

# Yarrilee State School



## Student Code of Conduct 2025-2028

### ***Equity and Excellence***

*Realising the potential of every student.  
Queensland Department of Education  
Equity and Excellence Strategy 2022*

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## Endorsement

Principal Name: Matthew Bulger

Principal Signature:

Date:

7 March 2025

P/C President and-or School  
Council Chair Name:

Sarah Dudgeon

P/C President and-or School  
Council Chair Signature:

Date:

7 March 2025

## Consultation

The consultation process used to inform the development of the Yarrilee State School Student Code of Conduct occurred in three phases.

*In the first phase*, we held a series of internal meetings with staff. During these meetings, we examined a range of data sets on student behaviour and school disciplinary absences (SDA). We provided staff with information around new legislation relating to the Human Rights Act and how this would underpin our approach to behaviour management. We identified strengths and successes from our previous school behaviour plan, and areas for further development.

*In the second phase* a Student Code of Conduct document was prepared and distributed for comment to all members of the school community before being unanimously endorsed by our school P&C.

*The third phase*, the on-going review phase, saw a Behaviour Working Party formed in 2024.

A communication strategy has been developed to support the implementation of the Yarrilee State School Student Code of Conduct, including promotion through the school website, weekly newsletter, Facebook, Class Dojo and email.

# Contents

|                                                    |       |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Purpose                                            | 5     |
| Creed Statement                                    | 6     |
| Learning and Behaviour Statement                   | 7     |
| Student Support Network                            | 11    |
| Consideration of Individual Circumstances          | 11    |
| Differentiation and Explicit Teaching              | 11    |
| Focussed and Intensive Teaching                    | 12,13 |
| Legislative Delegations                            | 13    |
| Legislation                                        | 13    |
| Delegations                                        | 14    |
| Disciplinary Consequences                          | 15    |
| School Policies                                    | 18    |
| Temporary removal of student property              | 18    |
| Use of mobile phones and other devices by students | 20    |
| Preventing and responding to bullying              | 23    |
| Appropriate use of social media                    | 26    |
| Restrictive Practices                              | 28    |
| Critical Incidents                                 | 29    |
| Related Procedures and Guidelines                  | 30    |
| Resources                                          | 30    |
| Conclusion                                         | 31    |

## Purpose

Yarrilee SS is committed to providing a safe, respectful and disciplined learning environment for students and staff, where students have opportunities to engage in quality learning experiences and acquire values supportive of their lifelong wellbeing.

This Student Code of Conduct is designed to facilitate high standards of behaviour so that the learning and teaching in our school can be effective and students can participate positively within our school community.

Yarrilee SS is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture helps to engage students and support them to achieve excellence in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely connected.

In line with our Creed Statement, an emphasis will be placed on self-management for all students' behaviour rather than exertion of control.

Positive habits of mind and developing empathy are fundamental to self management and refer to an individual's ability to develop and display the school's four values of:

- Caring for Others
- Caring for our Learning
- Caring for Ourselves
- Caring for the Environment



## Creed Statement

Yarrilee State School is a community of learners who feel a strong bond with each other. The school has a safe, warm and welcoming atmosphere where difference is accepted and making a difference is expected. Our values and beliefs are obvious in our respectful interaction with peers and with others.

Here, the students and staff see themselves not only as Hervey Bay, Queensland and Australian citizens but, more importantly, as global citizens. Leadership qualities are developed and encouraged from a young age.

There is a sense of purpose evident in the classrooms where challenging tasks are undertaken in a supportive and nurturing learning environment. There is a culture of praise for effort and achievement.

Information and communication technology is used as a tool to enhance learning outcomes. Students have an appreciation for the skills and attributes necessary to survive and prosper in modern times.

Our whole school community embraces a collective effort to optimise the social, emotional and academic outcomes of all young people promoting life long learning.

**LEARNING IS OUR FUTURE.**

## Learning and Behaviour Statement

All areas of Yarrilee SS are learning and teaching environments. We consider behaviour management to be an opportunity for valuable social learning as well as a means of maximising the success of academic education programs.

Our Student Code of Conduct outlines our system for facilitating positive behaviours, preventing problem behaviour and responding to unacceptable behaviours. Through our school plan, shared expectations for student behaviour are clear and transparent, assisting Yarrilee SS to create and maintain a positive and productive learning and teaching environment, where ALL school community members have clear and consistent expectations and understandings of their role in the educational process.

### **We believe that:-**

- Just like teaching students to read and write, we believe that behaviour also needs to be taught
- Strong relationships matter. Every child must feel they have an advocate in their school and children learn best from teachers they value and respect. They know that these teachers do care about them.
- Student behaviour is a participatory process between all members of our school community
- Students are individuals with a range of needs, abilities, interests, and life experiences
- Students can make good choices and accept responsibility for their actions and we encourage and support them through a restorative practice model
- Students need to determine appropriate behaviour having regard for the needs and rights of others
- Fair and logical consequences are directed at the behaviour and not personally at the student
- Experience and reflection = growth
- A safe, caring learning environment helps students to develop their own internal controls and the responsibility of self-discipline
- Self-discipline is not accidental but results from carefully constructed progress towards accepted and agreed goals

Our school community has identified the following school values to teach and promote our high standards of responsible behaviour:

- Caring for Others
- Caring for our Learning
- Caring for Ourselves
- Caring for the Environment

Our school values have been agreed upon and endorsed by all staff and our School Council. They are aligned with the values, principles and expected standards outlined in Education Queensland's Code of School Behaviour.

