



Procedure

Allegations against workers in the area of child and student protection procedure

Version: 3.0 | Version effective: 01/07/2026

Audience

All workers of the Department of Education (the department) which includes state schools and State Delivered Kindergartens.

Purpose

This procedure outlines the process for reporting and managing allegations of harm or risk of harm, including reportable conduct, to children and students caused by a worker of the department.

Overview

Departmental employees and other workers are required to report reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to children and students by a departmental worker. This procedure covers the types of conduct and matters that must be reported, and how those reports must be made and managed.

Anyone can form a suspicion that a child or student has been harmed or is at risk of harm by a worker and report it using the processes set out in this procedure. For suspicions formed in the course of their work, employees and workers are legally required to report suspicions or take protective action, as required under mandatory reporting and child protection laws, including:

- Under ss.365 and 365A of the [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#) a school staff member must immediately give a written report to the principal or principal's supervisor when they become aware of or reasonably suspect, in the course of their employment, the sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse of a student under 18 years. The principal or principal's supervisor must immediately give a copy of the report to the Queensland Police Service (QPS).
- Under s.13E of the [Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\)](#) a teacher, registered nurse or early childhood education and care professional must give a written report to the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (Child Safety) when, in the course of their employment, they form a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse and may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm.
- Under s.229BB of the [Criminal Code Act 1899 \(Qld\)](#) workers must take action to protect a child where there is a significant risk that a worker may or will commit a child sexual offence.

- Under s.229BC of the [Criminal Code Act 1899 \(Qld\)](#) an adult must, as soon as reasonably practicable, make a report to the QPS when they gain information that causes them to reasonably believe, or ought reasonably to cause them to believe, a child sexual offence is being or has been committed against a child by another adult.

As a reporting entity under the [Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 \(Qld\)](#) (CSO Act), the department is covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme. Under this scheme, any suspected or actual harm to a child caused by a worker, whether it occurred while the worker was working or not, must be reported to the department. Workers of the department include employees, volunteers, contractors, sole traders, individuals on work experience and tertiary students on placement (see definitions for more examples).

Types of reportable conduct under the CSO Act are:

- 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
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

By complying with this procedure, departmental employees and other workers will meet the mandatory reporting obligations for where a child or student has been harmed or is at risk of harm by a worker. The procedure should be read in conjunction with the [Guidelines for allegations against workers](#).

Suspicious of harm formed:

- where the harm is caused by someone who is not an employee or worker of the department will be managed under the [Student protection procedure](#).
- while not working for the department should be reported to the Queensland Police Service (QPS) in the first instance.

Responsibilities

Workers

- Report all suspicions of harm or risk of harm, including reportable conduct, without delay
- Not inform the worker who is the subject of the allegation unless directed or approved
- Maintain confidentiality and avoid discussing the matter with others
- Continue to report any new or emerging suspicions

All managers and supervisors

- Support staff and workers to understand and comply with requirements, including by providing induction and ensuring completion of mandatory training
- Monitor compliance with risk management and provide relevant support as required during the management or progression of the allegation

- Escalate concerns promptly where risks change

Principals

- Receive and record reports relating to harm or reportable conduct
- Consult with HR Regional Operations or Integrity before taking formal risk management action
- Submit reports without unreasonable delay using the correct Student Protection (SP) category
- Decide, implement, and monitor risk management strategies
- Escalate matters to HR Regional Operations, Regional Director, School Supervisors or Integrity where required
- Manage retained matters with procedural fairness and confidentiality
- Record incidents against the relevant student record securely, ensuring strict confidentiality
- Consider human rights when taking risk management action and make decisions that are compatible with the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld)

Regional Directors and School Supervisors

- Receive allegations or reports where a principal is the subject
- Manage these allegations as per principal responsibilities above
- Oversee regional management of retained SP1 and SP2 matters

HR Regional Operations

- Receive and assess SP1 and SP2 matters, and refer to Integrity when escalation is required
- Provide advice on and implement appropriate management pathways for retained matters
- Maintain accurate records in departmental systems
- Maintain confidentiality and procedural fairness
- Consider human rights when taking risk management action and make decisions that are compatible with the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld)

Integrity

- Receive and assess referred SP1 and SP2 matters and all SP3 referrals
- Make referrals or notifications to external agencies within required timeframes
- Conduct investigations in accordance with legislative and procedural requirements
- Provide direction on risk management and worker contact throughout the management of the matter
- Record all actions and decisions in the case management system
- Provide timely advice to delegated decision-makers, including recommendations relating to suspension and discipline
- Maintain confidentiality and procedural fairness
- Consider human rights when taking risk management action and make decisions that are compatible with the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld)

