

## WRITTEN BRIEFING

# EDUCATION, ARTS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

## Update on the Department of Education's response to the Queensland Audit Office Report No. 6: 2024–25 *Protecting students from bullying*

### Implementation of recommendations from the QAO Report

The Department of Education (the department) is implementing recommendations from the Queensland Audit Office (QAO) Report 6: 2024–25, *Protecting students from bullying*, through a range of strategies and initiatives aimed at preventing, reducing and responding to bullying.

**Recommendation 1:** That the Department of Education clearly documents its approach to bullying. This should include the supports available for state schools to implement evidence-based prevention and response strategies. As part of this it should develop a plan for how it will implement its strategy and monitor its effectiveness

**Status:** Implemented

The department developed an internal *Action Plan – Preventing, responding and reducing bullying* to guide the development and implementation of the publicly announced initiatives to address bullying, emphasising community awareness and joint action; preventing bullying behaviour through safe and disciplined schools; and enhancing support for families and students.

The department has promoted the new anti-bullying initiatives on the public facing and newly redeveloped Bullying prevention and support webpage. The webpage features tailored information about supports available for schools and educators, students, parents and the community. The department is monitoring the engagement in these initiatives to inform the continuous improvement of service delivery.

The Queensland Government has commenced an awareness campaign about support available to respond to bullying. The campaign, launched on 27 January 2026. A campaign [website](#) is also available.

**Recommendation 2: That the Department of Education supports more effective communication of schools' codes of conduct through:**

- **redeveloping the prevention and response to bullying requirements in the State Schools Student Code of Conduct to align with current evidence-based practice and departmental procedures**
- **monitoring schools' documentation of the code of conduct**
- **ensuring schools provide sufficient information online to demonstrate the currency of codes of conduct**

**Status: [In progress](#)**

The department is undertaking a comprehensive review of several school discipline procedures, including the *Student Code of Conduct*. Consultation with internal stakeholders (principals, teachers, regional office and central office staff) commenced at the start of 2025 and will continue through to July 2026.

**Recommendation 3: That the Department of Education, as part of delivering on its commitment to address recommendations from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, enhances its data collection to include information on students who experience bullying and cyber bullying**

**Status: [In progress](#)**

The department looks forward to sharing further details with the Committee once finalised and announced.

**Recommendation 4: That the Department of Education enhances its approach to monitoring student bullying by:**

- **improving its collection and analysis of information on the experiences of parents/carers, students and staff specific to the management of student bullying**
- **establishing processes for monitoring schools' implementation of bullying policies and when and how a region would intervene to support a school that needs assistance to reduce bullying**
- **evaluating the effectiveness of its policies and resources to support schools to prevent and respond to bullying**

**Status: Implemented**

The department is committed to effectively responding to bullying and the needs of schools, parents and students.

Through the implementation of the pilot of the Rapid Support Teams, the department identified opportunities to improve responses where a school community was experiencing high-risk student behaviours and critical incidents through the work of the regionally based Rapid Support Teams.

The Rapid Support Teams provide targeted, medium-term support services for Queensland state schools facing bullying incidents that are high in intensity, frequency or impact. The Rapid Support Teams work across three key functions: family support, student mental health and wellbeing, and staff capability-building, to ensure a coordinated wrap-around approach to response, recovery and prevention.

The provision of an expanded service through Parentline since July 2025 provides a new avenue for the department to respond to the experiences of parents/carers whose children are involved in bullying incidents or displaying bullying behaviour.

From 2 July 2025 to 31 January 2026, there have been 3,107 phone calls received by Parentline and parents/carers have engaged in 296 webchats.

**Recommendation 5: That the Department of Education reviews the Parent and Community Engagement Framework to include:**

- **up-to-date, contemporary approaches to engaging working parents/carers**
- **specific guidance on engaging with parents/carers on complex policy issues such as bullying**

**Status: In progress**

The department has commenced reviewing existing frameworks, resources and advice for schools to support positive engagement with parents and the community, including a full review of the Parent and Carer section of the Education website. This work is being informed by consultation with stakeholders.

A review of the Parent and Community Engagement Framework and supporting resources is also being undertaken to ensure the provision of up-to-date, effective and relevant resources for parents and school communities.

**Recommendation 6: That the Department of Education makes readily available access to professional learning, teaching resources and information for school staff about preventing and responding to bullying behaviour, including:**

- **how to identify bullying behaviour**
- **effective approaches for responding to and reporting different types of bullying, including cyber bullying**

**Status: Implemented**

The department has developed a suite of six self-paced online learning modules to equip Queensland state school staff with the knowledge and strategies to identify, prevent and respond to student bullying. The *Addressing student bullying* microlearning series includes six modules:

- Understanding and defining bullying;
- Identifying and responding to bullying;
- Enhancing the physical environment to reduce bullying;
- Preventing bullying by strengthening protective factors;
- Cyberbullying and promoting digital safety; and
- Partnering with parents and communities to prevent and respond to bullying.

Additionally, the department hosts resources provided by the eSafety Commissioner, providing staff with specialised online training on digital safety and cyberbullying prevention.

## **Response to the findings and recommendations of the Australian Government's *Final Report from the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review* released on 18 October 2025**

In October 2025, the Education Ministers Meeting (EMM) agreed to recommendations of the Final Report of the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review, led by expert co-chairs Professor Jo Robinson AM and Dr Charlotte Keating.

In February 2026, EMM agreed to the *National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian Schools*, and released an Implementation Plan detailing actions to be taken to deliver on their shared commitment to ensure every Australian school is a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment in which bullying and other harmful behaviours are prevented and addressed.