At Yarrilee State School everyone in the School Community has rights and responsibilities which are clearly articulated as follows:

| <b><u>Rights</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b><u>Responsibilities</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b><u>Students:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To learn in a friendly, encouraging, safe, supportive and positive environment</li> <li>• To learn and not have my learning interrupted by others</li> <li>• To be respected, care about myself and care for others, property and the environment</li> <li>• To be treated appropriately - with respect and consideration</li> <li>• To be heard and able to express opinions with appropriate manners and timing</li> <li>• To be safe and happy</li> <li>• To have a healthy well maintained school environment</li> <li>• To know what is acceptable behaviour and accept consequences for unacceptable behaviour</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make my school a happy, safe place where we care, and respect others and their property</li> <li>• To be organised and ready to learn to the best of my ability and not interfere with others' learning</li> <li>• To not threaten the safety of others or interfere with their property</li> <li>• To be responsible for my work and actions</li> <li>• To care about my school, keep my school in a clean and healthy manner and care about its equipment</li> <li>• To follow the school Code Of Conduct</li> <li>• To behave in a manner respectful to myself, my family and those in the school community</li> <li>• To be committed to the pursuit of a Yarrilee State School as depicted in the Creed Statement</li> <li>• To have pride in my school</li> <li>• To adhere to school dress code expectations</li> <li>• To use social media responsibly and respectfully.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b><u>Teachers:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To work in a pleasant, safe environment and to achieve ongoing job satisfaction</li> <li>• To have support from within the Education System</li> <li>• To have full support from parents and the school community in upholding the school's responsible behaviour plan</li> <li>• To be involved in collaborative decision-making</li> <li>• To be treated courteously by students, parents and other members of the school community</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote maximum learning</li> <li>• To encourage appropriate patterns of behaviour and instil the habits of mind</li> <li>• To see that the Student Code of Conduct is consistently implemented</li> <li>• To refer students to appropriate support services</li> <li>• To be positive role models</li> <li>• To provide a friendly, encouraging, safe, positive and supportive environment</li> <li>• To employ inclusive practices and differentiate curriculum offerings</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be free from verbal or physical abuse</li> <li>• To be free from intimidation and to have their property treated with respect.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be committed to the pursuit of Yarrilee State School as depicted in the Creed Statement</li> <li>• To use social media responsibly and respectfully.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p><b><u>Parents:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To receive information on school processes and school curricula</li> <li>• To be able to participate in school programs and decision making</li> <li>• To expect consistent application of the school's Responsible Behaviour Plan and be informed of student progress</li> <li>• To expect personal property will be well cared for</li> <li>• To be treated respectfully and courteously from all members of the school community</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To encourage good behaviour habits</li> <li>• To encourage children to accept the school code of conduct</li> <li>• To provide support to the school to enact policy</li> <li>• To provide information about relevant home circumstances which may affect school attitudes and learning</li> <li>• To recognise a shared responsibility for working towards achievement of our school's goals</li> <li>• To be committed to the pursuit of Yarrilee State School as depicted in the Creed Statement</li> <li>• To adhere to school dress code expectations</li> <li>• To raise issues/concerns to appropriate personnel at school</li> <li>• To respect the right of students and teachers to have uninterrupted teaching and learning time in school hours where appointments are encouraged</li> <li>• To be an active participant and communicate in a respectful manner in partnership with the school</li> <li>• To use social media responsibly and respectfully.</li> <li>• To ensure students are organised, prepared and attend school every day.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b><u>Non-Teaching Staff and Volunteers:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be treated respectfully and courteously from all members of the school community</li> <li>• To work in a safe, healthy and pleasant environment</li> <li>• To feel valued for their specialist skills and their contribution appreciated</li> <li>• To be given adequate support and information to fulfil the role when in a supervisory capacity</li> </ul>                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To treat all members of the school community with respect and consideration</li> <li>• To demonstrate a duty of care to students in line with the Code of Conduct</li> <li>• To model courteous and appropriate behaviour</li> <li>• To be partners in providing quality learning experiences for students</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be committed to the pursuit of a Yarrilee State School as depicted in the Creed Statement</li> <li>• To use social media responsibly and respectfully.</li> </ul> |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

At Yarrilee State School, there is a focus on “developing” behaviour rather than “managing” behaviour with the focus on a predominantly proactive approach rather than a reactive approach. Recognition is given however, to the fact that processes need to be in place to respond to inappropriate behaviour when it occurs.

Important aspects of Yarrilee’s proactive approach:

- Age appropriate social and emotional learning programs are embedded in classroom programs across the school (eg. Smiling Minds, Daily Check, Connect Circle Time)
- The explicit teaching of whole school behaviour expectations linked to our Behaviour Matrix
- There is recognition and reward for displaying positive behaviours including the I Care Cards, I Care Certificates and I Care Champion Awards
- A positive and inclusive culture recognises and values the contributions of everyone
- Leadership opportunities are offered to all students
- The values for Australian schooling underpin the teaching and interactions that occur in all contexts – being explicitly taught and modelled in all interactions
- Managed professional development, education or training for all members of the school community is implemented through training such as Essential Skills for Classroom Management, Behaviour Profiling and Restorative Practices.

Everyone brings their own sets of personal beliefs to a school community. These beliefs influence their decisions, behaviour and social practices. It is reasonable to expect that not everyone will share the same sets of beliefs, and this contributes to a richly diverse social environment in each school. It can also contribute to differences in expectations and force us to reflect on our own understanding of what we consider acceptable and unacceptable. We encourage any student or parent to make an appointment with the principal to discuss the model of behaviour support and discipline used at this school.

## **The network of student support**

The following personnel provide a close network of support for students and maintain a consistent approach. The network includes:

- Teaching Staff including Classroom Teachers and year level Co-teachers
- Support and Specialist Teaching Staff
- Teacher Aides
- Principal and Deputy Principals
- Parents and Carers
- Guidance Officer
- Chaplain/Student Well-Being Officer
- Community Education Counsellor (CECs)
- Adopt-a-Cop
- Volunteers
- Student Welfare Team
- Playground Mentors
- Bus Leaders
- Government, non-government and community agencies are also referred to for additional support as required.

## **Consideration of Individual Circumstances**

The consequences for breaching Yarrilee State School's Student Code of Conduct vary according to a number of factors which may include:

- Age of the child
- Outcome of restorative conference
- Previous behaviour record
- Presence of a disability or known trauma
- Developmental/family history/circumstances
- Severity of the incident
- Amount of reliable evidence
- Degree of provocation
- Intent of actions
- Honesty

The individual circumstances and actions of the student and the needs and rights of the school community members will be considered at all times when applying consequences in alignment with the Code of School Behaviour.

