



Protecting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students from Harm

Circumstances sometimes combine to make it more difficult for families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds to manage, or for students from CALD backgrounds to seek assistance when harmed.

These circumstances can include:

- Language and communication barriers that prevent students or families disclosing concerns. In times of crisis or distress a person's ability to communicate in a second language decreases.
- Social isolation: Not having family or friends to go to for support.
- Cultural or social practices that are acceptable at home but unacceptable or illegal in Australia.
- Economic and educational disadvantage
- Discrimination.
- Limited access to the broader community.

Whenever an Education Queensland employee suspects that a student from a

CALD background has been harmed or is at risk of harm, they must report their concerns to the school principal – regardless of whether these concerns relate to culturally acceptable practices.

What schools can do

Schools with high populations of students from CALD backgrounds may consider implementing a whole of school abuse prevention education program that is culturally inclusive.

When detecting harm or responding to a student from a CALD background who may have been harmed, Education Queensland personnel should:

- Be respectful of the student's cultural values and background when asking questions or seeking information. For example, if a female student who wears a hijab tells you that her father hit her on the ear and it still hurts, do not remove the hijab without asking permission.

For further information see

www.education.qld.gov.au/studentervices



- Assist communication for students with limited English by arranging a professional interpreter. Call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 to arrange an interpreter and quote the department's client code.

- Avoid asking closed or leading questions.

It is NOT appropriate for you to ask another student from the same language group to interpret. If the student brings a friend this may be appropriate, but you must be aware of the risks associated with involving another student in the disclosure of a potentially sensitive or criminal matter that demands confidentiality and could lead to a prosecution.

Principals may also wish to make contact with their local Queensland Police station and request assistance from their cross-cultural liaison officer.

Follow up

When developing strategies to support students from CALD backgrounds who have been harmed or placed at risk of harm, Education Queensland employees should consider involving a culturally and linguistically appropriate support network or counsellor. For example, it may not be culturally appropriate for a female student to receive support from a male guidance officer.

For further information see

www.education.qld.gov.au/student-services