

Preventing and Managing Bullying Policy

Inspiring Great Minds



Queensland Academy
for Science Mathematics
and Technology



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1. RATIONALE

Queensland Academy for Science, Mathematics and Technology is an independent public school for highly capable students in Years 7 to 12. All schools in Queensland are committed to taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur. Research indicates that both those being bullied and those who bully are at risk for behavioural, emotional and academic problems. These outcomes are in direct contradiction to our Academy's values and efforts for supporting all students.

QASMT uses the Academy Positive Education Framework, the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework, and the Parent Engagement Framework to promote positive relationships and the wellbeing of all students, staff, caregivers and visitors at the Academy. Our staff know that student learning is optimised when they feel connected to others and experience safe and trusting relationships. Students who feel secure are more likely to be active participants in their learning and to achieve better physical, emotional, social and educational outcomes. Teachers who feel valued and supported are more likely to engage positively with students and build stronger connections within the school community. Parents/caregivers who are positively engaged with their student's education leads to improved self-esteem, attendance and behaviour at school. Enhancing the wellbeing of students and their educators delivers overall long-term social, health and economic benefits to the Australian community. Research indicates that many problem behaviours are peer-maintained. That is, peers react to bullying in ways that may increase the likelihood of it occurring again in the future. Reactions include joining in, laughing, or simply observing, rather than intervening to help the person being bullied. Whilst our Academy would never encourage students to place themselves at risk, our anti-bullying procedures involve teaching the entire Academy a set of safe and effective responses to all problem behaviour, including online bullying, in such a way that those who bully are not socially reinforced for demonstrating it.

QASMT has an Academy Representative Council (ARC) with diverse representatives meeting regularly with the school leadership team to promote strategies to improve student wellbeing, safety and learning outcomes. A priority for the ARC is to contribute to the implementation of strategies that enhance wellbeing, promote safety and counter bullying and abuse in all online and physical spaces.

2. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

The agreed national definition for Australian schools describes bullying as:

- Ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm.
- Involving an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.
- Happening in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).
- Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).
- Having immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:

- Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online.
- Mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance).
- Not liking someone or a single act of social rejection.
- One-off acts of meanness or spite.
- Isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

However, these conflicts are still considered serious and need to be addressed and resolved. Academy staff will work to quickly respond to any matters raised of this nature in collaboration with students and parents/caregivers.

In line with the Australian Government, QASMT staff recognise that every student has the right to feel safe and supported at school. When bullying or harassment occurs, it is essential that concerns are raised promptly with the student's House Dean. Staff will respond to all reports of bullying in a timely and transparent manner. An initial response should occur within two school days, with an investigation to follow as soon as practicable. Throughout this process, the wellbeing of the affected student and their family remains the highest priority. Support measures will be provided to ensure the student's safety and inclusion, while the school undertakes a fair and thorough process to understand the situation and address the behaviour.

The following flowchart explains the actions QASMT teachers will take when they receive a report about student bullying, including bullying which may have occurred online or outside of the school setting. **The key contact for students and parents/caregivers to report bullying is the student's House Dean.**

3. BULLYING RESPONSE FLOWCHARGE FOR QASMT STAFF

Listen

If a student approaches a QASMT staff member with an allegation of bullying:

- Provide a safe, quiet space to talk.
- Reassure the student that their concerns will be heard.
- Let them share their experience and feelings without interruption.
- If a staff member holds immediate concerns for the student's safety, let the student know how you will address these. Immediate, in this circumstance, is where the staff member believes the student is likely to experience harm (from others or self) within the next 24 hours. Notify senior leaders immediately of this concern.
- Ask the student for examples they have of the alleged bullying (e.g. handwritten notes or screenshots).
- Write a record of your communication with the student.
- Check back with the student to ensure you have the facts correct.
- Enter the record in OneSchool and **refer to the student's House Dean for them to contact parents/caregivers and to begin an investigation.**

Document

Collect

The House Dean will:

- Gather additional information from other students, staff or family.
- Review any previous reports or records for students involved.
- Ensure the student can answer who, what, where, when and how.
- Make contact with the student and parent/caregiver within 2 school days to let them know that an investigation has begun.
- Evaluate the information to determine if bullying has occurred or if another disciplinary matter is at issue.
- Make a time to meet with the student to discuss next steps.
- Ask the student what they believe will help address the situation.
- Engage the student as part of the solution.

