

Child Safe Environment Report

June 2021



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Introduction

The Child Safe Environment Map outlines how the department maintains child safe environments by meeting each of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles). This report describes the measures in place and the actions undertaken that have strengthened the department's commitment and approach to child safety.

The Department of Education is a **child safe organisation** that prioritises child and student protection as an area of lowest appetite for risk.

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

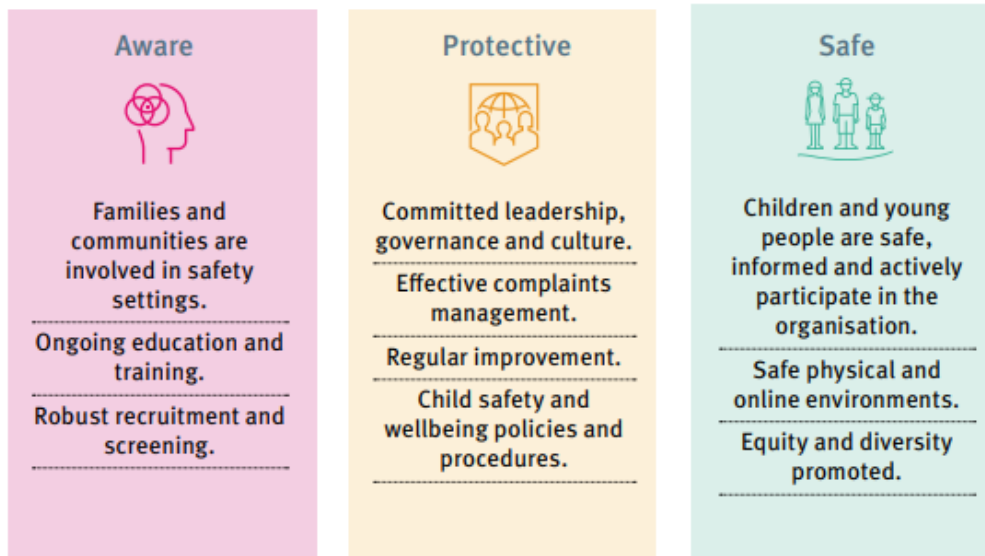
The [National Principles](#) provide a nationally consistent approach to cultivating organisational cultures and practices that foster child safety and wellbeing, and were endorsed by the Council of the Australian Governments (COAG) in February 2019. They are based on the Child Safe Standards that were established by the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* (Royal Commission).

The National Principles are underpinned by the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), to ensure a child-rights approach to build capacity and to deliver child safety and wellbeing in organisations, families and communities.

The Department is committed to providing child safe environments through implementation of the National Principles, guided by the *Aware. Protective. Safe.* strategy and roadmap.

Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy

In 2020, the department developed and released the [Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy](#) to strengthen its approach to keeping all children and young people safe from sexual abuse in Queensland schools and early childhood services.



The Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy reinforced the department's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. It also identifies how it is building on existing child safe environments by implementing the National Principles. This ensures the Department of Education is best placed to build a long-term and nationally consistent approach to strengthening a culture of awareness, protection and safety for all Queensland children and young people.

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) was established by the Australian Government in January 2013 to investigate how institutions have responded to child sexual abuse. The Commission sat for five years and made 409 recommendations.

The work of the Royal Commission has shown that members of the community lack an understanding of the nature of child sexual abuse, including the characteristics of adult perpetrators, grooming practices, and risks to children in both physical and online environments. The Royal Commission makes clear that it is the responsibility of all members of the community and of all institutions, to ensure that children are protected and that child safe environments are fostered in both public and private organisations.

The Royal Commission recommendations seek to build and strengthen a culture and society where all children are safe, valued and their rights are respected.

Aware

Principle 3 - Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

Keeping children and young people safe is a shared responsibility, and is not something that can be achieved without the combined efforts of early childhood services, schools, families, communities, elders and government. Creating and strengthening child safe environments requires a collaborative approach involving many key players in the community, within the department, and across other agencies.

Parents and carers are a child's first teachers and play a critical role in supporting children to engage safely online and avoid harmful experiences. Educating children from a young age about online safety is especially important, with technology increasingly accessible to children of all ages.

