Delivered Kindergartens, outside school

hours care services and other licensed early childhood services, in accordance with Education and Care Services National Law (National Law), workers must not capture, store or transmit an image of a child while the child is being educated and cared for by a State Delivered Kindergarten unless the image is taken on a department-issued device and is for the purpose of or in connection with, the provision of education and care services.)

- Using personal or departmental devices to photograph students other than for official purposes
- Publishing student photographs or images without documented parental, guardian or caregiver consent

- **Blurring professional boundaries**
  - Engaging in private messaging, informal communication or ongoing online interaction with students
  - Allowing students to access personal social media content that is inappropriate for student viewing
- **Failure to prevent access**
  - Not taking reasonable steps to prevent students from communicating with the employee or other workers or accessing the employee's or other workers personal information via social media platforms
  - Failing to apply privacy settings or access restrictions where required.

Social media interactions with students (current or former) and children

Employees and other workers must maintain clear, professional boundaries at all times.

Employees and other workers must not:

- use personal social media accounts to contact, interact with or access students
- access or initiate friend or follower requests with students or recently graduated students
- share or allow access to content that is inappropriate for student viewing
- use departmental social media for personal or informal communication or personal gain

Employees and other workers must:

- avoid making or interacting with negative or derogatory posts about students, families or colleagues
- take reasonable steps to prevent students and recently graduated students from accessing their personal information online

Employees and other workers must be aware that inappropriate electronic or social media interactions involving students (current or former) may constitute reportable conduct under the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld) including the associated Guide to Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme and the *Child Protection Act 1999* (Qld).

Conduct that may be reportable

- Sexual misconduct, abuse, or grooming
- Sending or accepting friend/follow requests to or from students

- Viewing, sharing, or tagging students in online content for sexualised purposes
- Private messaging students in a manner that could exploit or manipulate them
- Using personal devices to photograph or film students
- Publishing images of students without parental/caregiver consent in contexts that may place the student at risk

Emotional or psychological harm

- Publicly criticising, humiliating, or targeting a student online
- Engaging in social media interactions that blur professional boundaries (e.g., ongoing informal private messaging or commenting)

Misuse of position or authority

- Using official departmental social media accounts to communicate inappropriately with students
- Allowing students access to personal social media content that is inappropriate or could compromise professional boundaries.

Use of official departmental social media

Employees and other workers:

- must only establish an official social media presence or site with the approval of the principal or the director-general
- must use official social media for authorised, work-related purposes only.
- must not use official departmental social media sites for non-work-related communication
- must not use official departmental social media channels for matters more appropriately directed to a manager, principal or regional office.

Consent and publication of student images

Consent must be gained from the individual or their parent or legal guardian before publishing or otherwise sharing a student's (current or former) name, photograph or image.

Consent is valid if it is voluntary, informed, specific and current. Students under 18 years living independently who have sufficient maturity and intelligence to understand how the school or department will use their copyright works, or to understand the consequences of any agreed recording, use and disclosure of their personal information may sign the consent form.

Consent must be documented and may be withdrawn at any time.
For further information see Obtaining and managing student and individual consent procedure.

The publication of student personal information on social media without the required consent is likely to constitute a breach of the student's privacy. Any privacy data breaches should be reported to the Privacy Team in accordance with the Privacy data breach and complaints procedure.

Seeking advice

Employees and other workers should:

- consult a supervisor where there is uncertainty about the appropriateness of proposed public commentary

Example – appropriate and inappropriate use of social media

For the purpose of these examples employee also extends to other workers which include volunteers, contractors and tertiary students on placement.

Appropriate

- An employee posts updates on the school's official social media page about upcoming events, learning activities, and student achievements, ensuring all content is professional, respectful, and approved by the principal.
- An employee does not accept friend or follow requests from students (current or former) on any personal social media platform.
- An employee uses approved departmental platforms for all communication with students and always maintains professional boundaries.
- An employee does not search for, view or monitor student (current or former) social media accounts.
- Where concerns about student safety arise, the employee follows departmental reporting processes rather than accessing student social media.

Inappropriate

- Employees posting photographs of students (current or former) in their school uniforms to their social media accounts
- An employee tagging student (current or former) user/profile names to their social media posts
- An employee making friend requests to students (current or former)
- An employee posts personal opinions about students (current or former) or parents on their private social media account, or shares confidential school information, which could be seen as bullying, unprofessional, or damaging to the department's reputation.

Further information

Refer to:

- Allegations against workers in the area of child and student protection procedure
- Contribute to public discussion in an appropriate manner of the Code of Conduct Section 1.3
- How to protect a child from sexual abuse
- Manage participation in external organisations of the Code of Conduct Section 1.4
- Obtaining and Managing Student and Individual Consent procedure
- Privacy data breach and complaints procedure
- Principles for the use of social media networks and emerging technologies Queensland Government Enterprise Architecture (QGEA).
- Social media policy
- Social media for school and departmental promotion procedure
- Social media (DoE employees only)
- Professional Boundaries – A guide for Queensland teachers (QCT)
- QLearn Student Protection – Professional boundaries (DoE employees only)



Employee and other workers interactions with students

Our shared responsibility

All students have a fundamental right to learn and grow in an environment that is safe, respectful and free from harm. Departmental employees and other workers hold a position of trust and authority and are expected to act in a way that protects students' physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing.

Employees and other workers must:

- always act in the best interests of students
- use their authority appropriately and only for legitimate work-related purposes connected to their role
- actively prevent harm and respond promptly to concerns about harm or risk of harm
- comply with all reporting and legislative requirements.

These obligations apply whenever an employee or other workers is acting in connection with their role, including outside school hours and in online environments.

Professional boundaries

Employees must always strive to treat co-workers, students, and members of the public with respect and dignity. Employees should refrain from behaviours that may constitute workplace harassment, sexual harassment or violence.

Employees and other workers are expected to establish and maintain positive, professional relationships with students and young people that support learning, wellbeing and development. Interactions must always be, and be seen to be, professional.