## Differentiated and Explicit Teaching

Yarrilee State School is a disciplined school environment that provides differentiated teaching to respond to the learning needs of all students. This involves the following:

- Incorporate consistent predictable routines in every classroom, including brain breaks
- The formal teaching of social emotional and mental wellbeing program)
- Implement a whole school approach to restorative practices that build relationships and encourage respect
- teaching expected behaviours using the whole school weekly focus (developed by our Student Code of Conduct Working Party)
- Prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing – this is seen every day in every classroom through our 'Check and Connect' circle time meetings using the language of Zones of Regulation to communicate emotions
- Welcome all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning.
- Analyse and be responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, student behaviour data and school level assessment data.
- Positive behaviour and student achievement are acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents, including
  - I Care Cards and weekly draw for displaying School Values
  - I Care Certificates awarded on weekly assemblies
  - I Care Champions awarded each semester
  - Care Central prize shop

Teachers at Yarrilee State School vary what students are taught, how they are taught and how students can demonstrate what they know as part of this differentiated approach to behaviour. These decisions about differentiation are made in response to data and day-to-day monitoring that indicates the behavioural learning needs of students. This enables our teachers to purposefully plan a variety of ways to engage students; assist them to achieve the expected learning; and to demonstrate their learning.

There are three main layers to differentiation, as illustrated in the diagram below. This model is the same used for academic and pedagogical differentiation.



## Focused Teaching

At Yarrilee, we provide focussed teaching for students who continue to demonstrate that they are not meeting the school-level behaviour expectations or responding to the universal in-class strategies. Focussed teaching provides additional support, in or out of the classroom, by using explicit and structured instruction to assist in reducing the behaviour of concern. Focussed teaching provides students with more opportunities to practise skills to achieve the intended and expected behaviour.

Support throughout the process may include:

- Targeted Games playground support
- Restorative conferences that aim to develop empathy
- Staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students
- Referral to the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Team
- 'What's the Buzz' social skilling lessons
- 'FBA Competing Pathways' assessment tool (Autism Hub)
- Parent interviews/ contact
- Teaching replacement behaviours
- School Chaplain/Student Well-Being Officer programs
- Structured playtime activities – 'Re-Boot'

## **Intensive Teaching**

At Yarrilee, we provide support for a small number of students who require intensive intervention where focussed teaching hasn't led to the desired improvement. For this small number of students, who continue to display behaviours that are deemed complex and challenging, individualised, function-based behaviour assessment and support plans, along with multi-agency collaboration may be provided to support the student.

Support at this stage may include:

- Complex Case Management
- Regular communication with parents/ carers
- Referral to Guidance Officer or outside agency support
- Functional Behaviour assessment (practical FBA or Autism Hub)
- Individual behaviour support plan
- Integrated school and community approach.
- Teacher Aide support time
- Alternative Programs & Flexible arrangements
- Modified break and play programs

## **Legislative Delegations**

### **Legislation**

In this section of the Exemplar State College Student Code of Conduct are links to legislation which influences form and content of Queensland state school discipline procedures.

- [Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)
- [Criminal Code Act 1899 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2017](#)
- [Human Rights Act 2019 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Information Privacy Act 2009 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Judicial Review Act 1991 \(Qld\)](#)

- [Right to Information Act 2009 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2011 \(Cwth\)](#)

## Delegations

Under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, state school principals are responsible for “controlling and regulating student discipline in the school”.

Principals are afforded a number of **non-delegable powers** to assist them to meet this obligation, including the authority to suspend, exclude or cancel the enrolment of a student at the school. These decision-making responsibilities cannot be delegated to other staff in the school, such as deputy principals.

The details of these responsibilities are outlined in the legislative instruments of delegation and instruments of authorisation provided below:

- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 Director-General's delegations](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 Minister's delegations](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 Director-General's authorisations](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2006 Minister's delegations](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2017 Director-General's delegations](#)

## Disciplinary Consequences

The disciplinary consequences model used at Yarrilee State School follows the same differentiated approach used in the proactive teaching and support of student behavioural expectations.

Punitive exclusions are the last resort (e.g. timeout/in, detention, suspension and exclusion). As a school we aspire to their extinction, by making their use unnecessary rather than refusing to use them.

The majority of students will be confident and capable of meeting established expectations that are clear, explicitly taught and practised. In-class corrective feedback and rule reminders may be used by teachers to respond to low-level or minor problem behaviours.

Some students will need additional support, time and opportunities to practise expected behaviours. Approximately 15% of the student population may experience difficulty with meeting the stated expectations, and even with focussed teaching, in-class corrective feedback, sanctions and rule reminders continue to display low-level problem behaviour.

For a small number of students, approximately 2-5%, a high level of differentiated support or intensive teaching is required to enable them to meet the behavioural expectations. This may be needed throughout the school year on a continuous basis. The determination of the need will be made by the principal in consultation with staff and other relevant stakeholders. On occasion the behaviour of a student may be so serious, such as causing harm to other students or to staff, that the principal may determine that an out of school suspension or exclusion is necessary as a consequence for the student's behaviour. Usually this course of action is only taken when the behaviour is either so serious as to warrant immediate removal of the student for the safety of others, and no other alternative discipline strategy is considered sufficient to deal with the problem behaviour.

The differentiated responses to problem behaviour can be organised into three tiers, with increasing intensity of support and consequences to address behaviour that endangers others or causes major, ongoing interference with class or school operations.

### Differentiated

Class teacher provides in-class or in-school disciplinary responses to low-level or minor problem behaviour. This may include:

- Pre-correction (e.g. "Remember, walk quietly to your seat")
- Non-verbal and visual cues (e.g. posters, hand gestures)
- Whole class practising of routines
- Ratio of 5 positive to 1 negative commentary or feedback to class
- Corrective feedback (e.g. "Hand up when you want to ask a question")
- Rule reminders (e.g. "When the bell goes, stay seated until I dismiss you")
- Explicit behavioural instructions (e.g. "Pick up your pencil")
- Proximity control
- Tactical ignoring of inappropriate behaviour (not student)
- Revised seating plan and relocation of student/s
- Individual positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour
- Classwide incentives

- Reminders of incentives or class goals
- Redirection
- Low voice and tone for individual instructions
- Give 30 second 'take-up' time for student/s to process instruction/s
- Reduce verbal language
- Break down tasks into smaller chunks
- Provide positive choice of task order (e.g. "Which one do you want to start with?")
- Prompt student to take a break or time away in class
- Model appropriate language, problem solving and verbalise thinking process (e.g. "I'm not sure what is the next step, who can help me?")
- Provide demonstration of expected behaviour
- Peer consequence (e.g. corrective feedback to influential peer demonstrating same problem behaviour)
- Private discussion with student about expected behaviour
- Reprimand for inappropriate behaviour
- Warning of more serious consequences (e.g. removal from classroom)
- Other logical consequences such as 'Time In' to complete missed work or as a response to playground misbehaviour.