The department promotes resources of the Office of eSafety Commissioner that support state schools, non-state schools and parents to learn more about what children do online and how they can be encouraged to be positive digital citizens at a variety of ages. The department has developed a number of resources aimed at parents and guardians that provide advice and support about keeping children safe.

To support parents, teachers and community members to keep children safe online, the department has developed and quality assured a range of resources to combat online incidents.

Measures in place to meet the principle

- [Department of Education webpage](#) – provides information to parents, carers and the community about the department's operations and governance.
- [Parent and Community engagement framework](#) - helps schools to engage and partner with parents to improve student outcomes and support their wellbeing.
- [Public-facing policy and procedure register](#) – the source of information for schools, staff, families and the community about how the department operates and makes decisions. The register provides opportunities for families and communities to review policies and procedures and have a say in their development and review.

- [Qparents](#) - a secure, online portal that is free for all Queensland state schools to use and provides parents with quick and easy access to their student information.
- [Qschools App](#) - allows parents and carers to access latest school news, newsletters, annual reports and documents, Facebook, Twitter and download and sync calendar events. Schools can also send push notifications.
- [Parents and Citizens' Association Queensland](#) – advocacy institution who support positive educational outcomes achieved through strong parental, carer and community engagement in state schools. P&Cs enable families to participate in decisions affecting their children.
- [Online awareness: Information for parents and caregivers](#) - provides advice and support about keeping their child safe online, and what to do if their child is the target of, or is responsible for, inappropriate online behaviour.
- [Social media and the school community guide](#) - provides information to parents and caregivers about how to use social media in relation to comments or posts about their school community.
- [Key Messages Guide for volunteers, contractors and visitors](#) has been updated to include information for parents regarding online safety.

Measures from the Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy

- [Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy](#) – informs employees, families and the community about the department's approach to creating child safe environments.
- [Policy and Procedure Development Guidance](#) (DoE Employees Only) - assists department authors of policies and procedures to consider and incorporate the national principles into their documentation where appropriate – including how community and family should be engaged during development.
- [Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State School procedure](#) – includes a review of the local community body approach to addressing student non-attendance



Future Focus

The department is continuing its commitment to informing and involving families and communities in promoting child safety and wellbeing by building on measures already in place:

- Community members and parents of children and young people in Queensland schools and early education services have access to information on how to better support children's safety online.
- Equip families and communities with the tools and knowledge to better understand and respond to children displaying harmful sexual behaviours.

Aware

Principle 7 - Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

The department is committed to providing information and ongoing education and training for staff and volunteers to help keep children and young people safe.

The department's Cybersafety and Reputation Management team play a vital role in creating a safer online environment for children and young people by directly supporting state schools to respond to concerns of inappropriate online behaviour and misuse of digital technology.

At the national-level, the department has advocated for the inclusion of creating safe online environments into pre-service professional education (particularly for teachers and early childhood staff). In Queensland, nine out of ten universities have confirmed online safety and anti-bullying prevention education is included in their initial teacher education programs. To further strengthen pre-service teacher training, the department worked closely with the Queensland College of Teachers to amend [Template D](#), which outlines additional requirements for program accreditation in Queensland, to include consideration of eSafety requirements. Template D now includes a priority area dedicated to supporting child-related institutions to create safe online environments.

Measures in place to meet the principle

- [Annual mandatory all-staff training and refresher](#) (DoE Employees Only) - provides all staff with an overview of what is expected of departmental employees to work ethically, protect information, work safely, protect students and work together.
- [Key Messages Guide for contractors, volunteers and visitors](#) - covers key messages and responsibilities for working with children and young people.
- [Student Protection Principal Advisors](#) – are placed in each region to strengthen the department's capacity to support schools in responding to student protection matters by providing a key point of contact for support and advice to principals, school leaders and regional staff.

- [Student Protection Training for school-based employees](#) - outlines the responsibilities and processes for employees and visitors to state schools when dealing with student protection concerns, and responding when it is suspected that a student, or an unborn child, has been harmed or is at risk of harm.
- [Online incident management guidelines for school leaders](#) - provides strategies for schools on how to respond to and investigate online incidents including sexting and child exploitation and abuse material.
- [Managing your online reputation](#) and [I'm a teacher and have a personal social media account](#) (DoE Employees Only) - resources to assist teachers in identifying the level of risk connected with their online presence and ways they can improve their social media use and privacy.