Discuss

Implement

- Offer ongoing support to both the student and parent
- Document all correspondence on OneSchool and refer in GO other HDs or senior leader, if relevant
- Complete all actions agreed with student and parent/caregiver
- Monitor student and check in regularly on their wellbeing

Day 5 Review

- Meet with the student to review situation
- Discuss what has changed, improved or worsened
- Explore other options for strengthening student wellbeing or safety

Ongoing Follow-Up

- Continue to check in with student on regular basis until concerns have been mitigated
- Record notes of follow-up meetings in OneSchool and refer in GO, or senior leader, if relevant
- Look for opportunities to improve school wellbeing for all students

4. CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is treated at QASMT with the same level of seriousness as in-person bullying. The major difference with cyberbullying however, is that unlike in-person bullying cyberbullying follows students into their community, their homes and their bedrooms, giving them no opportunity to escape the harassment or abuse during the evening, weekends or holidays.

In the first instance, students or parents/caregivers who wish to make a report about cyberbullying should approach the student's House Dean.

It is important for students, parents/caregivers and staff to know that state school Principals have the authority to take disciplinary action to address student behaviours that occur outside of school hours or school grounds. This includes cyberbullying. Parents/caregivers and students who have concerns about cyberbullying incidents occurring during school holidays should immediately seek assistance through the [Office of the e-Safety Commissioner](#) or the Queensland Police Service.

It is a parents responsibility to enact the 'Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024', which sets a minimum age of 16 for social media accounts, effective December 10, 2025. Platforms must take "reasonable steps" to prevent under-16s from creating accounts, parents cannot provide consent to bypass this. The law aims to protect children from harms like cyberbullying and harmful content.

Students enrolled at QASMT may face in-school disciplinary action, such as detention or removing of privileges, or more serious consequences such as suspension from school, for engaging in behaviour that adversely affects, or is likely to adversely affect, other students or the good order and management of the Academy. This includes behaviour such as cyberbullying which occurs outside of school hours or settings, for example on the weekend or during school holidays. It also applies to inappropriate online behaviour that is directed towards other community members or students from other schools.

Parents/caregivers or other stakeholders who engage in inappropriate online behaviour towards students, staff or other parents/caregivers may be referred to the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner and/or the Queensland Police Service. State school staff will be referred for investigation to the Integrity and Employee Relations team in the Department of Education.