It is crucial for employees and other workers to remain vigilant and objective in their duty of care, particularly when working with students who may be more vulnerable to harm or neglect. While fostering positive relationships with families is an important aspect of supporting students, it is essential to maintain professional boundaries and avoid becoming overly involved to the point where objectivity is compromised. Personal relationships or assumptions about a family's intentions or efforts must never override the obligation to report any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing. Failure to report child protection concerns, regardless of the perceived intentions or circumstances of the family, can place the child at further risk and is a breach of professional and legal obligations. Employees must adhere to mandatory reporting requirements and departmental policies, ensuring that the safety and best interests of the child always remain the paramount consideration.

Employees and other workers must not:

- engage in conduct that is exploitative, coercive or harmful
- misuse their role or relationship with a student for personal, private or financial gain
- impose corporal punishment
- engage in, or create a reasonable suspicion of, sexual misconduct or other inappropriate relationships with students.

Employees and other workers must discourage and reject any sexual or romantic advances from a student and report concerns in line with departmental procedures.

Examples of conduct

Appropriate

A Transition Pathways Officer (TPO) contacts a parent by telephone regarding a 16-year-old Year 11 student whose enrolment is at risk of cancellation. The legal guardian provides the student's phone number and suggests reaching out directly to offer support. Written consent is preferred but verbal consent of the parent is recorded in OneSchool. The TPO arranges a meeting at a local library (a safe, public location) (e.g. library) within work hours to discuss next steps toward achieving the student's SET plan goal of obtaining full-time employment and barista training. After the meeting, the TPO sends a copy of the notes, actions, and next steps to the student's legal guardian to ensure transparency.

Inappropriate

A Transition Pathways Officer maintains frequent communication with the student via text messages that go beyond the agreed support plan or goals. Personal photos are exchanged, and the student's legal guardian is unaware of the frequency or nature of the contact.

Inappropriate interactions

The following are examples of behaviour that are inconsistent with professional boundaries and should be considered for assessment under the Reportable Conduct Scheme. The reportability of any particular matter will depend on the circumstances and the outcome of that assessment. This list is not exhaustive.

- Flirtatious or suggestive behaviour
- Dating or seeking a personal relationship with a student
- Spending excessive or unjustified time alone with a student
- Expressing romantic or sexual feelings to a student, verbally or in writing
- Messaging or live chats (for example SMS, social media, messaging applications) from personal phones/accounts or from work devices for unprofessional purposes

- sharing personal contact details
- social outings with students
- inappropriate physical contact or failing to maintain appropriate physical distance
- providing preferential treatment
- giving gifts, money or favours
- using disrespectful, degrading or sexualised language
- using restrictive practices to punish students
- friending, following, liking or privately contacting students on social media.

Example of inappropriate interactions

A teacher engaged in an overfamiliar and inappropriate relationship with a former student, including a romantic/sexual relationship after the student's graduation.

Parents and the community entrust teachers to act in the best interests of students, to protect them from harm, and to uphold that trust.

Where there is a reasonable belief that emotional intimacy developed while the teacher-student relationship existed, it is likely that the teacher has abused their position of trust.

Example of grooming behaviour towards a student

An employee or worker frequently seeks out one student for private conversations, gives excessive attention or special privileges, and encourages the student to share personal problems or secrets. The employee or worker treats the student as a peer or confidant rather than maintaining professional boundaries, and the student begins to rely on the employee or worker for emotional support beyond what is appropriate.

While no sexual activity has occurred, these behaviours create an inappropriate emotional dependency and may be considered grooming because they exploit the employee/worker-student relationship and blur professional boundaries.

Example risk of overfamiliar conduct with contractor, visitor, parent

While building strong, professional partnerships is essential to creating positive learning environments and opportunities for students, staff must ensure professional friendships with contractors, visitors and parents do not create a conflict of interest. Over time, they may encourage the teacher to break school rules, share confidential information, or act in ways that compromise professional boundaries. This manipulation is designed to normalise inappropriate behaviours and make the staff member feel complicit, creating an environment where further exploitation or misconduct is possible (or, is enabled).

Example of grooming behaviour towards a parent

An adult in a school setting (e.g., a volunteer, coach, or staff member) befriends a parent by offering special help, advice, or access to resources that other parents do not receive. They may try to influence the parent's decisions regarding the child or the school or gain information about the child and family to later manipulate or control the situation.

Further information

Refer to:

- Gifts and Benefits procedure
- Home visit procedure
- Conflict of Interest procedure
- Student protection procedure and guidelines
- Professional boundaries and behaviour (DoE employees only)
- Qlearn Professional boundaries with students and families (DoE employees only)
- Allegations against workers in the area of child and student protection procedure
- Sharing information for student protection, DFV and law enforcement (DoE employees only)
- Preventing and responding to sexual harassment and related conduct at work procedure

Other Resources

- Professional Boundaries: A Guideline for Queensland Teachers
- Queensland College of Teachers professional standards and conduct
- National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers (Queensland)
- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
- Psychology Board of Australia
- Occupational Therapy Board of Australia
- Physiotherapy Board of Australia
- Speech Pathology Australia National Code of Conduct
- Australian Association of Social Workers
- Professional Standards for Australian School Science Laboratory Technicians

QCAT decisions related to inappropriate interactions

- Queensland College of Teachers v Teacher XBW [2019] QCAT 240
- Queensland College of Teachers v PPK [2019] QCAT 59.

Legal and procedural obligations

Employees and other workers must understand and comply, with the department's legal and regulatory framework including, but not limited to:

- Relevant obligations under the *Public Sector Act 2022 (*Qld*)*
- Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service
- Preventing workplace bullying and unlawful discrimination policy
- Social media policy
- Appropriate and ethical use of public resources policy
- Gifts and benefits procedure
- Conflict of Interest policy and procedure
- Preventing and responding to sexual harassment and related conduct at work procedure
- Student protection procedure
- Allegations against workers in the area of child and student protection procedure

Employees and other workers are responsible for knowing the department's expected standards for conduct and behaviour including those that protect children, guide decisions in the use of public resources and reporting integrity matters.