Measures from the Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy

- [Management Foundations Training](#) (DoE Employees Only) – embeds the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations into the practices of department leaders and aspiring leaders.
- [Responding to disclosure poster](#) (DoE Employees Only) - outlines how school staff can support students during disclosure and provides clear guidance on next steps to follow up. (Internal resource)

Future Focus

The department is continuing its commitment to equip staff and volunteers with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training, through the development of the following measures:

- Provide staff and volunteers with information and training to better support children's safety.
- Contribute to the development of guidelines and procedures for the creation, maintenance and disposal of records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse
- Work with the Australian Government and other jurisdictions to develop a nationally consistent information exchange scheme.
- Develop policies and safeguards to ensure the appropriate exchange of student information when students move schools in line with legislative obligations and privacy requirements.
- Develop policies and guidance to ensure teachers, early childhood professionals and child-related organisations have the appropriate tools and knowledge to understand the issue of children's harmful sexual behaviours, including knowledge of the nationally consistent referral pathways.



Aware

Principle 5 - People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect children safety and wellbeing values

Robust human resource management policies provide a strong foundation for child safe organisations to protect children from harm, including screening, recruitment and performance reviews.

The department has undertaken significant work to strengthen its screening processes. This has included the coordination, development and implementation of new processes to ensure the department's compliance with new laws (No card, No start law) related to a review of the blue card process. New policy instruments, including a Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy to assist schools in meeting their obligations and minimising risk of harm to students and additional centralised compliance monitoring for blue card holders, were also developed to ensure valid blue cards are maintained for all staff working with children.

Additional actions to strengthen recruitment and screening process includes amending roles descriptions and relevant departmental webpages to include explicit statements related to child safety and engaging with central agencies to amend whole-of-government employment pages and leadership and capability documents to reflect the national principles.

Measures in place to meet the principle

- [Student protection procedure and guidelines](#) – outlines the responsibilities and processes for employees and visitors to state schools when dealing with student protection concerns, and responding when it is suspected that a student, or an unborn child, has been harmed or is at risk of harm.
- [Allegations Against Employees in the Area of Student Protection procedure and guidelines](#) – outlines the responsibilities and commitment of the department to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students, covering the steps required when an employee causes harm or where there is a suspicion that an employee has caused, or is likely to cause, harm to a student.

Measures from the Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy

- [Working with Children Checks \(Blue Cards\)](#) – No Card, No Start – changes to Blue Card requirements mean people working with children must have a valid Blue Card before they can start work.

- [Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy](#) – annual publication that describes how the department meets the eight requirements for an organisation regulated by the Blue Card system.
- [Departmental role descriptions](#) – updated role descriptions to include explicit statements related to child safety.
- [Teach Queensland webpage](#) – updated expectations of teachers to include a commitment to create safe environments for children.
- [Child death and injury review team](#) – delivered training to regions, state schools and early childhood and education improvement division, provided factsheets and toolkit resources to schools to respond to suicide risk and events and conducts review to promote the safety and wellbeing of children who come in contact with the Queensland child protection system.

Future Focus

The department is continuing its commitment to ensuring people working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values, through development of the following measures:

- Develop resources to induct, train and support voluntary placement students, vocational / tertiary placement students and adult vocational education and training of students to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- Strengthen teacher registration arrangements in line with the outcomes of the Royal Commission and National Review of Teacher Registration.
- Support the development and implementation of a Reportable Conduct Scheme to oversee and monitor the handling of allegations of child sexual abuse.
- Develop a Queensland Engagement and Wellbeing Survey.

Protective

Principle 1 - Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

The department's leadership models regularly reinforce attitudes and behaviours that place emphasis on the importance of children and young people and the department's commitment to child safety, child wellbeing and cultural safety.

A number of resources have been developed that support students and schools' access to sexual abuse prevention programs and further inform children and young people of their rights. Queensland schools will be implementing the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education by the end of 2021, which gives schools opportunities to provide sexual abuse prevention education. Queensland state schools also now have access to the Respectful Relationships Education Program. This provides a primary prevention program for all students in Prep to Year 12 that seeks to remove the causes of violence, prevent associated risks and enhance protective factors.