A current review of school discipline procedures will ensure the department is enacting clear, transparent and responsive bullying policies that embed and reflect the expectations of the *National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian Schools*.

Associated actions include development of an anti-bullying resource hub, a national public awareness campaign and embedding anti-bullying and respectful relationships training into initial teacher education.

## Current anti-bullying initiatives and strategies

### ***Establishment of an Anti-Bullying Expert Advisory Panel***

The Queensland Anti-Bullying Expert Advisory Panel was formed in July 2025 to provide evidence-based guidance to the department on the prevention and response to bullying in Queensland schools.

The Panel is chaired by Professor Donna Pendergast AM, Director of Engagement – Arts, Education and Law Group, Griffith University, and includes experts in bullying, mental health, child development and community health:

- Professor Marilyn Campbell, School of Education, Queensland University of Technology;
- Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, Adolescent and Family Psychologist;
- Dr Billy Garvey, Developmental and Behavioural Paediatrician, Guiding Growing Minds; and
- Ms Renee Blackman, Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service.

The Panel has met four times: 16 July 2025, 18 September 2025, 12 November 2025 and 18 February 2026. A further two meetings are scheduled in April and June 2026.

The department has leveraged the expertise of the Panel to inform solutions and strategies to address the key drivers of bullying and strengthen existing anti-bullying initiatives. For example, the Panel has provided strategic advice to the department on responding to the Australian Government's *Final Report from the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review*.

### ***Funding for additional chaplains and student wellbeing officers***

Chaplains and student wellbeing officers play a key role in preventing and responding to bullying and the creation and maintenance of safe, supportive and inclusive learning environments where every student can thrive.

All Queensland schools were invited to apply for government funding for the 2024–2027 school years. Additional funding has now been provided to the 302 waitlisted schools for

chaplains and student wellbeing officer services putting more support on the ground in Queensland state schools.

### ***Expansion of a dedicated support hotline for parents through Parentline***

Parentline offers free, confidential and immediate support to concerned parents and carers of Queensland children and young people aged 0 to 25, available by phone or webchat, seven days a week.

Since 2 July 2025, Parentline service hours have been expanded, with the phone line and webchat now available from 6am to midnight. From 2 July 2025 to 31 January 2026, there have been 3,107 phone calls received by Parentline and parents/carers have engaged in 296 webchats.

The expansion also includes mediated peer support groups for parents through *My Circle for Parents*. *My Circle for Parents* is a moderated, online peer support forum designed to give parents and carers a safe and supportive space to connect with others who may be experiencing similar challenges.

Parentline services include:

- a website with practical parenting resources;
- live webchat with professional counsellors or phone support for immediate assistance;
- the option to pre-book ongoing sessions with the same counsellor;
- online, counsellor-facilitated parenting forums for shared support; and
- referrals to other family support services when additional help is needed, including to the Parent Navigator.

### ***Establishment of the Parent Navigator service***

The Parent Navigator service supports families and schools to work together when bullying concerns arise.

By fostering respectful communication and mutual understanding, the service strengthens family–school partnerships and promotes better outcomes for students by:

- providing early engagement and neutral support;
- focusing on trust, understanding and connection;
- taking a tailored, considered approach to each situation; and
- supporting parents in partnership to improve shared outcomes.

The Parent Navigator service provides parents with advice and resources, supporting them to take informed action when bullying occurs outside the school gates.

The service also helps parents to navigate and access community supports, including those that promote wellbeing, digital safety and effective parenting.

Parents can access the Parent Navigator service through Parentline referrals.

### ***Establishment of Rapid Support Teams to provide timely, expert advice and support for critical bullying scenarios***

Rapid Support Teams are specialist multi-disciplinary teams that can step in to deliver urgent, on-the-ground support to schools managing high-impact and high-intensity bullying incidents.

While bullying is a complex issue, Rapid Support Teams walk alongside schools, families and communities to build tailored responses and support plans to meet the unique needs of each school community.

Rapid Support Teams have been established across all eight education regions and have been actively engaging with schools to support the response to bullying related matters.

### ***Development of new and updated professional development resources to upskill teachers, teacher aides and support staff with targeted resources***

The department is delivering a comprehensive suite of professional learning for all Queensland state school staff. These resources are designed to be flexible and practical, and completed at a time that suits them.

The modules were released during Semester 2, 2025, and were developed to equip school staff with the knowledge and strategies to identify, prevent and respond to student bullying. The modules cover key topics including bullying definitions, intervention strategies, cyberbullying and partnering with parents. This series promotes a whole-school and broader community approach to creating safe, respectful environments.

Additionally, the department hosts resources provided by the eSafety Commissioner, providing staff with specialised online training on digital safety and cyberbullying prevention.

These resources cover key online safety topics and are designed to support school leaders, teachers, and non-teaching staff in understanding and responding to online safety challenges within school communities.

These resources focus on:

- increasing awareness of the role, functions and resources of the eSafety Commissioner for school communities;

- equipping school leaders, teachers, and non-teaching staff with knowledge and skills to effectively respond to and report critical online incidents; and
- providing strategies to support safer, more positive online gaming experiences for children and young people.

The professional learning resources are available through the department's Education Futures Institute online course catalogue and have been promoted to school staff through the internal communication newsletter, ConnectED.

## Status of the draft Action Plan on Anti-Bullying and when it is expected to be publicly released

### Status: Implemented

The department developed an *Action Plan – Preventing, responding and reducing bullying* and has used this to internally guide the direction of the Queensland Government's anti-bullying response. The department's Action Plan is designed for internal use and it is not intended for public release.

More information can be found at [www.education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/initiatives/bullying](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/initiatives/bullying).