Cairns State Special School

Further information

Refer to:

- Allegations against workers in the area of child and student protection procedure
- Appropriate and ethical use of public resources policy
- Code of Conduct
- Conflict of interest policy
- Conflict of interest procedure
- Gifts and benefits procedure
- Preventing and responding to sexual harassment and related conduct at work procedure
- Preventing workplace bullying and unlawful discrimination policy
- Social media policy
- Student protection procedure.

Guidance on appropriate interactions

The department's *Allegations against workers in the area of child and student protection– guidelines* provide practical examples of appropriate and inappropriate conduct, including:

- physical contact and restraint
- verbal communication and intervention
- non-physical behaviour
- conduct that may constitute physical assault, sexual misconduct or sexual abuse.

Employees and other workers must use the *Allegations against workers in the area of child and student protection guidelines* to inform daily practice.

Personal relationships and conflicts of interest

Employees and other workers must disclose any personal relationship that could create an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest with their professional duties.

Conflicts generally relate to the making of decisions, and in a student context could include but not be limited to decisions about school or team representation, awards, or access to or participation in school activities or other programs.

Complete the conflict of interest declaration and management plan to disclose conflicts and private interests.

Disclosures relating to conflicts of interest are managed confidentially.

Electronic communication with students

The following behaviours raise reasonable suspicion that the standards applying to the employee's and other worker's role may have been breached these may include; electronic communication includes phone calls, email, SMS, messaging applications, social media and other online platforms that allow real-time or asynchronous interaction, such as chat functions in websites or games, which are outside of the Department of Education's email system or outside of the department's approved communication applications (eg school Facebook account).

Employees and other workers must not communicate electronically with students unless:

- there is a clear educational, post school transition or safety purpose, and
- prior approval has been given by the principal or manager, except where the communication involves the employees or worker's child, stepchild, adopted child, child for whom the worker is the parent or carer, or a student residing with the worker as part of a homestay arrangement.

Please note - specifically for State Delivered Kindergartens, outside school hours care services and other licensed early childhood services, workers must not have a personal device in their possession or under their control, except for authorised purposes under the National Law.

Additional requirements:

- approvals and the nature of communication outside of departmental email and applications must be recorded in OneSchool
- where required, electronic communication with a student must be undertaken only from a work email, work mobile phone or landline
- the consent of the legal guardian for electronic communication with a student must be sought, and the approval documented in OneSchool. If consent is not provided, and electronic contact occurs, the rationale for contact without consent should be clearly documented in OneSchool.
- departmental email and mobile phones must be used for official purposes only and within scope of the responsibilities of the position.

Images and recordings (State Delivered Kindergartens)

In accordance with *Education and Care Services National Law* (National Law), employees and other workers must not capture, store or transmit an image of a child while the child is being educated and cared for by a State Delivered Kindergarten unless the image is taken on a department-issued device and is for the purpose of or in connection with, the provision of education and care services.

When working directly with children, as part of the State Delivered Kindergarten service, department employees, other workers and volunteers (including students on placement) must not have a personal device in their possession or under their control, except for authorised purposes outlined in the National Law.

Recordings or photography of students are only permitted where: Parental or caregiver consent has been obtained before publishing student images, in line with the *Obtaining and managing student and individual consent* procedure.

Non-compliance may attract significant penalties under the Education and Care Services National Law (Qld) and relevant privacy legislation.

Interactions with parents/caregivers

Employees and other workers should respond promptly within working hours and respectfully to reasonable requests from parents and caregivers regarding their child's education or wellbeing. Building strong, professional partnerships is essential to creating positive learning environments and opportunities for students.

Communication with parents and caregivers should be open, professional, and focused on promoting successful educational outcomes. This includes reporting on student progress and discussing learning options in a clear and constructive manner.

Employees and other workers must avoid or appropriately manage any conflict of interest that may arise between their personal relationship with a student's parent/caregiver and their professional responsibilities.

Some relationships may give rise to a dual role where the professional focus is on the education of the child and personal view may focus on helping a family (or child) in need. This could create a potential conflict of being "too close" to a situation, which may intersect with their professional boundaries as an objective educator or education support.

Transport of students and/or families in fleet or school vehicles must be approved by an employee's line manager. Documentation of consent by the principal, line manager and the family of the student is required (SMS or email acceptable). For post Year 12 completers, consent to transport the young person must be provided by the young person and family in writing.

Use of an employee's private vehicle for transporting students, or family members is not recommended due to safety risks and duty of care responsibilities. Where available, a school or departmental fleet vehicle is recommended.

Where it is necessary for an employee to use their private vehicle to transport a student, young person or family member, this must be approved by the principal or line manager and a thorough risk assessment to ensure the employee holds a valid licence and that their vehicle is insured and road worthy.

Further information

Refer to:

- Conflict of Interest
- Fleet management procedure
- Offer to provide transport in a private vehicle (DoE employees only)
- Private transport consent form (DoE employees only)
- School excursion procedure

Leadership and supervisory responsibilities

Employees and other workers are encouraged to demonstrate leadership in their daily work. Those who supervise others have additional responsibilities to ensure a positive, ethical, productive and safe work environment.

Supervisors must:

- model ethical conduct by promoting behaviour aligned with the Code of Conduct, the *Public Sector Act 2022* and this Standard
- clarify expectations regarding work performance, personal conduct, departmental values, and what constitutes corrupt conduct under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* (Qld)

- treat all team members fairly and respectfully, ensuring consistency and equity
- communicate responsibilities clearly, including obligations under the Code of Conduct, this Standard, and relevant legislation, policies, and procedures
- ensure compliance with departmental policies and procedures
- set reasonable expectations, providing adequate resources, support, and guidance for employees to perform their duties effectively
- maintain open, honest, and transparent communication with team members
- reinforce standards of conduct, ensuring all employees and other workers understand what is expected
- monitor and reflect on their own performance to ensure they contribute positively to the team and workplace culture
- distribute workloads across the team fairly and with equity.