Measures in place to meet the principle

- [Department strategic plan](#) - outlines the department's commitment to the wellbeing and safety of children and students.
- [Enterprise Risk Management Framework](#) – outlines the level of risk that can be taken in delivering the department's objectives. The safety of children and young people is an area of the department's lowest appetite for risk. Controls and actions are identified and regularly reported to the Executive Management Group to manage risk.
- [Child and Student Protection Committee](#) (DoE Employees only) – reports to the Executive Management Group and provides oversight, direction and continuous review and improvement of child/student protection activities across the department to support the health, safety and wellbeing of children in early childhood education and the state schooling system.
- [Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service](#) - contains the ethics principles and values in the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*.
- [School reviews](#) - conducted by experienced educators who use the National School Improvement Tool to review a school's teaching and learning practices and to suggest areas for further consideration or improvement.

- [School audits](#) (DoE Employees only) - focus on addressing governance, risk management and control processes including financial, compliance, systems, operational, due diligence, probity, special investigations and project related audits.
- [School annual reports](#) - effective school reporting provides parents, staff, students and the community with meaningful information about schools and ensures all schools report similar information that complies with Government requirements.

Measures from the **Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy**

- [Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy](#) – provides a public commitment to keeping children and young people safe from sexual abuse in Queensland schools and early childhood services.
- [Department Briefing Templates](#) – include consideration of the national principles to assure Executive Management Board and other briefing process delegates that Child Safety and Human Rights have been considered in development processes and decisions.
- [Student Protection Training](#) and [Management Foundations Training](#) (DoE Employees Only) – incorporate the National Principles into staff training programs to ensure awareness of roles and responsibilities in the context of student safety.

Future Focus

Strong and clear governance arrangements allow leaders to ensure child safety is a focus within their organisation. The department will continue to set the direction and demonstrate its commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and will work to continuously improve its approach to meeting the National Principles standards, through the follow measures:

- Work with the National Office for Child Safety to develop the National Strategy to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse.
- Implement agreed strategies from the National Framework for Child Safety and National Strategy to Prevent Child Abuse within the Queensland Educational context.
- Contribute to the development of prevention education and awareness raising for all students engaged in education, parents and community.
- Assist in the design and installation of oversight mechanisms for the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations in Queensland.

Protective

Principle 6 - Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused

The department is committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments, ensuring procedures for raising concerns and complaints are accessible and concerns and complaints are taken seriously. Complaints can be made in any way, including in person at school. Students can be supported through the complaints process and all concerns are followed up with those involved.

Occasionally, a student or child may voluntarily disclose information about harm or risk of harm they have experienced. The department has developed targeted guidance, including practice support, for staff in responding to disclosures of harm. The 'Responding to disclosures' fact sheet and poster outline how to support students during disclosure and provides clear guidance on next steps to follow up. This guidance forms part of the department's dedicated student protection training opportunities and mandatory requirements.



To further support staff in responding to student protection concerns the department has developed an interactive online training course "Responding to student protection concerns: Case studies". The course includes a focus on ensuring staff have the ability to skilfully support students during disclosures of abuse.

Measures in place to meet the principle

- [Customer complaints management framework](#) – describes how the department manages and responds to complaints. The department welcomes feedback from its customers, whether it be on line, via phone or in person. Those making complaints, including children and parents, are supported through the process.
- [Making a customer complaint: Information for parents and carers](#) – provides information to parents and carers about how to make a complaint to the department and what to expect from the complaint resolution process.
- [Child-friendly complaints form](#) – available on the department's website, the form provides a simple format for recording and reporting complaints to the department.
- [Integrity Framework](#) (DoE employees only) - The department's Integrity Framework sets out the systems, strategies and standards that underpin the strong commitment of the department and its employees to organisational integrity.

- [Student protection procedure](#) - outlines the responsibilities and processes for employees and visitors to state schools when dealing with student protection concerns, and responding when it is suspected that a student, or an unborn child, has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Measures from the Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy

- [Student protection guidelines](#) (DoE employees only) - supports the Student protection procedure and provides detailed guidance about sharing information and [supporting vulnerable students](#), responding to other student protection matters, including student sexual behaviour and sexual relationships, harm caused by another student, student self-harm, sexting and possible child exploitation material.
- [Responding to disclosure poster](#) (DoE Employees Only) - outlines how staff can support students during disclosure and provides clear guidance on next steps to follow up. (Internal resource)
- [Allegations against employees in the area of student protection procedure](#) – provides information about student protection concerns involving a departmental employee.