## **Focussed**

Class teacher is supported by other school-based staff to address in-class problem behaviour. This may include:

- Functional Behaviour Assessment/Competing Behaviour Pathways (Autism Hub)
- Individual student behaviour support strategies (e.g. Student behaviour plan)
- Targeted skills teaching in small group
- Logical Consequences
- Time in during lunch breaks
- Conferencing and guidance support
- Self-monitoring plan (Tracker)
- Check in strategy
- Teacher coaching and debriefing
- Referral to Student Welfare Meeting for team based problem solving
- Stakeholder meeting with parents and external agencies

## **Intensive**

School leadership team work in consultation with Student Support Network to address persistent or ongoing serious problem behaviour. This may include:

- Functional Behaviour Assessment based individual support plan
- Complex case management and review
- Stakeholder meeting with parents and external agencies including regional specialists
- Temporary removal of student property (e.g. mobile phone)
- Short term suspension (up to 10 school days)
- Long term suspension (up to 20 school days)
- Charge related suspension (student has been charged with a serious criminal offence is suspended from school until the charge has been dealt with by the relevant justice authorities)
- Suspension pending exclusion (student is suspended from school pending a decision by the Director-General or delegate (principal) about their exclusion from school)

- Exclusion (student is excluded from a particular state school site, a group of state schools or all state schools in Queensland for a defined period of time or permanently)
- Cancellation of enrolment for students older than compulsory school age who refuse to participate in the educational program provided at the school.

## **School Disciplinary Absences**

A School Disciplinary Absence (SDA) is an enforced period of absence from attending a Queensland state school, applied by the Principal as a consequence to address poor student behaviour. There are four types of SDA:

- Short suspension (1 to 10 school days)
- Long suspension (11 to 20 school days)
- Charge-related suspension
- Exclusion (period of not more than one year or permanently).

At Yarrilee State School, the use of any SDA is considered a very serious decision. It is typically only used by the Principal when other options have been exhausted or the student's behaviour is so dangerous that continued attendance at the school is considered a risk to the safety or wellbeing of the school community.

Parents and students may appeal a long suspension, charge-related suspension or exclusion decision. A review will be conducted by the Director-General or their delegate, and a decision made within 40 school days to confirm, amend/vary or set aside the original SDA decision by the Principal.

The appeal process is a thorough review of all documentation associated with the SDA decision and provides an opportunity for both the school and the family to present their case in the matter. Time is afforded for collection, dissemination and response to the materials by both the school and the family. It is important that the purpose of the appeal is understood so that expectations are clear, and appropriate supports are in place to ensure students can continue to access their education while completing their SDA.

### **Re-entry following suspension**

Students who are suspended from Yarrilee State School may be invited to attend a re-entry meeting on the day of their scheduled return to school. The main purpose of this meeting is to welcome the student, with their parent/s, back to the school. It is **not a time** to review the student's behaviour or the decision to suspend, the student has already received a punishment through their disciplinary absence from school. The aim of the re-entry meeting is for school staff to set the student up for future success and strengthen home-school communication.

It is not mandatory for the student or their parents to attend a re-entry meeting. It may be offered as a support for the student to assist in their successful re-engagement in school following suspension.

### **Arrangements**

The invitation to attend the re-entry meeting will be communicated via telephone and/or in writing, usually via email. Re-entry meetings are typically short, and kept small with only the Principal or their delegate attending with the student and their parent/s.

A record of the meeting is saved in OneSchool, under the Contact tab, including any notes or discussions occurring during the meeting.

### **Structure**

The structure of the re-entry meeting should follow a set agenda, shared in advance with the student and their family. If additional items are raised for discussion, a separate arrangement should be made to meet with the parent/s at a later date and time. This meeting should be narrowly focussed on making the student and their family feel welcome back into the school community.

Possible agenda:

- Welcome back to school
- Check in on student wellbeing
- Discuss any recent changes to school routine or staffing
- Offer information about supports available (e.g. guidance officer)
- Set a date for follow-up
- Thank student and parent/s for attending
- Walk with student to classroom

### **Reasonable adjustments**

In planning the re-entry meeting, school staff will consider reasonable adjustments needed to support the attendance and engagement of the student. This includes selecting an appropriate and accessible meeting space, organising translation or interpretation services or supports (e.g. AUSLAN), provision of written and/or pictorial information and other relevant accommodations. The inclusion of support staff, such as guidance officers or Community Education Counsellors, may also offer important advice to ensure a successful outcome to the re-entry meeting.

## School Policies

Yarrilee State School has tailored school discipline policies designed to ensure students, staff and visitors work cooperatively to create and maintain a supportive and safe learning environment. Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the responsibilities for students, staff and visitors outlined in the following policies:

- Temporary removal of student property
- Use of mobile phones and other devices by students
- Preventing and responding to bullying
- Appropriate use of social media

### **Temporary removal of student property**

The removal of any property in a student's possession may be necessary to promote the caring, safe and supportive learning environment of the school, to maintain and foster mutual respect between all state school staff and students. The **Temporary removal of student property by school staff procedure** outlines the processes, conditions and responsibilities for state school principals and school staff when temporarily removing student property.

In determining what constitutes a reasonable time to retain student property, the principal or state school staff will consider:

- the condition, nature or value of the property
- the circumstances in which the property was removed
- the safety of the student from whom the property was removed, other students or staff members
- good management, administration and control of the school.

The Principal or state school staff determine when the temporarily removed student property can be returned, unless the property has been handed to the Queensland Police Service.

The following items are explicitly prohibited at Yarrilee State School and will be removed if found in a student's possession:

- illegal items or weapons (e.g. guns, knives\*, throwing stars, brass knuckles, chains)
- imitation guns or weapons
- potentially dangerous items (e.g. blades, rope)
- drugs\*\* (including tobacco)
- alcohol
- aerosol deodorants or cans (including spray paint)
- explosives (e.g. fireworks, flares, sparklers)
- flammable solids or liquids (e.g. fire starters, mothballs, lighters)
- poisons (e.g. weed killer, insecticides)
- inappropriate or offensive material (e.g. racist literature, pornography, extremist propaganda).