Misconduct in a private capacity

Section 91 of the Public Sector Act 2022 defines misconduct to include inappropriate or improper conduct by an employee in an official or private capacity that reflects seriously and adversely on the public sector entity in which the employee is employed.

Clause 1.5(d) of the Code places a broader ethical obligation on employees, requiring them to demonstrate a high standard of workplace behaviour and personal conduct, including by ensuring their private conduct maintains the integrity of the public service and their ability to perform their duties.

This means that there may be a Code of Conduct issue without statutory misconduct being established. For example, in the situation where an employee's personal conduct may create concerns about judgment,

professionalism or fitness for duty, but is not sufficiently serious to reflect seriously and adversely on the employing entity itself.

Misconduct does not require reputational damage to have occurred. Conduct that damages, or has the potential to damage, the reputation or integrity of the department may constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

Disciplinary processes for employees are governed by Part 8 of the *Public Sector Act 2022 (Qld)* and the Discipline Directive 05/23 issued under the Act.

While section 91 of the *Public Sector Act 2022* (Qld) applies specifically to employees, all workers (including contractors, consultants and volunteers) are expected to uphold the department's standards of integrity and conduct at all times. For non-employees, inappropriate conduct in a private capacity may result in action under:

- contractual provisions
- termination of engagement
- exclusion from departmental workplaces or activities
- referral to relevant external authorities where required.

Employees or other workers who hold professional registration (for example, teachers, nurses, psychologists or other registered practitioners) must also comply with the standards and codes of conduct set by their relevant professional regulator. Inappropriate conduct in a private capacity may have implications under those regulatory frameworks, in addition to any departmental action.

Child safety considerations

All employees and other workers are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children and students who engage with the department. All employees and other workers are expected to act in accordance with this Standard and the Code of Conduct in their physical and online interactions with children and students.

Employees and other workers must also:

- comply with any mandatory reporting obligations including, but not limited to, the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld),* the *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld), the Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld)* and associated regulations.
- help foster safe, respectful environments for children, ensuring active community engagement, inclusion of diverse voices, and transparent handling of any concerns (1.5c of the Code of Conduct).

Your responsibilities as an employee or other worker

- Fulfil the duty to promote the public good - be responsive, inclusive, efficient, and collaborative.
- When making decisions that impact children, prioritise their safety and wellbeing, and ensure your actions align with legislative and/or policies and procedures obligations.
- Create environments where children feel safe and valued. This involves implementing policies and procedures that actively protect children from harm and fostering a culture of safety and respect.
- Fostering safe and respectful environments for children, including building positive relationships with children and their families, encouraging children to speak up if they feel unsafe, and addressing concerns transparently and promptly.

Principle 2 - Promoting the public good

Under the *Public Sector Ethics Act* 1994 *(*Qld*)* (Section 7):
Public sector agencies, entities, and officials should:

- be responsive to both the requirements of government and the public interest
- engage the community in developing and implementing priorities, policies, and decisions
- manage public resources effectively, efficiently, and economically
- strive for excellence in service delivery
- enhance service integration to better service clients.

Key duties for employees and other workers

Employees and other workers must:

- deliver services fairly, courteously, and effectively, ensuring responsible and economical use of public funds and resources
- support equitable access, with a focus on assisting people with disabilities, non-English speakers, and those who may find it difficult to access government services
- act and make decisions that are compatible with human rights
- respond seriously to feedback and complaints, using them to drive continuous improvement
- engage meaningfully with communities—listening to concerns, consulting on policy, and raising awareness of public issues
- collaborate with other agencies to deliver integrated, efficient services to achieve value for the public.

Principle 3 - Commitment to the system of government

The *Public Sector Ethics Act* 1994 (Qld) states: “In recognition that the public sector has a duty to uphold the system of government and the laws of the State, Commonwealth and local government, public service agencies, public sector entities and public officials accept, value and commit to:

- uphold State, Commonwealth, and local laws, and support the system of government
- implement public sector priorities, policies, and decisions professionally and impartially
- operate within the framework of Ministerial responsibility to government, Parliament, and the community.

Your duty as an employee or other worker

All departmental employees and other workers are therefore, entrusted to uphold and discharge government policies professionally and impartially. This includes:

- complying with all applicable laws, awards, agreements, and whole of government policies
- adhering to the department’s values, policies, codes, and operational procedures.

Engaging with Ministers and Parliamentarians

Employees and other workers are to maintain appropriate, professional relationships with Ministerial staff at all times. When providing advice to Ministers, communication is to be constructive, respectful, and aligned with professional standards.

Employees and other workers may contact Members of Parliament on matters that affect them personally as private citizens. However, when doing so, they must uphold confidentiality obligations. Privileged or confidential information obtained through their employment cannot be used for personal purposes under any circumstances.



Principle 4 - Accountability and transparency

Public trust in government depends on strong ethical principles and professional conduct. Under the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* (Qld), public officials and entities are expected to:

- exercise diligence, care, and attention in all aspects of their work
- use public resources effectively, efficiently, and accountably
- manage information as openly as possible, within legal and privacy requirements
- strive for high standards of administration, innovation, and continuous improvement
- work within a framework of mutual obligation and shared responsibility across agencies and officials.

These principles guide how the department deliver services, manage resources, and interact with the community. They remind us that every decision and action should reflect integrity, transparency, and a commitment to improving outcomes for Queenslanders.

Ensure diligence in public administration (Code of conduct 4.1)

The department is committed to fostering a workplace where employees and other workers feel supported to disclose information about risks, misconduct, or improper use of resources. This includes concerns relating to:

- fraud, corruption, maladministration, or other unlawful, negligent or improper conduct that could amount to corrupt conduct
- substantial misuse of public resources

- contact by lobbyists
- significant risks to public health and safety
- substantial or specific risks to the health and safety of people including those with a disability
- threats to public health, safety, or the environment.

Employees and other workers are encouraged to report concerns without fear of reprisal, in line with departmental policies and obligations under the *Public Sector Act 2022* (Qld) and the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010 (Qld)*.