Delegated Decision-Makers

- Make formal risk management decisions under sections 101–102 of the *PS Act 2022 (Qld)* (*PS Act*)
- Determine suspensions, transfers or alternative duties and make decisions relating to discipline.
- Ensure decisions are lawful, proportionate, and documented
- Provide procedural fairness to the worker who is the subject of the allegation
- Notify workers in writing of risk management decisions and reviews
- Consider human rights when taking risk management action and make decisions that are compatible with the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld)

Process

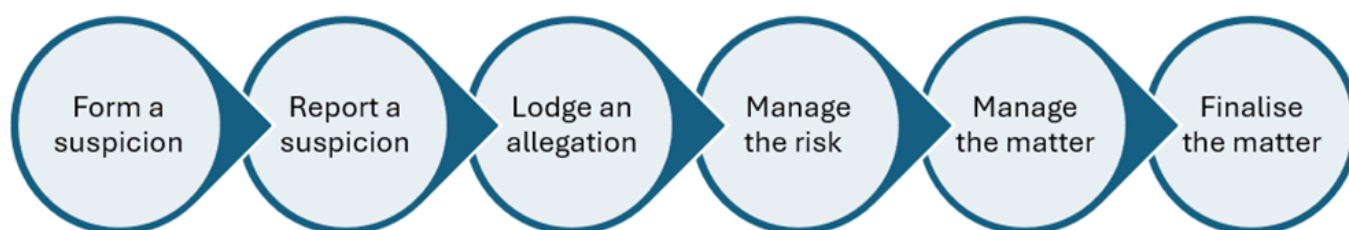


Image 1: Procedure process flow

Forming a reasonable suspicion

Anyone can form a reasonable suspicion that a child or student has been harmed or is at risk of harm by a departmental worker.

A reasonable suspicion:

- may be formed when a person believes that behaviour or other information indicates a genuine possibility of harm to a child or student by a worker. Proof, certainty, or confirmation is not required to form this suspicion.
- may be based on one or more of the following:
 - direct observations of conduct, conversations, or interactions
 - contextual or circumstantial information
 - repeated patterns of concerning behaviour towards a child or student
 - additionally, for employees, a reasonable suspicion may also be informed by:
 - professional judgement based on their role, responsibilities, or experience
 - complaints or statements from witnesses.
- may include consideration of factors such as the child's age and disability.

Workers must prioritise child safety and apply a low threshold when identifying potential risks of child harm. In identifying potential risks of child harm, workers should consider risk factors, including disability. They can seek advice from [HR Regional Operations](#) about reporting thresholds, particularly for allegations involving

suspected sexual abuse or grooming-type behaviour. More information for employees on student protection concepts and indicators of abuse can be found in the department's [student protection guidelines](#).

Reporting a reasonable suspicion

Reasonable suspicions that a child or student has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed by a departmental worker:

- can be reported by members of the public:
 - to the principal, where the conduct relates to a worker at a school
 - by emailing [HR Regional Operations](#), for all other concerns.
- must be reported by workers soon as practicable, as follows:
 - School employees must provide a written report to the principal, or the school supervisor or regional director if the suspicion involves the principal.
 - Other workers must report to:
 - the principal, where the conduct relates to a worker at a school
 - the regional director or school supervisor, where the conduct relates to the principal
 - their manager or supervisor, where a non-school based worker is making an allegation about the conduct of another non-school based worker.

The person making the report must:

- remove the child or student from any immediate risk of harm if appropriate to do so, seeking support from the principal if required
- provide accurate, factual information and any relevant notes or documents to support their suspicion
- not tell the reported worker about the suspicion or report
- maintain confidentiality and avoid discussing the matter with others beyond what is necessary to meet procedural requirements
- report any new or emerging concerns as they arise.

Lodging an allegation

Note: following the lodgement of an SP3 in iRefer will automatically send matters under the mandatory reporting obligations to the QPS. If a principal believes that the matter should also go to Child Safety, they should make a report as per the [Student protection procedure](#).

As soon as practicable after receiving an allegation about a worker, the principal, regional director, school supervisor, manager or supervisor must determine the correct student protection (SP) referral type (see table below) and lodge the allegation through iRefer. If iRefer is unavailable, allegations can be lodged by contacting your [HR Regional Operations](#) team.

The following table supports the decision-making process to determine the appropriate referral type.