Future focus

The department will enhance existing complaints and concerns processes and resources to ensure they are easy to understand and easily accessible to children and young people, families, staff and volunteers. This will ensure communication, mediation and desired outcomes of complaints and concerns processes remain child-focused and child-friendly. Working with students through the Ministerial Advisory Council will guide opportunities to improve guidance for students to raise concerns.

Protective

Principle 9 - Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved

The safety of children and students is one of the department's areas of lowest appetite for risk. The department continuously seeks to improve the delivery of child safe services to ensure it is best placed to address and respond to new challenges or concerns that arise.

In 2020, the department undertook significant efforts to strengthen child protection responses and support the rights of children and young people, including through the development of its Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy, and subsequent implementation of the National Principles.

Case Study – Aware Protective Safe Strategy

The strategy was developed in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) education-related recommendations. It reinforces our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and identifies how we are building on our existing child safe environment by implementing the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

The Strategy and its supporting [Child Safe Environment Map](#) were built to align to and reflect the National Principles. Through this alignment, the department is best placed to build a long-term and nationally consistent

approach to strengthening child safety that continues once the Royal Commission recommendations are delivered.

As part of the strategy, the department developed a number of resources to support state schools in fulfilling the requirements of the National Principles that can be shared with other entities, including non-state schools. Key steps to engage and communicate with peak bodies, which represent the interests of independent and Catholic Education schools, have been undertaken with the aim to continue to work with all Queensland schools to support the implementation of the National Principles.

Measures in place to meet the principle

- [School reviews](#) - conducted by experienced educators who use the National School Improvement Tool to review a school's teaching and learning practices and suggest areas for further consideration or improvement.
- [School audits](#) (DoE Employees only) - focus on addressing governance, risk management and control processes including financial, compliance, systems, operational, due diligence, probity, special investigations and project related audits.

- [School annual reports](#) - effective school reporting provides parents, staff, students and the community with meaningful information about schools and ensures all schools report similar information that complies with Government requirements.
- [Policy Management Framework](#) - outlines the department's framework for developing, implementing, communicating, monitoring and reviewing policies and procedures.

Measures from the *Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy*

- [Queensland Government report on the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#) – provides a summary of actions undertaken and underway to implement the national principles across Queensland Government.
- [Student hostel assistance kit](#) – updated to include reference to national principles in the student hostel assistance kit for student hostels.
- [Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme](#) – 2021 draft Funding Requirements incorporate the requirement to implement the National Principles.
- [Early Years Service Funding Category Guidelines](#) - 2021 draft guidelines incorporate the National Principles.
- [National principles for child safe organisations inclusion assessment tool](#) (DoE Employees Only) – provides staff authoring and reviewing policies and procedures guidance and a template to record their consideration and inclusion of the national principles.
- [National principles for child safe organisations checklist and action plan](#) (DoE Employees Only) - supports school leaders to identify how their school is already complying with the national principles and focus on areas that may need to be addressed to demonstrate alignment with the national principles.
- [Student Protection Principal Advisor training package](#) (DoE Employees Only) – updated to embed the National Principles into online student protection training and the Principal Annual Training.

Future Focus

As part of Queensland Department of Education's ongoing work to deliver the *Aware. Protective. Safe Strategy*, the department will continue to monitor implementation activities, assess the efficacy of actions, and identify further

strategies to continually strengthen the approach to implementing the National Principles. This includes:

- Putting in place practices to ensure the interests of the child are a primary consideration in decision-making.
- Working to ensure schools and early childhood service providers have access to the information and support required to implement the National Principles.
- Ensuring State and Non-State run student boarding schools and hostels are supported to implement the National Principles.

Protective

Principle 10 - Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

Documenting policies and procedures ensures consistent application of child safe practices across the organisation. It also enables organisations to examine, through review processes, adherence to child safety and wellbeing principles and practices. The department is a child safe organisation that creates a culture, adopts strategies and acts to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.