Examples

Reporting suspected misconduct — appropriate reporting

Two employees attend a workshop interstate. Upon returning, each submits travel expense claims. One employee notices that items claimed by the other employee were not actually incurred and reasonably suspects that a false claim has been submitted. The employee reports the concern to their supervisor. The supervisor then notifies the Integrity team in accordance with departmental reporting procedures.

Making a vexatious complaint — inappropriate reporting

Julie lodges a valid complaint regarding Darren's behaviour. Upset by being the subject of a complaint, Darren retaliates by lodging a complaint against Julie without any reasonable basis. This is considered a vexatious complaint and is not appropriate reporting.

Employee responsibilities during workplace investigations

Departmental employees are obligated to participate in workplace investigation processes when required, including as a complainant, subject officer or witness. Participation is mandatory and includes compliance with all lawful and reasonable directions given by an authorised officer.

Employees are responsible for the following:

Participation and cooperation

- Participating fully and promptly in workplace investigations when required where they have been lawfully and reasonably directed to participate.
- Attending interviews at the time and place directed by the authorised officer, reasonable notice must be given so the person can arrange a support person or an Industrial representative.
- Providing a written response where the authorised officer determines this is sufficient in lieu of an interview.
- Responding to questions in an open, honest and accurate manner.

Compliance with directions

- Complying with all lawful and reasonable directions issued during the investigation process.
- Meeting specified timeframes for interviews, written responses or provision of information.

Integrity of the investigation process

- Maintaining confidentiality and not disclosing information about the investigation except where authorised or required by law.
- Not interfering with evidence or records.
- Not attempting to influence, coach or intimidate witnesses.
- Not engaging in victimisation or retaliation against any person involved in the investigation.

Understanding consequences

- Understanding that failure to participate, cooperate or comply with directions during an investigation may itself constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct and this Standard, and could result in grounds for disciplinary action.
- Understanding that the purpose of a workplace investigation is to determine whether there has been a breach of the Code of Conduct, this Standard and/or departmental policies and procedures, and whether disciplinary action is warranted under the *Public Sector Act 2022 (Qld)*.

Employees, regardless of their role in an investigation, can access support at any stage of the process via the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Further information

Refer to:

- Workplace investigations (Directive 01/24) (Section 10)
- Corruption and focus – A guide to dealing with corrupt conduct in Qld Public Sector
- Managing workplace investigations – A practical guide for the Qld public Sector
- Employee Assistance Program (DoE employees only)
- Making and managing a public interest disclosure procedure.

Reporting suspected corruption

Under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001 (Qld)*, the Director-General must promptly refer any suspected corrupt conduct—including anonymous allegations—to the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC). The conduct is managed under the *Public Sector Act 2022 (Qld)* disciplinary framework and may also be subject to the *Criminal Code Act 1899* (Qld).

Further information

Refer to:

- *Good decision making* (DoE Employees only)
- *Making and Managing a Public interest disclosure*
- *Qld Ombudsman Public interest disclosures*.

Ensure transparency in our business dealings (Code of conduct 4.2)

Donations, sponsorship, endorsements, gifts, and benefits

The department values transparency and integrity when handling donations, sponsorships, endorsements, gifts and benefits. Offers of donations, gifts and benefits must be managed carefully to avoid any perception of bias or obligation.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship is the right to associate a sponsor's name, product or services with the sponsored organisation's initiative, in return for negotiated and specific benefits such as cash or in-kind support or promotional opportunities.

The department acknowledges that appropriate sponsorship activity can generate significant benefits for all parties. It is important to be mindful that inappropriate sponsorship can damage a school, department or the Queensland Government's brand and public image. All sponsorships must withstand public scrutiny and not damage the reputation of a school, the department or Queensland Government or contravene departmental and whole of Queensland Government policies and procedures.

Before seeking sponsorship, it is important to assess whether your current budget allocation could cover costs. Sponsorship should only be sought when there is a genuine need and should not fund core activities.

For further information, refer to the Sponsorship procedure

Endorsement

An endorsement includes, but is not limited to, providing testimonials, quotes, comments, videos or recordings that reference a supplier, contractor, product or service.

The department and its employees and other workers must remain impartial and must not be, or be perceived to be, promoting or favouring an individual supplier, contractor, product or service.

Accordingly, employees and other workers:

- must not provide testimonials or endorsements on behalf of the department
- must not provide testimonials or endorsements in a personal capacity where this could reasonably be perceived as connected to their departmental role
- must decline requests for endorsement and refer to the employee's or other workers supervisor if required.

For further information, refer to the Purchasing and procurement procedure.

Donations

If a donation or offer is received:

- notify the supervisor immediately.
- ensure donations are only accepted for departmental use and are recorded in line with financial management requirements.

- make it clear to the donor that acceptance does not create any obligation or influence departmental decisions.
- only accept conditional donations where the conditions do not compromise, or appear to compromise, impartiality.

Gifts and benefits

Manage gifts and benefits by:

- **being aware** that accepting gifts, benefits, or donations can reflect adversely on the department or create reputational risk.
- **understanding** that any gift or benefit—regardless of value—may imply a relationship that could interfere with objectivity and independence.
- **recording** gifts and benefits over $150.
- **avoiding requests** for discounts or benefits based on our employment, as this undermines professionalism and impartiality.
- **seeking prior approval** for any solicitation of gifts or benefits for approved community or organisational purposes.
- **following all relevant policies and procedures and guidelines** on gifts, benefits and donations.

Examples

Acceptance of a donation for official purposes — appropriate conduct

A community member offers to donate $1,000 to the school on the condition that the funds are used exclusively to purchase library books. The donation is accepted and recorded in the school's financial system. The conditions do not compromise the impartial performance of departmental functions, and the donation is managed transparently and in line with departmental policies.

Refusal of a donation with unacceptable conditions — appropriate conduct

A parent offers to donate $1,000 to purchase sporting equipment, provided that their child is guaranteed selection for the school football team. As team selection is based on merit, skill, and fair opportunity, the principal declines the offer. The principal explains the team selection process to the parent and reinforces the school's commitment to providing equal opportunity to all students.