\* No knives of any type are allowed at school, including flick knives, ballistic knives, sheath knives, push daggers, trench knives, butterfly knives, star knives, butter knives, fruit knives or craft knives, or any item that can be used as a weapon, for example a chisel. Knives needed for school activities will be provided by the school, and the use of them will be supervised by school staff. In circumstances where students are required to have their own knives or sharp tools for particular subjects or vocational courses, the school will provide information about the procedures for carrying and storing these items at school.

\*\* The administration of medications to students by school staff is only considered when a prescribing health practitioner has determined that it is necessary or when there is no other alternative in relation to the treatment of a specific health need. Schools require medical authorisation to administer any medication to students (**including over-the-counter medications such as paracetamol or alternative medicines**).

## Responsibilities

**State school staff** at Yarrilee State School:

- do not require the student's consent to search school property such as lockers, desks or laptops that are supplied to the student through the school;
- may seize a student's bag where there is suspicion that the student has a dangerous item (for example, a knife) in their school bag, prior to seeking consent to search from a parent or calling the police;
- consent from the student or parent is required to examine or otherwise deal with the temporarily removed student property. For example, staff who temporarily remove a mobile phone from a student are not authorised to unlock the phone or to read, copy or delete messages stored on the phone;

- there may, however, be emergency circumstances where it is necessary to search a student's property without the student's consent or the consent of the student's parents (e.g. to access an EpiPen for an anaphylactic emergency);
- consent from the student or parent is required to search the person of a student (e.g. pockets or shoes). If consent is not provided and a search is considered necessary, the police and the student's parents should be called to make such a determination.

#### **Parents of students at Yarrilee State School**

- ensure your children do not bring property onto schools grounds or other settings used by the school (e.g. camp, sporting venues) that:
  - is prohibited according to the Yarrilee State School Student Code of Conduct
  - is illegal
  - puts the safety or wellbeing of others at risk
  - does not preserve a caring, safe, supportive or productive learning environment
  - does not maintain and foster mutual respect;
- collect temporarily removed student property as soon as possible after they have been notified by the Principal or state school staff that the property is available for collection.

#### **Students of Yarrilee State School**

- do not bring property onto school grounds or other settings used by the school (e.g. camp, sporting venues) that:
  - is prohibited according to the Exemplar State College Code of Conduct
  - is illegal
  - puts the safety or wellbeing of others at risk
  - does not preserve a caring, safe, supportive or productive learning environment
  - does not maintain and foster mutual respect;
- collect their property as soon as possible when advised by the Principal or state school staff it is available for collection.

## **Use of mobile phones and other devices by students**

### **Personal Technology Device Etiquette**

Bringing personal technology devices to school is not encouraged by the school because of the potential for theft and general distraction and/or disruption associated with them. However, if they are brought to school, they must be signed into the office on arrival at school and collected at the end of the school day.

### **Confiscation**

Permitted personal technology devices used contrary to this policy on school premises will be confiscated by school staff. They will be made available for collection from the school office at the end of the school day unless required to be kept for purposes of disciplinary investigation, when it will only be returned in the presence of a parent.

Devices potentially containing evidence of criminal offences may be reported to the police. In such cases police may take possession of such devices for investigation purposes and students and parents will be advised to contact Queensland Police Service (QPS) directly.

## **Recording voice and Images**

Every member of the school community should feel confident about participating fully and frankly in all aspects of school life without concern that their personal privacy is being invaded by them being recorded without their knowledge or consent.

We uphold the value of trust and the right to privacy at Yarrilee SS. Students using personal technology devices to record inappropriate behaviours or incidents (such as vandalism, fighting, bullying, staged fighting or pranks etc) for the purpose of dissemination among the student body or outside the school, by any means (including distribution by phone or internet posting) builds a culture of distrust and disharmony.

Students must not record images anywhere that recording would not reasonably be considered appropriate (e.g. in change rooms, toilets or any other place where a reasonable person would expect to be afforded privacy). Recording of events in class is not permitted unless express consent is provided by the class teacher.

A student at school who uses a personal technology device to record private conversations, ordinary school activities (apart from social functions like graduation ceremonies) or violent, illegal or embarrassing matter capable of bringing the school into public disrepute is considered to be in breach of this policy.

Even where consent is obtained for such recording, the school will not tolerate images or sound captured by personal technology devices on the school premises or elsewhere being disseminated to others, if it is done for the purpose of causing embarrassment to individuals or the school, for the purpose of bullying or harassment, including racial and sexual harassment, or where without such intent a reasonable person would conclude that such outcomes may have or will occur.

Students involved in:

- recording; and/or
- disseminating material (through text messaging, display, internet uploading etc); and/or,
- knowingly being a subject of a recording

Breach of this policy may be subject to discipline.

Students should note that the recording or dissemination of images that are considered indecent (such as nudity or sexual acts involving children), is against the law and if detected by the school will result in a referral to QPS.

## **Text communication**

The sending of text messages or other messages via social media sites that contain obscene language and/or threats of violence may amount to bullying and or harassment or even stalking, and will subject the sender to discipline and possible referral to QPS. Students receiving such text messages at school, should ensure they keep the message as evidence and bring the matter to the attention of the school office.

## **Recording Private Conversations and the Invasion of Privacy Act 1971**

It is important that all members of the school community understand that under the Invasion of Privacy Act 1971, 'a person is guilty of an offence against this Act if the person uses a listening device to overhear, record, monitor or listen to a private conversation'. It is also an offence under the Act for a person who has overheard, recorded, monitored or listened to a conversation to which s/he is not a party to publish or communicate the substance or meaning of the conversation to others.

Students need to understand that some conversations are private and therefore to overhear, record, monitor or listen to such private conversations may be in breach of this Act, unless consent to the recording is appropriately obtained.

### **Special Circumstances Arrangement**

Students who require the use of a personal technology device in circumstances that would contravene this policy (for example to assist with a medical condition or other disability or for a special project) should negotiate a special circumstances arrangement with the Deputy Principal or Principal.

\* Personal Technology Devices includes, but is not limited to, games devices (such as Portable gaming devices, laptop computers, PDAs, cameras and/or voice recording devices (whether or not integrated with a mobile phone or MP3 player), mobile telephones, iPods®, iPads, Smartphones and devices of a similar nature.