To support staff, implement child safe best practices, the department has integrated the national principles into the policies and procedures drafting and review guidelines. Staff writing or reviewing policies and procedures can use the [National Principles inclusion assessment: Policies and Procedures](#) to record their consideration and inclusion of the national principles into departmental documentation.

The work undertaken by the department in leading the development of the Children's Wellbeing Framework for Whole of Government provides a common language, aspirations and commitments for the wellbeing of Queensland children aged 0 to 8. Its aim is for our children to be strong in self and culture, active and healthy, happy and resilient, learning and exploring, and capable and connected.

Case Study – Queensland Children's Wellbeing Framework

Giving all our children a great start

The framework creates a common vision for the wellbeing of babies and children, from conception to eight years old, and the conditions needed to make sure every baby and child get a great start to life. All sectors and sections of the community that make decisions affecting children can use this framework to guide policy development, program implementation and service delivery

Our guiding values

The following values guide our aspirations and commitments for all children.

All children thriving

All children should be safe and able to overcome challenges in order to flourish and reach their full potential.

Attention to each child

Every child should be treated as an individual with their own strengths, personality and background, including culture. We recognise that individual children reach milestones at different times and in their own ways.

Keeping children visible

As communities, systems and service providers – in our considerations, policies and actions – we listen to children's voices and maintain a focus on their rights and wellbeing.



The Children's Wellbeing Framework has allowed the department to comprehensively integrate the national principles into a broad array of policies and procedures, drafting and review guidelines. This integration has, and will continue to permit a multi-lateral application of the principles in a variety of circumstances.

Measures in place to meet the principle

- [Supporting student health and wellbeing policy statement](#) – outlines the specific health and wellbeing issues that will be addressed for whole schools, specific students and certain circumstances.
- [Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework](#) - Schools play a significant role in supporting the wellbeing and mental health of their students. The Framework guides schools to implement a whole school approach to supporting students' wellbeing and mental health.
- [Safety and wellbeing of students residing at boarding facilities procedure](#) - outlines the responsibilities and processes to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students residing in state school operated residential boarding facilities. This procedure also sets out the processes for registration of students at the residential boarding facility

Measures from the **Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy**

- [Aware. Protected. Safe. Strategy](#) - reinforces our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and identifies how we are building on our existing Child Safe Environment by implementing the national principles for child safe organisations
- **Child Safe Environment Map** (this document) - outlines how the department maintains child safe environments by meeting each of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles) and describes the measures in place and the actions undertaken that have strengthened the department's commitment and approach to child safety.

Future focus

The department will continue to strengthen its approach to documenting how we are a child safe organisation by continuously working to improve best practice approaches in our policies and procedures. This includes supporting schools to ensure policies and procedures on child safety are documented and easily accessible and that all staff and volunteers know how to apply the school's policies and procedures on child safety. Such as:

- Services engaged by the department that conduct child-related work abide by the national principles for child safe organisations.
- Amended mandatory reporting laws relating to child protection have been integrated into the department's child safe standards process and procedures.

Safe

Principle 2 - Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

The department has processes, procedures and resources in place that assist children and young people in understanding what child safety and wellbeing means. Children and young people also have the ability to participate in the provision of direction, that assists in achieving the best learning outcomes for the school's students.

The department is supporting Queensland schools to implement the nationally consistent curriculum (p-10) and Queensland senior curriculum for online safety education in schools.

Queensland has provided input into ACARA's review of the Australian Curriculum to ensure refinements to the curriculum provide schools with core content to support the development of behavioural skills, technical knowledge and description of essential content in learning areas that support online safety education, such as digital technologies and health and physical education. There are also opportunities currently to deliver Cybersafety education across learning areas through the ICT General Capability Element, which outlines the application of social and ethical protocols and practices when using ICT. The review of the Australian Curriculum will seek to strengthen this aspect of the capability and fortify connections to all learning areas.