Example

Declaration of receipt of prizes - appropriate conduct

Q. I received a lucky door prize at a conference, what do I do?

A. If the gift is valued at over $150, complete the declaration form on SCO with approval from an appropriate delegate. Raffle or lottery winnings from tickets that the employee paid for with their own money while attending a conference are not considered a gift or benefit. In some circumstances it may not be appropriate for you to retain a lucky door prize. For example, if you are in a purchaser/provider relationship with the gift giver (in a sensitive position). If you are in any doubt about whether you should accept the prize, complete the declaration form on SCO and discuss with your supervisor, manager, Principal or with the team in Finance, Procurement and Facilities.

Q. I have received a teaching award, which includes a cash prize, what do I do?

A. The PSC directive states that cash, or something which is easily converted into cash, like shares, lottery tickets, 'scratchies' or Mastercard and Visa prepaid cards must not be accepted, as doing so breaches whole of Government policies and legislative requirements. However, the PSC guideline states that in exceptional circumstances, such as an award which involves a cash prize, employees can obtain approval to accept such a gift or benefit. Acceptance of such a gift is still subject to approval and declaration requirements depending on the value of the award or prize.

Further examples can be found at Gifts and benefits – frequently asked questions.

Further information

Refer to:

- Integrity Act 2009 (Qld)
- Reporting contact with lobbyists procedure
- Sponsorship procedure
- Gifts and benefits – frequently asked questions (DoE employees only)
- Gifts and benefits (DoE employees only)
- Gifts and benefits procedure
- Donations and bequests procedure
- Purchasing and procurement procedure
- Request for voluntary financial contributions procedure
- Managing offers of assistance in disaster events procedure.

Contact by lobbyists (Code of conduct 4.2)

Public officials are to ensure interactions between government officials and third-party advocates are transparent, ethical, and aligned with public interest.

Any employee of the department who has contact with a lobbyist in relation to a lobbying activity has obligations under the *Integrity Act 2009 (Qld)*, these obligations are detailed in the department's Reporting contact with lobbyists procedure.

Ethical lobbying is a legitimate activity and an important part of the democratic process. Having contact with a lobbyist is not unusual or wrong but failing to report all contact, declare and manage any conflict of interest appropriately, and determine whether the lobbying activity is permitted or prohibited may result in disciplinary action and expose the employee and the department to risk.

Appointments to government boards

Public officials are in a unique position of trust and responsibility. In some instances, public officials may be appointed by name, as a government or departmental representative to a government board due to their experience within a department or the public service, without the appointment being linked to a specific position.

In these circumstances, public service officers appointed to government boards as government or departmental representatives have an ethical obligation to formally resign from such appointments if they cease employment in the public service or with the department or agency relevant to the board position. Enabling legislation will usually specify to whom the resignation should be tendered. For boards not constituted under legislation and where the Minister is the appointing authority, a written resignation should be tendered to the Minister. Where there is doubt to whom the resignation should be tendered, advice should be sought from the department responsible for the administration of the board.

Ensure appropriate use of official resources, public property and facilities (Code of conduct 4.3)

Departmental resources, such as school facilities, grounds and sporting equipment, can be made available for community and commercial use in accordance with the relevant departmental procedures. Principals must ensure any required documentation, including hire agreements, are completed and stored appropriately.

Example

Inappropriate use of official resources

David collects a department fleet vehicle on Friday afternoon as he has an early meeting on Monday morning at a school that is in the opposite direction to the vehicle collection location. On Saturday morning, David realises his personal vehicle has a flat battery and uses the fleet vehicle to go shopping. This is not appropriate use of official resources.

Further information

Refer to:

- Community use of state school facilities procedure
- Fleet management procedure.



Western Cape College - Weipa campus

Ensure appropriate use and disclosure of official information (Code of Conduct 4.4)

The department collects a large volume of personal information on students, parents/carers, staff and members of the public through departmental activities. All workers are obligated to manage personal information in accordance with relevant legislation, including the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld), regulation and industry best practice.

The safety and security of all students and staff information is paramount. As such, we must protect student, staff, parent and carer personal information and information about members of the public from unauthorised access, use, disclosure or loss.

As well as being part of the law in Queensland, the need to protect information is also a key part of the Code of Conduct and we must all abide by this code.

Under the Code of Conduct for the Queensland public service, our responsibilities for protecting personal information also include the following.

- **Care**: treat personal information with care.
- **Authorised use**: use personal information only for the reason it was collected or authorised in the first place.
- **Personal interests**: never access or use confidential, personal or privileged information to further our personal interests. This includes the viewing of information contained in any of our systems.
- **Appropriate access**: limit access to those who need it for legitimate purposes.
- **Secure storage**: store personal information securely and protect it.

Unauthorised access to, disclosure of or the misuse of personal information may constitute a privacy data breach which may require management under Queensland's Mandatory Notification of Data Breach scheme where it could result in serious harm to individuals. Any suspected privacy data breaches

should be reported to the Privacy Team in accordance with the Privacy data breach and complaints procedure.

When you cease employment or engagement with the Department, employees and other workers are to:

- maintain confidentiality of all official information accessed during employment
- return all departmental property before departure.

These obligations protect the integrity of the public sector and uphold community trust.

Further information

Refer to:

- Employee separation procedure
- Information management, privacy and security policy
- Privacy data breach and complaints procedure
- Privacy obligations (DoE employees only).



2025 Queensland Pathways SC - Toowoomba Campus

Term	Description
Confidential	Information of a sensitive, personal, medical, commercial or political nature made available to you in connection with your role as a public official that could cause harm to individuals or the State if disclosed other than in accordance with its intended purpose or target audience.