Allegations submitted via iRefer will go straight to the responsible party for management. SP3 allegations submitted by phone or email will first go to Integrity, all others will go to the responsible party as outlined above and below.

Referral type	Situation	Referred to and managed by
SP1	<p>Isolated incidents causing slight emotional or physical discomfort.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yelling or coarse language • inappropriate tone or language • minor inappropriate physical contact • minor scratching or bruising • sharing personal information with students without an educational purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Regional Operations (in consultation with principals, managers, supervisors and regional directors) • HR regional operations may refer a matter to Integrity or recategorise it as an SP2 if they identify repetitious behaviour or conduct
SP2	<p>Where the conduct or incident is more serious than an SP1.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inappropriate physical contact that is not sexualised • physical violence resulting in injury • repetition of SP1 type conduct • pattern of intimidating or belligerent behaviour • reportable conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Regional Operations (in consultation with school principals, managers, supervisors and regional directors) • HR Regional Operations will refer a matter to Integrity when it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ involves significant harm ○ involves escalation or patterns of behaviour that raise child safety concerns ○ is, or may be, a type of reportable conduct
SP3	<p>Where there is, or is suspected to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sexual abuse • grooming-type conduct • behaviours consistent with recognised grooming indicators • reportable conduct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity • Queensland Police Service (QPS) (SP3 submissions through iRefer trigger automatic notification to QPS)

Managing risk

Risk management strategies must be implemented from the time an allegation is initially reported through to the finalisation and closure of the matter. Risk management strategies can be both formal and informal. Formal risk management strategies, as outlined under the [PS Act 2022 \(Qld\)](#), can only be applied to employees.

Before implementing any ongoing risk management actions, the principal, manager, supervisor or regional director must seek approval from the team managing the matter (typically HR Regional Operations for SP1 and SP2 matters, and Integrity for SP3 matters). This ensures that the response will not compromise any departmental or QPS investigations.

Informal risk management strategies

Informal risk management strategies are assessed and implemented by the principal, manager, supervisor, or regional director to ensure the immediate safety of children or students. These strategies may include:

- moving students within classrooms or away from harm
- providing additional supervision and oversight (e.g., placing a second employee in the classroom)
- removing additional duties, such as co-curricular responsibilities
- issuing lawful and reasonable direction letters
- providing additional training to staff.

Formal risk management strategies

Formal risk management strategies may be required for employees and include:

- suspension from duties
- placement on alternative duties
- temporary transfers
- application of a notice of further consideration.

For workers who are non-employees, the principal may consider directing a person to leave or not enter the school premises as per the [Managing inappropriate and hostile conduct procedure](#).

Integrity will:

- assess any local risk management actions already in place and determine whether additional formal risk management strategies are necessary
- progress recommendations for formal risk management action to an authorised delegate under the HR Delegations Manual for consideration.

The delegated decision-maker will:

- consider any formal risk management recommendations
- determine whether to implement suspension, transfer, or alternative duties for an employee
- notify the employee in writing about any formal risk management action.

Implement risk management strategies

Any decision to implement risk management strategies (formal or informal) requires the decision-maker to assess the impact on human rights and document their considerations by addressing the following questions:

- Are any human rights engaged or impacted by the risk management decision or action taken?
- If so, did the decision or action place any limits on those human rights?
- If so, was the limitation lawful, justified, and reasonable in the circumstances?

The decision-maker's assessment of human rights considerations must also be documented and saved in the department's records management system.

Monitor risk management strategies

Principals, managers, supervisors and regional directors will monitor the effectiveness of applied risk management strategies and escalate any concerns to Integrity.

The delegated-decision maker must review suspensions as required under the Suspension Directive (06/23).

Integrity will:

- reassess the appropriateness of risk management strategies where further information is received regarding an ongoing matter
- where required, progress a recommendation to the delegated decision maker for consideration of a change in risk management strategies.

Managing SP matters

Taking care not to disclose any information that may compromise an investigation or breach privacy requirements:

- principals must notify the student's parents of any incident of student harm and record contact with the parent in OneSchool.
- principals, managers, supervisors and regional directors must make any other disclosures necessary based on the worker's role. These may include notifying:
 - the university if the worker is a preservice teacher
 - the company if the worker is a contractor
 - the school or institution if the worker is a work experience student.

For matters retained by HR Regional Operations

HR Regional operations will:

- review and assess matters to determine if allegations require escalation to Integrity
- as soon as practicable, notify the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) of any matters involving registered teachers.