4.1 CYBERSAFETY AND REPUTATION MANAGEMENT (CRM)

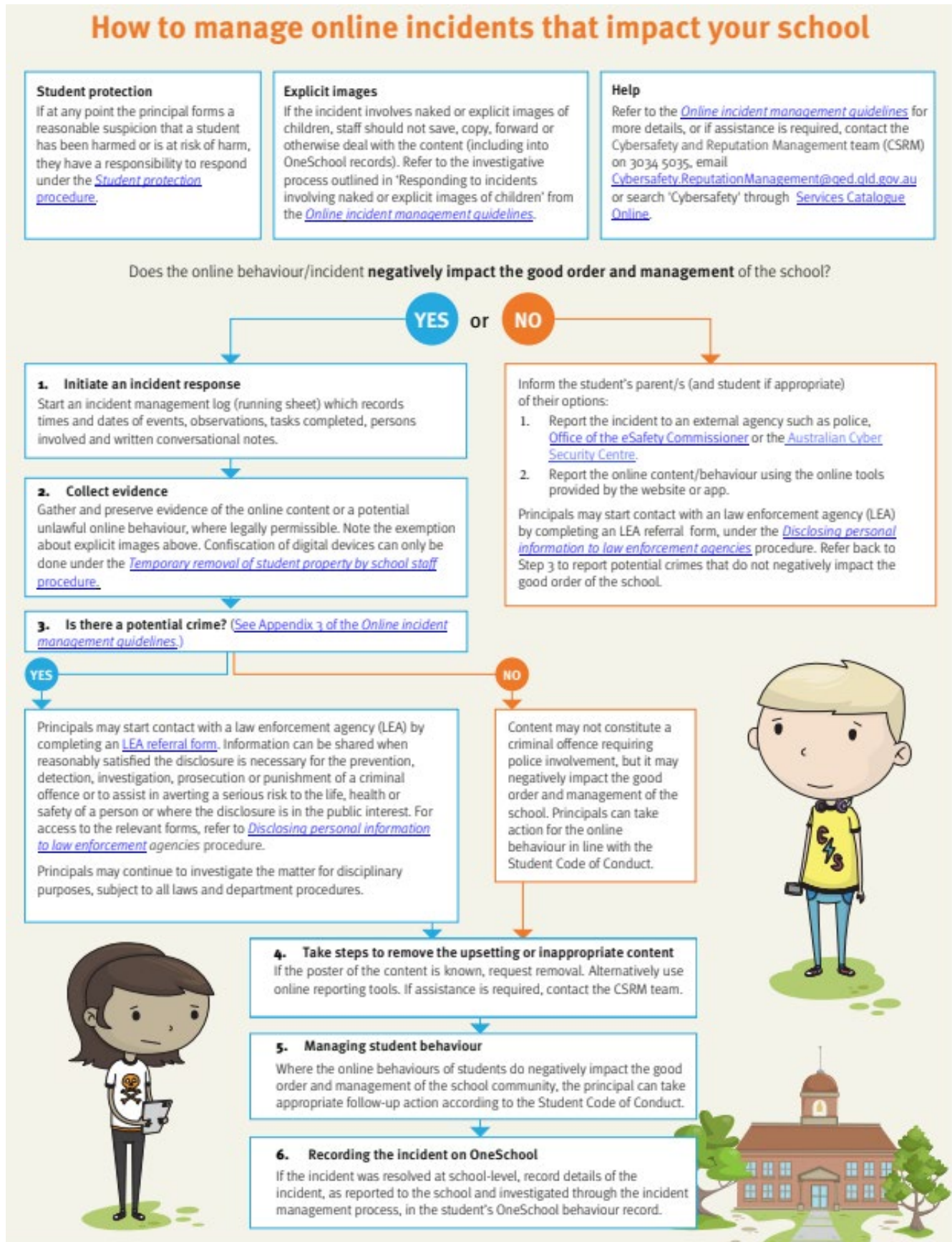
The Department of Education employs a dedicated team of experts to assist in maintaining the integrity of the Department's reputation with regard to cybersafety and reputation management issues, effectively leading the development and implementation of departmental cybersafety processes. This team provides direct support for schools to respond to concerns of inappropriate online behaviour and misuse of information and communication technology.

4.2 STUDENT INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

QASMT recognises the need to provide intervention and support to all students involved in incidents of bullying, including cyberbullying. Students who have been subject or witness to bullying have access to a range of Academy support staff. Depending on the nature of the reported bullying incident, a formal plan of action may be developed and documented to support the implementation of strategies to assist the student.

Students who engage in bullying behaviours towards others will also be provided with support to assist them to use more socially acceptable and appropriate behaviours in their interactions. This may include counselling, social development programs, or involvement in a restorative justice strategy. School disciplinary measures may also be taken to reinforce the seriousness with which the community takes all incidents of bullying. These measures may include detention, withdrawal from social events or celebrations, or more severe punishments such as suspension from school.

5. QASMT CYBERBULLYING RESPONSE FLOWCHART FOR SCHOOL STAFF



6. QASMT ANTI-BULLYING CONTRACT

The Anti-Bullying Contract provides a clear outline of the way our community works together to establish a safe, supportive and disciplined school environment. This contract is available to students and their parents/caregivers and may be revisited with individual students if particular problems around bullying arise.

6.1 EXEMPLAR: QASMT ANTI-BULLYING CONTRACT

We agree to work together to improve the quality of relationships in our community at QASMT. It is through intentional consideration of our behaviour and communication that we can reduce the occurrence of bullying, and improve the quality of the schooling experience for everyone.