Corruption / corrupt conduct	Corruption is defined as corrupt conduct under provisions of section 15 of the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* (Qld). Corrupt conduct means conduct of a person, regardless of whether the person holds or held an appointment, that:
	• adversely affects, or could adversely affect, directly or indirectly, the performance of functions or the exercise of powers of—
	  ○ a unit of public administration; or
	  ○ a person holding an appointment; and
	• results, or could result, directly or indirectly, in the performance of functions or the exercise of powers mentioned in *paragraph (1)* in a way that—
	  ○ is not honest or is not impartial; or
	  ○ involves a breach of the trust placed in a person holding an appointment, either knowingly or recklessly; or
	  ○ involves a misuse of information or material acquired in or in connection with the performance of functions or the exercise of powers of a person holding an appointment; and
	• would, if proved, be—
	  ○ a criminal offence; or
	  ○ a disciplinary breach providing reasonable grounds for terminating the person's services, if the person is or were the holder of an appointment.
	Corrupt conduct is further defined in section 15 of the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* (Qld).

Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC)	A statutory body set up to combat and reduce the incidence of major crime and public sector corruption in Queensland.
Disciplinary action	Action taken as a result of a disciplinary process. The disciplinary action that may be taken for substantiated allegations of misconduct or serious misconduct is provided for under the *Public Sector Act 2022* (Qld).
Discrimination	Treating, or proposing to treat, a person unfairly or less favourably because of personal attributes protected under law. This includes attributes recognised under the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld), the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld), or other applicable legislation. Discrimination can be direct (overt unfavourable treatment) or indirect (policies or practices that disadvantage a person or group), and may occur in employment, education, or the provision of services.
Primary duty of care	Primary duty of care refers to an employer and/or a person conducting a business or undertaking, having the main responsibility for the health and safety of workers and other persons in the workplace/s. The primary duty is not limited to workers and other persons presence at a particular workplace. Instead, the duty relates to the physical and psychological health and safety of workers and other persons when they are 'at work'.
Employee	Persons currently employed as public sector employees (see sections 12 and 13) of the *Public Sector Act 2022* (Qld), including general employees, fixed term temporary employees, casual employees, public service officers, senior officers, senior executive officers and the chief executive.
Endorsement	An endorsement includes but is not limited to testimonials, quotes, comments, videos or recordings. Providing testimonials gives the perception that the department is endorsing a supplier and/or its products or services. The department and all employees of the department must be impartial, and cannot be seen or perceived, to be promoting or favouring an individual supplier.

	For more information on endorsement please refer to the Purchasing and procurement procedure.
Ethics	Ethics are the moral principles or values that guide employees and workers in aspects of their work. Ethical behaviour encompasses the concepts of honesty, integrity, probity, diligence, fairness, trust and respect. Ethical behaviour includes avoiding conflicts of interest and not making improper use of an individual's position.
Fraud	A dishonest, deceitful and/or deliberate act or omission designed to gain any benefit or advantage, pecuniary or otherwise, to which a person or entity is not entitled. The benefit or advantage can be gained before, during and/or after the act or omission occurs. This also includes any attempt to commit any act or omission.
Gift and benefits	Refers to items given or received by an employee in the course of official duties. Includes: • gifts and/or benefits which may be tangible (of lasting value), such as merchandise from a supplier • gifts and/or benefits which may be intangible (of no lasting value), such as sponsored travel and accommodation to attend training, or hospitality. Does not include: • gifts or benefits received under an appropriately approved employee health and wellbeing program or an appropriately approved rewards and recognition program, or relevant directive • benefits to the department negotiated when the department sponsors a service, product or activity on its own or with another government agency, as may occur under the Queensland Government Sponsorship Policy External link • items donated to the department, rather than given to an individual employee, for example, equipment given to the department/school, which is instead subject to the Donations and bequests procedure

	• personal recognition of life-event gifts privately funded by colleagues, e.g. for a retirement, baby shower, marriage or birthday.
Harm to a student	Harm, to a student, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by— (a) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or (b) sexual abuse or exploitation. Harm can be caused by— (a) a single act, omission or circumstance; or (b)a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances. Harm also includes failure to report or protect a student from actual or suspected harm, whether caused by workers and may encompass behaviour that would constitute reportable conduct if perpetrated by a worker.
Impartiality	In the context of public administration, impartiality means implementing the law and government policies and serving the community without bias or favour, regardless of which political party forms the government.
Integrity	Integrity is the unwavering adherence to honest, ethical principles and values. It demands that our actions are consistently objective, accurate and impartial. The department is committed to the highest standards of Integrity and impartiality at every level.
Intellectual property	An invention, original work, the results of scientific research or a product development, which can be protected under legislation and common law depending on the type of intellectual property involved. Examples include computer software, illustrations, written documentation.

Interest	Used in relation to declaring personal interests or conflicts of interest, the term 'interest' means direct or indirect personal interests of a public official that may conflict with the discharge of the employee's duties. Interests may be pecuniary (i.e. financial or economic forms of advantage) or non-pecuniary (i.e. non-financial forms of advantage).
Lawful	Warranted or authorised by the law, or alternatively, neither contrary to nor forbidden by the law.
Lobbyist	A person who carries out a lobbying activity on behalf of a third party. Under the Act, lobbyists must be registered with the QIC before they contact a government representative for the purpose of lobbying activities
Maladministration	An administrative action that is unlawful, arbitrary, unjust, oppressive, improperly discriminatory, or taken for an improper purpose.
Manager (Public Sector)	Public sector manager means a public sector employee whose duties involve or include managing other public sector employees in the carrying out of their duties.
Misconduct	The meaning given in the Public Sector Act 2022 (Qld) and includes inappropriate or improper conduct by a public sector employee in an official capacity, or in a private capacity, that reflects seriously and adversely on the public sector.
National Law	The Education and Care Services National Law External link and National Regulations External link apply to most long day care, family day care, kindergarten/preschool and outside school hours care services in Australia. The law and regulations detail the operational requirements for an education and care service.
Official information	Information contained within departmental records or imparted in an official capacity.
Pornography	Material that is sexually explicit, such as a description or exhibition of obscene literature, art or photography, generally intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic or emotional feelings, which can include child exploitation material which describes or depicts a person who is or appears under the age of 18.