At all times students, while using ICT facilities and devices supplied by the school, will be required to act in line with the requirements of the Exemplar State College Student Code of Conduct. In addition students and their parents should:

- understand the responsibility and behaviour requirements (as outlined by the school) that come with accessing the department's ICT network facilities
- ensure they have the skills to report and discontinue access to harmful information if presented via the internet or email
- be aware that:
  - access to ICT facilities and devices provides valuable learning experiences for students and supports the school's teaching and learning programs
  - the school is not responsible for safeguarding information stored by students on departmentally-owned student computers or mobile devices
  - schools may remotely access departmentally-owned student computers or mobile devices for management purposes
  - students who use a school's ICT facilities and devices in a manner that is not appropriate may be subject to disciplinary action by the school, which could include restricting network access
  - despite internal departmental controls to manage content on the internet, illegal, dangerous or offensive information may be accessed or accidentally displayed
  - teachers will always exercise their duty of care, but avoiding or reducing access to harmful information also requires responsible use by the student.

## Preventing and responding to bullying

### 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. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:

- 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. At Yarrilee State School our staff will work to quickly respond to any matters raised of this nature in collaboration with students and parents.

The following flowchart explains the actions Yarrilee State School teachers will take when they receive a report about student bullying, including bullying which may have occurred online or outside of the school setting. Please note that the indicative timeframes will vary depending on the professional judgment of teachers who receive the bullying complaint and their assessment of immediate risk to student/s.

## Yarrilee State School - Bullying response flowchart for teachers

Please note these timelines may be adjusted depending on the unique circumstances and risk associated with each situation. This is at the professional judgment of the staff involved. Timeframes should be clearly discussed and agreed with student and family.

### Key contacts for students and parents to report bullying:

Prep to Year 6 – Class teacher, Head of Special Education Services, Deputy Principals

#### First hour Listen

- Provide a safe, quiet space to talk
- Reassure the student that you will listen to them
- Let them share their experience and feelings without interruption
- If you hold 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

#### Day one Document

- Ask the student for examples they have of the alleged bullying (e.g. hand written 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
- Notify parent/s that the issue of concern is being investigated

#### Day two Collect

- Gather additional information from other students, staff or family
- Review any previous reports or records for students involved
- Make sure you can answer who, what, where, when and how
- Clarify information with student and check on their wellbeing

#### Day three Discuss

- 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
- Provide the student and parent with information about student support network
- Agree to a plan of action and timeline for the student, parent and yourself

#### Day four Implement

- Document the plan of action in OneSchool
- Complete all actions agreed with student and parent within agreed timeframes
- Monitor student and check in regularly on their wellbeing
- Seek assistance from student support network if needed

#### Day five Review

- Meet with the student to review situation
- Discuss what has changed, improved or worsened
- Explore other options for strengthening student wellbeing or safety
- Report back to parent
- Record outcomes in OneSchool

#### 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
- Refer matter to specialist staff within 48 hours if problems escalate
- Look for opportunities to improve school wellbeing for all students

# Yarrilee State School - Cyberbullying response flowchart for school staff

## How to manage online incidents that impact your school

### Student protection

If at any point the principal forms a reasonable suspicion that a student has been harmed or is at risk of harm, they have a responsibility to respond in accordance with the [Student protection procedure](#).

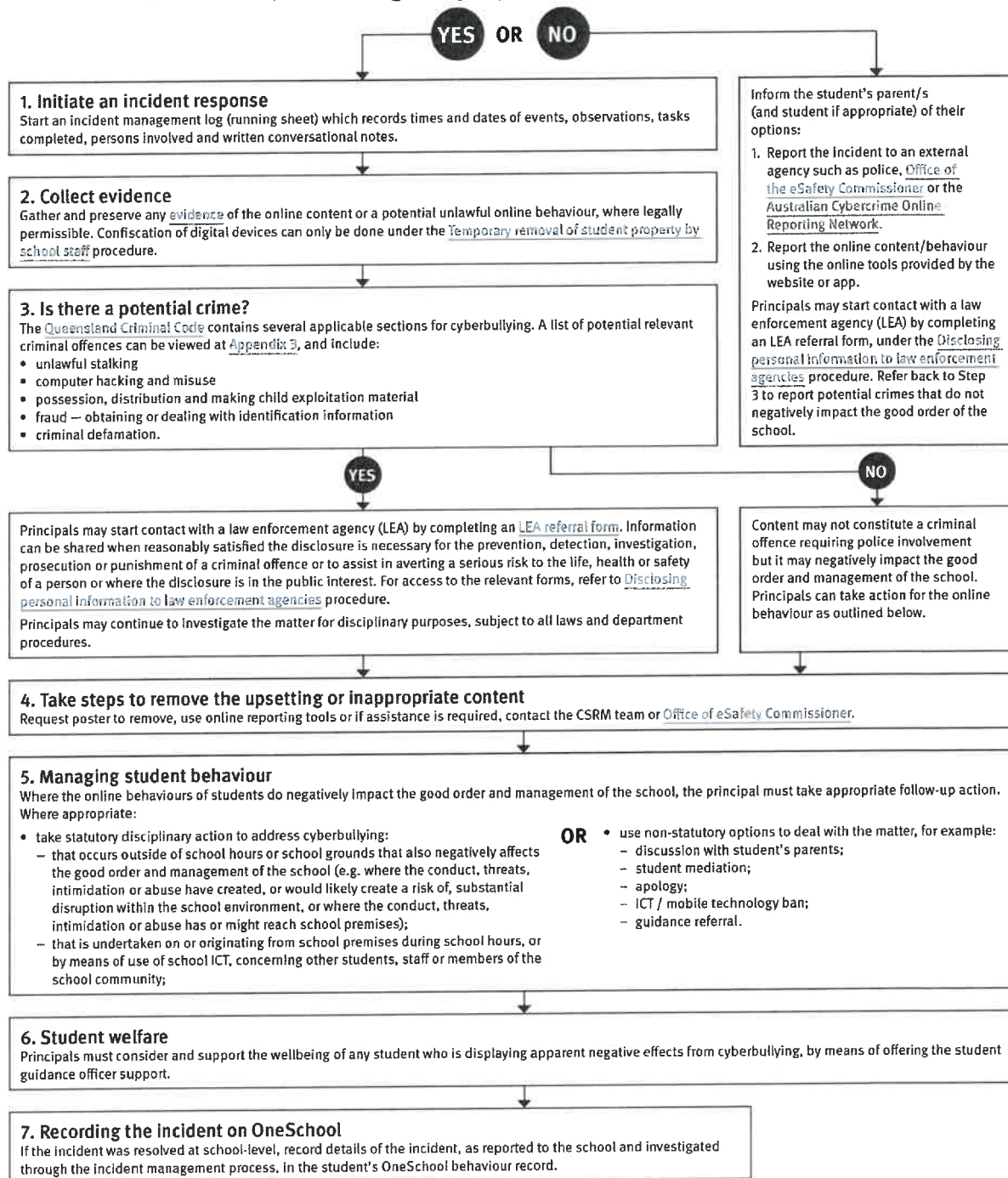
### Explicit images

If the investigation involves naked or explicit images of children, staff should not save, copy, forward or otherwise deal with the content, as per the [Temporary removal of student property by school staff procedure](#). This includes onto OneSchool records. Refer to the investigative process outlined in 'Responding to incidents involving naked or explicit images of children' from the [Online incident management guidelines](#).