HR Regional Operations in conjunction with principals, managers, school supervisors and regional directors, will:

- collaboratively manage SP matters through local management action aligned to the positive performance management principles under the [PS Act 2022 \(Qld\)](#) and [Positive performance management directive 02/24](#)
- maintain confidentiality and avoid discussing the matter with others beyond what is necessary for child/student safety and meeting legislative and procedural requirement
- record any actions and decisions in the appropriate document management system, in line with the department's [Information asset and recordkeeping procedure](#)
- Consider human rights when taking risk management action and make decisions that are compatible with the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld).

For matters referred to Integrity

Integrity will:

- review and assess matters to determine if allegations meet the criteria for mandatory notification under relevant legislation/s
- notify the appropriate external agencies within the required legislative timeframes, including:
 - QPS for criminal matters (this notification is automatic for SP3 matters lodged through iRefer)
 - Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) for reportable conduct matters
 - Crime and Corruption Committee (CCC) for allegations of corrupt conduct
 - QCT for matters involving registered teachers
 - Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) and/or Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (APHRA) for matters involving registered health professionals.
- provide all necessary reports and supporting documentation to accompany notifications, and interim reports as required by external agencies
- determine if an investigation is required based on the nature and severity of the matter, and may devolve some matters back to HR Regional operations for local management
- refer matters internally or externally for investigation, as required
- conduct investigations in accordance with legislative and procedural requirements
- progress matters for consideration of disciplinary action, if required
- Consider human rights when taking risk management action and make decisions that are compatible with the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld).

Finalising SP matters

At the conclusion of the matter, Integrity will:

- finalise any management action outcomes
- for employees:
 - progress to the delegated-decision maker for consideration of any recommendations:
 - for disciplinary action

- to continue or lift a notice of further consideration
- cease any formal risk management actions (suspension, alternative duties or transfer) that have been applied.
- consider any systemic or preventative actions and report to relevant strategic committee for continuous improvement.

For employees, the delegated decision maker will:

- consider and determine any disciplinary actions and notice of further consideration outcomes
- consider human rights and document their assessment of whether the allegation and outcome engage or limits any human rights by examining the following:
 - Are any human rights engaged or impacted by the decision or action complained about?
 - If so, will the decision or action in question place any limits on those human rights?
 - If so, was the limitation lawful, justified and reasonable in the circumstances?
- ensure procedural fairness to the worker who is the subject of the allegation
- notify the employee in writing about the:
 - removal of formal risk management actions
 - application of any disciplinary outcomes
 - status of any notice of further consideration
 - available options for review.

Integrity will:

- communicate the outcomes to all relevant parties, including to the reported worker, the reporting worker and any external bodies required to meet mandatory reporting obligations
- record all relevant information and outcomes related to the matter in the department's complaints management system (Resolve), to ensure accurate and complete records are maintained in line with the [Information asset and recordkeeping procedure](#).

Definitions

Term	Definition
Adult	A person who is 18 years or older.
Child/children	A person under 18 years of age.
Child sexual offence	Is any sexual act committed by an adult against a child. This includes offences outlined in chapter 22 or 32 of the <i>Criminal Code Act 1899</i> (Qld).

Term	Definition
Grooming	<p>Grooming is when an adult deliberately builds an emotional connection with a child to lower their defences and gain their trust. This is often done to prepare the child for inappropriate behaviour, either in the future or when an opportunity arises. Signs of grooming by a worker may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • giving special treatment or privileges to a specific child • engaging in unnecessary physical contact, such as frequent touching or caressing • providing gifts, treats, or money to the child without a legitimate reason. <p>Refer to the Student protection guidelines (accessible to DoE employees only) for more information.</p>
Harm	<p>Under section 9 of the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i> (Qld), harm refers to any significant negative effect on a child’s physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing. It doesn’t matter how the harm happens—it can result from physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Harm may be caused by a single event or a series of actions, inactions, or situations.</p>
Immediately	<p>The EGPA requires school staff members to immediately submit a written report regarding sexual abuse to the principal, and for the principal to immediately forward reports regarding sexual abuse to the QPS. In this context, ‘immediately’ means the report must be progressed without unreasonable delay, once a reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse has been formed.</p>
Integrity	<p>A departmental business unit that works in conjunction with HR Regional Operations to receive, assess and manage allegations related to performance, conduct and behaviour including misconduct, corrupt conduct, reportable conduct and criminal conduct.</p>
Misconduct	<p>As defined in section 91(5)(a)(b) of the <i>PS Act 2022</i> (Qld), misconduct refers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inappropriate or improper conduct in an official capacity; or • inappropriate or improper conduct in a private capacity that seriously and negatively impacts on the public sector entity where the employee works.
Principal/Manager/Supervisor	<p>Refers to the principal, manager or supervisor working in a state educational institution or a business unit in the department.</p>
Reasonable suspicion	<p>A reasonable suspicion is one formed on grounds that are appropriate in the circumstances. Under section 13C of the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i> (Qld):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factors to consider when forming a reasonable suspicion include:

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ whether the child is experiencing, or is likely to experience, detrimental effects on their body, psychological state, or emotional state ○ the nature and severity of these effects and the likelihood they will continue ○ the child's age. ● a reasonable suspicion may be informed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ observations of the child ○ other knowledge of the child ○ relevant knowledge, training, or experience of the person forming the suspicion. <p>For the purposes of clarity for the <i>Criminal Code 1899</i> and <i>Child Safe Organisations Act 2024</i>, this also includes 'reasonable belief'.</p>
Registered teacher	<p>Registered teacher, for the purposes of this procedure, is 'relevant teacher' under sections 76 and 77 of the <i>Queensland (College of Teachers) Act 2005</i>.</p> <p>These sections require that a notification is made to the Queensland College of Teachers when an allegation meets the criteria for mandatory notification.</p> <p>Notifications would therefore be made for a registered teacher, a person with Permission to Teach (PTT), former approved teachers, and teachers with deemed registration.</p>
Reportable conduct	<p>Under section 26 of the <i>Child Safe Organisations Act 2024</i> (Qld), reportable conduct is harm caused to any child by a worker, whether in the workplace or in private capacity.</p> <p>Types of reportable conduct include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a child sexual offence ● sexual misconduct involving or in the presence of a child ● ill-treatment of a child ● significant neglect of a child ● physical violence involving or in the presence of a child ● behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child. <p>Thresholds for categories of reportable conduct are determined by Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) refer to Guide to Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme.</p>
Risk management action	<p>Actions taken to prevent or minimise risk to students during the assessment or investigation of an allegation, which may include alternative duties,</p>

Term	Definition
	temporary transfer, suspension, increased supervision, removing a child from a classroom for a period of time, or other suitable working arrangements.
Sexual abuse	<p>For the purposes of this procedure, sexual abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • means sexual behaviour involving a student or child and another person in the following circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the student or child; ○ the student or child has less power than the other person; or ○ there is a significant difference in intellectual capacity or maturity between the student or child and the other person; and • includes a child sexual offence.
State educational institution	<p>Under Chapter 2 of the EGPA, a state educational institution includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schools where the State provides primary, secondary, or special education and State Delivered Kindergartens (s.13). • centres offering additional educational programs for state school students, such as environmental or outdoor education centres (s.14). • facilities supporting teachers and departmental staff, as well as student hostels or residential colleges (s.15).
State school	For the purposes of this procedure, means a state educational institution.
Student	Any person who is enrolled at or attends a state school and for the purposes of this procedure, includes a kindergarten age child registered in a State Delivered Kindergarten.
Worker	<p>Extending the definition under section 8 of the <i>Child Safe Organisations Act 2024</i>, a worker includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trainees or work experience participants, including tertiary students on placement such as preservice teachers • P&C executives and School Council members.

Legislation

- [Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Criminal Code Act 1899 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(Queensland College of Teachers\) Act 2005 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Human Rights Act 2019 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Act 2024 \(Qld\) Chapter 3, parts 3-4](#)

Delegations/Authorisations

- [Human Resources Delegations Manual 01/2025](#) (DoE employees only)

Policies and procedures in this group

- [Child and student protection policy](#)
- [Disclosing personal information to law enforcement agencies procedure](#)
- [Information sharing under the Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\) procedure](#)
- [Student protection procedure](#)
- [Working with children \(blue card\) procedure](#)

Supporting information for this procedure

- [Allegations against workers in the area of child and student protection – guidelines](#)

Other resources

- [Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service](#)
- [Standard of Practice](#)
- [Student protection fact sheet](#) (DoE employees only)
- [Charter of Victims' Rights](#)
- [Guideline: Charter of Victims' Rights Complaints](#) (DoE employees only).

- [QFCC Reportable Conduct Scheme Guidelines](#)
- [QCT Guidelines](#)

Contact

For further information, please contact your HR Regional Operations team:

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Where necessary, Regional HR should contact Integrity and Employee Relations for further advice and assistance.

Integrity: intake@qed.qld.gov.au

Review date

1/07/2029

Superseded versions

Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.

2.0 Allegations against employees in the area of student protection procedure



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