Personal Information	Information or an opinion about an identified individual or an individual who is reasonably identifiable from the information or opinion: • whether the information or opinion is true or not, and • whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.
Privacy data breach	A privacy data breach or potential breach may include an action or omission that results in loss, theft, misuse, or unauthorised disclosure or use of personal information. A privacy data breach occurs if the department does not deal with a person's personal information in accordance with its obligations under the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld) and associated Queensland Privacy Principles.
Prize	A prize is something that is won in a raffle, competition or similar.
Procedural fairness (natural justice)	Procedural fairness is a right recognised and defined by law that involves two key elements—the hearing rule (the parties shall be given adequate notice of the case against them, and a right to respond), and the bias rule (everyone is entitled to a decision by a disinterested and unbiased adjudicator)
Public interest	For a public official, acting in the public interest means acting lawfully and/or in accordance with government policy under the direction of the Minister. In the absence of legal or policy frameworks, it means acting for the common good of the community. It is the collective interest of the entire community — not the sum of individual interests nor the interest of a particular group.
Public sector ethics	Those principles and standards governing conduct by government officials. They provide guidance in situations where there are no specific rules or where matters are unclear but where the ultimate objective is to serve the public interest. The relevant public sector ethics principles are described in the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* (Qld), the Code and this Standard.

Reportable conduct	Reportable conduct is defined under section 26 of the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld). Conduct is harm to any child by a worker and can occur in the workplace or in private capacity Types of reportable conduct is: • a child sexual offence • sexual misconduct committed in relation to or in the presence of a child • ill-treatment of a child • significant neglect of a child • physical violence committed in relation to, or in the presence of, a child • behaviours that causes significant, emotional or psychological harm to a child. Thresholds for categories of reportable conduct are determined by the Scheme's oversight body which is currently Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) refer to Guide to Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme.
Reprisal	Reprisal occurs when a person causes, attempts or conspires to cause, detriment to another person because of, or in the belief that another person has made, or may make, a public interest disclosure. The detriment could be an action (or threats of action) that results in: • a physical or psychological injury • loss or damage to property • intimidation or harassment and • discrimination or disadvantage to a person's career, employment or business. Reprisal is unlawful under both civil and criminal law.
Responsive	To respond readily and comprehensively, appropriate to the circumstances.
Sexual harassment	Happens if a person: • (a) subjects another person to an unsolicited act of physical intimacy.

	For example: physical contact such as patting, pinching or touching in a sexual way, or unnecessary familiarity such as deliberately brushing against a person • (b) makes an unsolicited demand or request (whether directly or by implication) for sexual favours from the other person. For example: sexual propositions • (c) makes a remark with sexual connotations relating to the other person. For example: unwelcome and uncalled for remarks or insinuations about a person's sex or private life, or suggestive comments about a person's appearance or body • (d) engages in any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the other person. For example: offensive telephone calls, or indecent exposure (e) and the person engaging in the conduct described in paragraphs above does so: The circumstances that are relevant in determining whether a reasonable person would have anticipated the possibility that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated by the conduct include: • (a) the sex, age or race of the other person; and • (b) the age of the other person; and • (c) the race of the other person; and • (d) any impairment that the other person has; and • (e) the relationship between the other person and the person engaging in the conduct; and • (f) any other circumstance of the other person. Sexual harassment and related conduct can be directed at a person or group of people and be carried out by one or more persons.

Sexual misconduct	A range or pattern of behaviour involving in sexual acts involving students of a state educational facility. It includes: • conduct towards a student that would constitute a criminal offence of a sexual nature • sexual abuse of a student by an employee • conduct that is sexual harassment as defined in section 119 of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld). Some of these behaviours may include: • any sexual relationship with a student • inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature with a student • comments that express a desire to act in a sexual manner with an individual student • unwarranted and inappropriate touching of a student • sexual exhibitionism in the presence of a student • personal correspondence (including electronic communication) with a student in respect of the employee's sexual feelings for that student • exposing a student to pornography • suggestive remarks or actions of a sexual nature to a student • obscene gestures, language, jokes containing sexual references or deliberately exposing students to the sexual behaviour of others in any form, other than in the case of prescribed curriculum material in which sexual themes are contextual • making a remark with sexual connotation, to or within the hearing or presence of a student • a pattern of behaviour aimed at engaging in or 'grooming' a student as a precursor to sexual abuse. Grooming is a separate offence from the actual sexual abuse or

	• encouraging or failing to discourage romantic or inappropriate advances by a student.
Sponsorship	Sponsorship is the right to associate a sponsor's name, product or services with the sponsored organisation's initiative, in return for negotiated and specific benefits such as cash or in-kind support or promotional opportunities. Refer to Sponsorship Guideline for additional information.
State educational facility	Includes state schools and other institutions established under sections 13, 14 or 15 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (Qld), and any other educational facility at which employees of the DoE work.
Student	For the purposes of this standard, "student" includes any child or young person enrolled at, or participating in programs delivered by, the school or department, including education and training centres and school-operated early childhood education and care services or year 12 completer engaged with the department's post school transition program.
Vexatious complaint	A written or verbal report of alleged improper conduct made to an authority intending the report to be acted upon, where there is a demonstrable absence of reasonable grounds for suspecting the improper conduct, and the report is made to cause distress.
Worker	Extending the definition under section 8 of the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld), a worker includes: • all employees (temporary, permanent or casual) • volunteers, such as P&C members, parents, family volunteers, or families who host international students • contractors, subcontractors, consultants or sole traders providing services or products to schools or students through school or department purchasing arrangements, which can include requests to quote, government

	Standing Offer Arrangements or maintenance/building contracts • individuals provided by labour hire services, which can include but is not limited to office support staff, relief teaching and chaplains • trainees or work experience participants, including tertiary students on placement such as preservice teachers • P&C executives and School Council members.
Workplace	Where employees are on departmental duty or are representing the department. The term workplace can include areas beyond the work location and activities outside of work hours. It can include but is not limited to activities such as extra-curricular activities, school camps and excursions, residential or external training courses, Christmas parties and other functions that are officially supported by the department.