

Student Protection Fact Sheet



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The Department of Education, Training and Employment is committed to providing safe, supportive and disciplined learning environments, to preventing reasonably foreseeable harm to students and to responding when an employee reasonably suspects harm or risk of harm to students.

Student Protection involves:

- Working to make all state educational institutions safe, supportive and disciplined places for all students
- Taking action to prevent students being harmed at a state educational institution, and
- Reporting any suspicion you have that a student has been harmed or is likely to be harmed

All students have a right to be protected from harm.

Harm is:

Any detrimental effect of a **significant nature** on a student's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. This could also include harm to an unborn child. Harm can be caused by physical abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, neglect or sexual abuse or exploitation.

Any behaviour that harms a student is not acceptable. The Department will not condone behaviours (e.g. a student witnessing domestic or family violence) or cultural customs (e.g. caning children or female genital mutilation) that fall into the definition of harm. In other words, claiming culture or custom is **no excuse** for harming a student.

Everyone who works in a state educational institution must look after the best interests of students.

Managing your own behaviour is the first step in student protection.

- **NEVER** harm a student, either physically, psychologically or emotionally
- **NEVER** make fun of, put down or unlawfully discriminate against a student
- **NEVER** touch a student in a sexual way, or engage in any other inappropriate sexual activity (for example: sending a suggestive text message, showing a student inappropriate images, engaging in overfamiliar and unprofessional conduct with a student without sound educational reason)
- **NEVER** do or say anything that would make people think you are doing or intending to do something sexual to a student.

You must report to the Principal/Manager/Supervisor, any harm to a student that is caused by:

- someone working at the educational institution
- another student
- someone from the student's family, a friend or a stranger
- the student self-harming

If you see harm occurring at a state educational institution:

1. **Help** the student who has been harmed, for example:
 - by telling other students to move away
 - get another employee involved as soon as possible
2. **Tell the Principal/Manager/Supervisor** straight away about what you have seen
3. **Write down** what you saw and give the information to the Principal/Manager/Supervisor.

If you suspect a student has been harmed at a state educational institution or outside of a state educational institution:

1. **Tell the Principal/Manager/Supervisor** straight away about what you suspect
2. **Write down** what you saw and give the information to the Principal/Manager/Supervisor.

If a student tells you that they have been harmed at a state educational institution or outside of a state educational institution:

1. **Listen** carefully
2. **Reassure** the student that they have done the right thing by telling you
3. **Tell the student** that you must advise the Principal/Manager/Supervisor about what they have told you
4. **Tell the Principal/Manager/Supervisor** straight away about what the student told you
5. **Write down** what the student told you and give the information to the Principal/Manager.

If you suspect that the Principal/Manager is responsible for causing harm to a student, report this to the Regional Director at the local regional office and the Ethical Standards Unit on (07) 3234 1514 or email at: ethicalstandards@dete.qld.gov.au.

The main thing to remember is:

If you suspect that a student might have been harmed or might be at risk of harm,

Report it!