### Report

Refer to the [Online incident management guidelines](#) for more details, or if assistance is required, contact the Cybersecurity and Reputation Management (CSRM) team on 3034 5035 or [Cybersecurity.ReputationManagement@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:Cybersecurity.ReputationManagement@qed.qld.gov.au).

Does the online behaviour/incident negatively impact the good order and management of the school?



## 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 regards 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.

The team provides a [guide for parents](#) with important information about cybersafety and cyberbullying, and suggestions about what you can do if your child is a target or responsible for inappropriate online behaviour.

The team has also developed a [Cyberbullying and reputation management](#) (Department employees only) resource to assist principals in incident management.

For more information about cybersafety sessions at your school, or for assistance with issues relating to online behaviour, contact the [team](#) (Department employees only).

## Student Intervention and Support Services

Yarrilee State School 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 internal support staff, as identified in the Student Support Network section earlier in this document. Students are, however, also encouraged to approach any staff member with whom they feel comfortable sharing their concerns, regardless of their role in the school. All staff at Yarrilee State School are familiar with the response expectations to reports of bullying, and will act quickly to ensure students' concerns are addressed. 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 includes counselling, social development programs, referral to mental health services or involvement in a restorative justice strategy. School disciplinary measures may also be used to reinforce the seriousness with which the community takes all incidents of bullying. These measures may include internal school suspension, withdrawal from social events or celebrations or more severe punishments such as suspension or exclusion from school.

## Appropriate use of social media

The internet, mobile phones and social media provide wonderful opportunities for students to network and socialise online. While these technologies provide positive platforms for sharing ideas, they also have the potential to cause pain and suffering to individuals, groups or even whole communities.

It's important to remember that sometimes negative comments posted about the school community have a greater impact than expected. This guide offers some information about how to use social media in relation to comments or posts about the school community. Reputations of students, teachers, schools, principals and even parents can be permanently

damaged — and in some cases, serious instances of inappropriate online behaviour are dealt with by police and the court system.

Being aware of a few simple strategies can help keep the use of social media positive and constructive:

- Before you post something online, ask yourself if the community or individual really need to know. Is it relevant, positive and helpful?
- Remember that what you post online is a direct reflection of who you are. People will potentially form lasting opinions of you based on what you post online.
- Be a good role model. If things get heated online consider logging out and taking a few moments to relax and think. Hasty, emotive responses could inflame situations unnecessarily.
- Be mindful when commenting, try to keep general and avoid posting anything that could identify individuals.
- A few years ago parents may have discussed concerns or issues with their friends at the school gate. Today with the use of social media, online discussions between you and your close friends can very quickly be shared with a much wider audience, potentially far larger than intended.
- Taking a few moments to think about the content you are about to post could save upset, embarrassment, and possible legal action.
- As a parent you have a role in supervising and regulating your child's online activities at home and its impact on the reputation and privacy of others. Parents are their child's first teachers — so they will learn online behaviours from you.

### **Is it appropriate to comment or post about schools, staff or students?**

Parental and community feedback is important for schools and the department. If you have a compliment, complaint or enquiry about an issue at school, the best approach is to speak directly to the school about the matter, rather than discussing it in a public forum.

While many schools use social media to update parents of school notices, the department prefers that parents contact schools directly with a compliment, complaint or enquiry due to privacy considerations. Imagine if your doctor, accountant or banking institution tried to contact you to discuss important matters via Facebook.

If you have raised an issue with a school or know that another person has, consider refraining from discussing those details on social media, particularly the names of anyone involved.

Keep comments calm and polite, just as you would over the telephone or by email. If you encounter negative or derogatory content online which involves the school, hinders a child's learning and/or affects the school community at large, contact the school principal.

### **Possible civil or criminal ramifications of online commentary**

A serious instance of inappropriate online behaviour may constitute a criminal offence and become a police matter. For example, online content may substantiate the offence of 'using a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence' (Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth) s. 474.17). School staff may contact their union or obtain personal legal advice if they feel that online content seriously impacts their reputation. Defamatory online content may give rise to litigation under the Defamation Act 2005 (Qld).

### **What about other people's privacy?**

If you upload photos of your children, be mindful of who might be in the background. You might be happy to share your child's successes with your friends and family via social media, but some parents are not. If you are tagging or naming students, consider that other parents may not want their child's name attached to images online.

## What if I encounter problem content?

Taking the following steps may help resolve the issue in a constructive way:

- refrain from responding
- take a screen capture or print a copy of the concerning online content
- if you consider problem content to be explicit, pornographic or exploitative of minors, you should keep a record of the URL of the page containing that content but NOT print or share it. The URL can be provided to the school principal, or police, as needed for escalation of serious concerns
- block the offending user
- report the content to the social media provider.

## Restrictive Practices

School staff at Yarrilee State School need to respond to student behaviour that presents a risk of physical harm to the student themselves or others. It is anticipated that most instances of risky behaviour can be de-escalated and resolved quickly. On some rarer occasions, a student's behaviour may continue to escalate and staff need to engage immediately with positive and proactive strategies aimed at supporting the student to manage their emotional arousal and behaviour.

In some very rare situations, where there is immediate risk of physical harm to the student or other people, and when all other alternative strategies have failed to reduce the risk, it may be necessary for staff to use restrictive practices.

The use of restrictive practices will always be as a last resort, when there is no other available option for reducing immediate risk to the student, staff or other people. Restrictive practices are not used for punishment or as a disciplinary measure.