Measures in place to meet the principle

- **Ministerial Student Advisory Council** - the council provides advice, feedback and shares views on critical and emerging issues for Queensland school students and provides student views on current and future policy and practice.
- **Student Code of Conduct** - every Queensland state school is required to have a Student Code of Conduct. This is the school's behaviour policy, with information about school rules, consequences and processes for addressing bullying and the use of technology.
- **School Council procedure** - school councils can be established in all state schools and where established, can enable greater involvement of the school community and other stakeholders, such as industry, in setting the strategic direction for the school. School Councils can include representatives from students in year 10, 11, and 12.

- [Queensland Engagement and Wellbeing Survey](#) - aims to gain a better understanding of the engagement and wellbeing of our students. It asks questions about many aspects of students' wellbeing, engagement and experience at school.
- [School opinion survey](#) - questions asked include perceptions of fairness, safety and inclusivity. Feedback from the survey informs departmental strategy, policy and continuous improvement.

Measures from the Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy

- [Health and Physical Education Curriculum](#) – provides students with the knowledge, understanding and skills to support them to be resilient, to develop a strong sense of self, to build and maintain satisfying relationships, to make health-enhancing decisions in relation to their health and physical activity participation, and to develop health literacy competencies in order to enhance their own and others' health and wellbeing.
- [DoE Human Rights Framework](#) – outlines the department's commitment to respecting, protecting and promoting the human rights of children, students, staff and community members in everyday decisions and actions.
- [Queensland Human Rights poster](#) – provides a plain language overview of the rights enshrined in the Queensland *Human Right Act 2019*.

Future focus

The department will continue to promote age-appropriate education and reporting resources for children and young people to inform them about their rights and keep them safe.

The department values the views of students and children and remains committed to supporting students to share their views and participate in decision making. An area of need recently highlighted by students included understanding how to report harm to themselves or others and how schools respond to concerns or disclosures of sexual assault and abuse. The department will explore opportunities to enhance and communicate student guidance in this area. The department's work on reviewing complaints processes to ensure they are child focussed will further support this area of work.

Safe

Principle 8 - Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

The department focuses on the prevention of harm through education and awareness, that provides the skills children and young people need to be safe in online environments.

The department has adopted the online safety framework developed by the eSafety Commissioner and made resources available to support all Queensland schools to develop, implement and review their online codes of conduct, policies and procedures that enable the creation of an online culture that is safe for children, and guide schools in their responses to specific online incidents.

[Information sessions](#) for school principals and leadership teams have been developed to support capability and knowledge building of behaviour procedures.

Formal relationships with peak bodies have been established for the non-state schooling sector (including Independent Schools Queensland and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission), to provide:

- assistance and/or advice in serious incidents of offensive content (dependent on non-government schools cooperation/desire to utilise);
- access to Queensland Department of Education resources; and
- regular cyber safety forums with key representatives from all sectors to share information and to discuss online issues, policies and procedures, and coordinate responses to contemporary online incidents.

These formal relationships have been established through the department-led Queensland Online Safety Cross Sectoral Group, which includes Queensland Government and non-government schooling sectors. This group met three times in 2020 to share issues, responses and solutions to inappropriate online behaviours impacting on school communities.

Measures in place to meet the principle

- [Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Services](#) - optional for schools and provide students and staff with social, emotional and spiritual support, provide an additional adult role model in the school and enhance engagement with the broader community, including parents.

- [Curriculum activity risk assessments](#) - the [Managing risks in school curriculum activities](#) procedure supports schools in identifying potential hazards, assessing risks and implementing control measures. This helps to keep everyone safe when conducting **curriculum activities** as part of the delivery of the Prep to Year 12 curriculum in Queensland state schools.
- [Student health, safety and wellbeing](#) – provides information and resources for creating and maintaining healthy and safe working and learning environments.

Measures from the **Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy**

- [Cyberbullying and reputation management model](#) - plays a key role 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.
- [Online Safety in Queensland State Schools](#) - provides guidance on how the department responds and supports schools, students, parents and the community in keeping young people safe online.
- [Respectful Relationships Education Program](#) - is a Prep to Year 12 primary prevention program focused on influencing behaviour change to prevent undesirable social consequences such as domestic and family violence. This is done through challenging attitudes about violence and gender construction known to lead to violence while also supporting students to develop pro-social behaviours that lead to equitable and respectful relationships. A strengths-based approach underpins the development of respectful relationships knowledge and skills.
- [Daniel Morcombe Child Safe Curriculum](#) - covers a range of topics which teach students about preventative measures to reduce the risks of sexual abuse, including information around private body parts, how to recognise situations which are unsafe and the appropriate actions to take when there is a risk to a child's safety.