The agreed national definition for Australian schools describes bullying as:

- ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm;
- involving an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening;
- happening in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records);
- having immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders
- single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

We believe that no one deserves to be mistreated and all members of our school community have the right to feel safe, secure, and respected.

As a student at QASMT, I agree to:

- Treat everyone with kindness and respect.
- Abide by the school's anti-bullying policies and procedures.
- Support individuals who have been bullied.
- Speak out against verbal, relational, physical bullying and cyber bullying.
- Notify a parent/caregiver, teacher, or school administrator when bullying does occur.

Student's signature:

Parent/Caregiver's signature:

Date:

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

Students

- Are required to behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity.
- Behave as responsible digital citizens.
- Follow the school Preventing and Managing Bullying Policy.
- Behave as responsible bystanders.
- Report all incidences of bullying to their House Dean.

Parents/caregivers

- It is a parents responsibility to enact the 'Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024', which sets a minimum age of 16 for social media accounts
- Support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible in person and on-line behaviour.
- Be aware of the school *Preventing and Managing Bullying Policy* and assist their children to understand bullying behaviour.
- Report incidents of school-related bullying behaviour to their child's House Dean.
- Work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

School

- Maintain a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur
- Develop and implement programs for bullying prevention in InStep programs, IBL and PEP
- Develop and implement early intervention support for students identified by the school as being at risk of developing long term difficulties with social relationships
- Develop and implement early intervention support for those students who are identified at, or after, enrolment as having previously experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviour
- Empower the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation and behave as responsible bystanders
- Develop and publish clear procedures for reporting incidents of bullying to the school
- Respond to incidents of bullying that have been reported to the school quickly and effectively
- Provide support to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour
- Identify patterns of bullying behaviour and respond to such patterns
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Anti-bullying Policy regularly
- Model and promote appropriate behaviour

8. BULLYING PREVENTION

Attempting to address specific problem behaviours will not be successful if the general level of disruptive behaviour in all areas of our school is not kept to a low level. Therefore, our school wide universal behaviour support practices will be maintained at all times. This will ensure that:

- Our universal behaviour support processes will always remain the primary strategy for preventing problem behaviour, including preventing the subset of bullying behaviour
- All students know the Academy expectations and have been taught the expected behaviours attached to each aspect of the IB Learner Profile
- All students have been, or are being, taught the specific routines in the non-classroom areas, from exiting the classroom, conducting themselves in accordance with the school expectations in the playground and other areas, to re-entering their classrooms
- All students are receiving high levels of positive reinforcement for demonstrating expected

behaviours, including those associated with following our routines, from all staff in the non-classroom areas of the school

- A high level of quality active supervision is a permanent staff routine in the non-classroom areas. This means that duty staff members are easily identifiable and are constantly moving, scanning and positively interacting as they move through the designated supervision sectors of the non-classroom areas

Other prevention strategies include:

- Using the curriculum to teach students about respectful relationships, civics and citizenship, the IB Learner Profile, eSafety and the SMT Way
- Developing programs to help students participate and have a say in their learning
- Teaching students about violence prevention, conflict resolution, anger management and problem solving and developing policies which promote student safety
- Teaching for and about diversity
- Providing professional learning for staff in collaboration with local agencies

9. CONSEQUENCES

If an incident of bullying happens at QASMT we use intervention and post-intervention strategies to respond. All consequences issued to students are, as per our Student Code of Conduct, within the context of our whole school positive education framework.

Intervention strategies may include:

- Counselling students who have been bullied
- Talking with parents/caregivers about the situation
- Putting consequences in place for those who bully others
- Teaching students to be better bystanders
- Ensuring that all staff know how to address bullying effectively and respectfully

Post-intervention strategies include:

- Monitoring the situation between the students to ensure that their safety and wellbeing are maintained
- Talking with parents/caregivers about strategies
- Dealing with hotspots in the non-teaching areas
- Reviewing and evaluating behaviour codes and policies
- Instigating restorative practices, where appropriate.

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

- eSafety Commissioner www.esafety.gov.au
- Bullying No Way <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>
- Google www.google.com/goodtoknow
- Parentline www.parentline.com.au/parenting-information/tip-sheets
- SchoolTV <https://qasmt.eq.schooltv.me/>