The department's **Restrictive practices procedure** is written with consideration for the protection of everyone's human rights, health, safety and welfare. There are six fundamental principles:

1. Regard to the human rights of those students
2. Safeguards students, staff and others from harm
3. Ensures transparency and accountability
4. Places importance on communication and consultation with parents and carers
5. Maximises the opportunity for positive outcomes, and
6. Aims to reduce or eliminate the use of restrictive practices.

Very rarely restrictive practices will be planned and staff will employ, when necessary, pre-arranged strategies and methods (of physical restraint/ mechanical restraint/ clinical holding) which are based upon behaviour risk assessment or clinical health need and are recorded in advance. The use of planned strategies will only be where there is foreseeable immediate risk consistent with the **Restrictive practices procedure**.

Seclusion will not be used as a planned response and will only be used in serious circumstances for managing an unforeseeable situation in an emergency. It will be used for the shortest time possible and in a safe area that presents no additional foreseeable risk to the student. In such emergencies, a staff member will observe the student at all times and seclusion will cease as soon as possible.

Following the use of any restrictive practice, a focused review will help staff to understand how they responded to the risk in any incident that involved the use of a restrictive practice. Staff will consider whether there are other options for managing a similar situation in the future. This strategy works well for reducing the use of restrictive practices.

All incidents of restrictive practices will be recorded and reported in line with departmental procedures.

## Critical Incidents

It is important that all school staff have a consistent understanding of how to respond in emergencies involving student behaviour that seriously endangers the student or others. This consistency ensures that appropriate actions are taken to ensure that both students and staff are kept safe.

A critical incident is defined as an occurrence that is sudden, urgent, and usually unexpected, or an occasion requiring immediate action (e.g. in the community, on the road). The aim in these situations is to bring the behaviour of the student under rapid and safe control. It is not a time to try and to punish or discipline the student; it is a crisis management period only.

Staff should follow the documented plan for any student involved in regular critical incidents, which should be saved and available for staff to review in OneSchool.

For unexpected critical incidents, staff should use basic defusing techniques:

1. Avoid escalating the problem behaviour: Avoid shouting, cornering the student, moving into the student's space, touching or grabbing the student, sudden responses, sarcasm, becoming defensive, communicating anger and frustration through body language.
2. Maintain calmness, respect and detachment: Model the behaviour you want students to adopt, stay calm and controlled, use a serious measured tone, choose your language carefully, avoid humiliating the student, be matter of fact and avoid responding emotionally.
3. Approach the student in a non-threatening manner: Move slowly and deliberately toward the problem situation, speak privately to the student/s where possible, speak calmly and respectfully, minimise body language, keep a reasonable distance, establish eye level position, be brief, stay with the agenda, acknowledge cooperation, withdraw if the situation escalates.
4. Follow through: If the student starts displaying the appropriate behaviour briefly acknowledge their choice and re-direct other students' attention towards their usual work/activity. If the student continues with the problem behaviour, then remind them of the expected school behaviour and identify consequences of continued unacceptable behaviour.
5. Debrief: At an appropriate time when there is low risk of re-escalation, help the student to identify the sequence of events that led to the unacceptable behaviour, pinpoint decision moments during the sequence of events, evaluate decisions made, and identify acceptable decision options for future situations.

## Related Procedures and Guidelines

These are related procedures or guidelines which school staff use to inform decisions and actions around matters associated with students wellbeing, behaviour and learning.

- Cancellation of enrolment
- Complex case management
- Customer complaints management policy and procedure
- Disclosing personal information to law enforcement agencies
- Enrolment in state primary, secondary and special schools
- Hostile people on school premises, wilful disturbance and trespass
- Inclusive education
- Police and Child Safety Officer interviews and searches with students
- Restrictive practices
- Refusal to enrol – Risk to safety or wellbeing
- Student discipline
- Student dress code
- Student protection
- Supporting students' mental health and wellbeing
- Temporary removal of student property by school staff
- Use of ICT systems
- Using mobile devices

## Resources

- [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#)
- [Behaviour Foundations professional development package](#) (school employees only)
- [Bullying. No Way!](#)
- [eheadspace](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [Office of the eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Parent and community engagement framework](#)
- [Parentline](#)
- [Queensland Department of Education School Discipline](#)
- [Raising Children Network](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)

## Conclusion

Yarrilee State School staff are committed to ensuring every student is supported to feel safe, welcome and valued in our school. There may, however, be occasions where parents need to raise a concern or make a complaint about an issue you feel is adversely affecting their child's education.

All Queensland state schools are committed to ensuring that all complaints - whether they relate to a school staff member or a school's operations - are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. As a parent or carer, you can express dissatisfaction with the service or action of the Department of Education or its staff, including decisions made or actions taken in a school and/or by the local regional office.

As a complainant, it is your responsibility to:

- give us a clear idea of the issue or concern and your desired solution
- provide all the relevant information when making the complaint
- understand that addressing a complaint can take time
- cooperate respectfully and understand that unreasonable, abusive, or disrespectful conduct will not be tolerated
- let us know if something changes, including if help is no longer needed.

**The Department of Education may not proceed with your complaint if your conduct is unreasonable.**

In most instances, staff members are told of complaints made about them and offered the right of reply. A complainant also has the right to have a support person throughout the process.

The following three-step approach assists parents and school staff in reaching an outcome that is in the best interests of the student:

**1. Early resolution:** discuss your complaint with the school

The best place to raise any concerns is at the point where the problem or issue arose. You can make an appointment at the school to discuss your complaint with your child's teacher or the principal. You are also welcome to lodge your complaint in writing or over the phone. You can also make a complaint through [QGov](#).

Complaints may be lodged by telephone, writing or in electronic format. Email addresses can be accessed through the [schools directory](#).

**2. Internal review:** [contact the local Regional Office](#)

If, after taking the early resolution step, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint or how the complaint was handled, you can ask the local [regional office](#) to conduct a review. You need to submit a [Request for internal review form](#) within 28 days of receiving the complaint outcome.

**3. External review:** contact a review authority

if you are dissatisfied after the internal review, you may wish to contact a review authority, such as the Queensland Ombudsman, and request an independent, external review. More information about external review options is available at [www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au).

Some matters need to be handled in a different way to school matters and will be referred to other areas in the department. These include:

- issues about harm, or risk of harm, to a student attending a state school, which must be managed in accordance with the [Student protection procedure](#).
- complaints about corrupt conduct, public interest disclosures; or certain decisions made under legislation, which will be dealt with as outlined in the [Excluded complaints factsheet](#).