Case Study - *Online Safety in Queensland state schools*

The department supports every child and young person in Queensland state schools to learn and engage safely in the digital world. With the rise of technology and increasing access for young people, the department has developed [the Online Safety in Queensland State Schools](#) document, that provides guidance on how the department responds and supports schools, students, parents and the community, in keeping young people safe online.



Our approach to eSafety

The department focuses on prevention through education and awareness to provide the skills young people need to be safe in online environments.

By building **awareness** within school communities – with students, parents and carers, teachers and school leaders – we are able to respond swiftly to protect young people when an incident occurs.



Awareness

Through **partnerships** with our stakeholders, social networking providers and other government agencies, we all work together to keep children and young people safe from harm online.



Partnerships

Importantly, the department's strong focus on student wellbeing ensures that young people, parents and the community receive appropriate support, guidance and resources to **respond** to and safely navigate the online world with confidence.



Responding

The document covers the available resources created by the department, tailored to inform and educate students, parents, teacher and the community to address online safety issues. It identifies the important roles played by government and non-government educators, the broader school community, and families.

Future focus

The department will continue to create physical and online environments that promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, while minimising the opportunity for harm. Enhanced opportunities for cyber-safety education will be explored through the Australian Curriculum Review, with support from the Cyber-safety and Reputation Management unit.

Safe

Principle 4 - Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice

The department is committed to creating a diverse, inclusive and positive workplace to enhance performance, wellbeing, innovation to attract and retain quality staff and leadership. This aligns to the [Queensland Government 10 Year Human Capital Outlook that](#) recognises the importance of workplace culture in fostering inclusiveness and harnessing diversity for greater innovation and performance.

The department's student protection guidelines support schools to respond appropriately to student protection matters, this includes ensuring the diverse needs of students with disability, such as those with complex communication needs or cognitive disability, are addressed. The guidelines include additional considerations when students with disability disclose abuse or neglect and how to appropriately respond and provide, or link to, support.

In addition, the [State Schools Improvement Strategy 2021 - 2025](#) is Queensland's plan to lift the performance of each child and student in our state schooling system.

The strategy acknowledges the diverse context for our state schools and communities across the state, and provides clear and relevant guidance to support all of us in our shared work of improving the outcomes of our children and students.

The two fundamental priorities which can direct the work of individuals and teams and will make a difference to all children and students are:

- success and wellbeing for all children and students as they transition through each stage of learning in an inclusive education system, and
- continuous improvement in the access to, and teaching, learning and assessment of the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline, the Australian Curriculum and the senior syllabuses.

Schools bring the State Schools Improvement Strategy to life when they plan for, monitor, review and report on responses to locally determined student and school needs aligned to the department's strategic direction.

Measures in place to meet the principle

- [State Schools Improvement Strategy: Every student succeeding strategy](#) - plan to lift educational performance for every child and student in our state schooling system.
- [Inclusive Education Policy](#) – sets out the department's commitment to continue to work towards a more inclusive state education system and the principles, which will guide that work

- [Signposts for school improvement – inclusive education](#) – provides an inclusive education framework for schools aligned to the [School Improvement Hierarchy model](#), which guides what needs to happen next in a school's improvement journey.
- [Supports for students with disability](#) – provides information on a range of topics to assist parents to understand supports available for their child and other department processes.
- [Human Rights Act 2019](#) - protects the freedom, equality and dignity of every person in Queensland. The Act respects, protects, and promotes human rights.

Measures from the Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy

- [Supporting vulnerable children and families](#) – provides information about supporting families that do not meet the threshold for a report to Child Safety or the QPS and it is believed the child and family would benefit from additional support, they can be referred to support services.
- [Student protection guidelines](#) – updated to address the diverse needs of students with disability, including students with complex communication needs or cognitive disability.

Future focus

Upholding, reviewing and strengthening departmental policies, procedures and guidelines for those with diverse needs and background will remain a focus for the department. This supports our commitment to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights in our everyday decisions and actions in line with the Queensland *Human Rights Act 2019*.