

## Education (General Provisions) Amendment Bill 2025

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# Queensland Secondary Principals' Association



## Submission – Education (General Provisions) Amendment Bill 2025

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The Queensland Secondary Principals' Association (QSPA) would like to thank the Education, Arts and Communities Committee of the Queensland Parliament for the opportunity to provide a submission to the *Education (General Provisions) Amendment Bill 2025*.

QSPA is the peak professional organisation representing Government secondary Principals, Deputy Principals and Heads of Department. QSPA members are represented in more than 98% of state secondary schools in all parts of the state; metropolitan, regional, rural and remote ranging in size from just over 100 to our largest schools of more than 3000 students. Throughout this submission, where the term 'Principal' is used it should be read as encompassing all secondary school leaders as listed previously.

- **QSPA supports** streamlining student access to online services for digital learning

The digital learning environment is a given in 2025. As technology has changed the world, so too has technology changed the delivery of education. In recent years this has been occurring at an ever-increasing pace. Students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are 'digital natives'; they have grown up with, surrounded by and with digital technologies (software, hardware, platforms) at their fingertips 24/7.

Queensland state secondary schools provide rich and diverse learning environments. This includes the online, digital environment. Learning materials, resources and student interactions across the globe occur more and more in the digital space. This has provided challenges for schools as they strive to keep pace with ongoing developments.

Student access to online platforms requires Principals and teachers to give careful consideration to risks and benefits. Often the benefits are obvious, the risks sometime less so. On many occasions, digital providers seek information that will support student access, eg student name, date of birth, achievement data, email addresses and school data. This enables account registration and access to the service for a student. Currently parents or students are required to provide consent where personal information is recorded, used, stored or disclosed for each individual service they access, or if the service requires this in their terms and conditions.

Presently this consent is required on each occasion information is required. With the growing use of online services, this has become a significant workload and compliance responsibility for schools, with this responsibility sitting squarely on the shoulders of Principals. As an example, *Mathletics* is an online learning maths program currently in use by 349 schools. Consent is required for every student; in total more than 20 000 requests that have to be made by schools and approved by parents/carers. compliance and risk assessment activities such as these are peripheral to the real game of teaching and learning. While care of personal information should be paramount in the minds of Principals and the broader Department of Education, it should not be as onerous as it has become.

The changes proposed by this Bill are sensible; they protect the confidential nature of student information and by using the Safer Technologies 4 Schools framework provide for a consistent approach to the evaluation of digital services and products in schools. This evaluation, undertaken by Central Office staff, will reduce the workload placed upon Principals. In addition, the use of the Safer Technologies 4 Schools framework will provide certainty for service providers, enabling them to clearly understand what is required to ensure any risk passed on to schools is minimised and mitigated.

QSPA supports the proposed twelve-month implementation window to ensure that schools are provided with appropriate guidance and support as required.

- **QSPA supports** enabling Principals to delegate the notification of suspension decisions. Whilst maintaining responsibility for the decision making with regards to a school disciplinary absence (SDA), the Bill recognises the demands on a Principal's time every day. It also recognises the need for the decision to be communicated as quickly as possible. Delegating this task would ensure that communication is timely and not held up due to the absence of the Principal from the school site or their attention to other tasks.

Secondary school Principals lead complex organisations. Executive leadership structures exist in secondary schools to ensure that the myriad of leadership functions required is delegated and shared appropriately. Often a Head of School, Associate Principal or Deputy Principal is the school leader with the closest relationship between a student who is the subject of an SDA and their parent/career. That relationship can be critical in communicating the SDA and the subsequent re-entry of the student to school. This amendment recognises and helps support those relationships.

- **QSPA supports** the preclusion from a person holding executive office within a P&C is convicted of an indictable offence.
- P&C associations hold a place of high trust in communities. This amendment will give even greater confidence for communities in the integrity and high standard of the P&C in their local school.

- **QSPA supports** the proportionate sharing of relevant student information when students transfer between Queensland state and non-state schools.

Currently sharing of information between state schools upon the transfer of a student happens seamlessly through One School. With non-state schools the practice is optional, and Principals often describe it as ad hoc. Relevant information is prescribed by regulation and includes student identifying information and educational information such as level of schooling and educational performance, educational support or behavioural issues and school attendance.

The introduction of a mandatory requirement for a new school to request this information from the previous school will strengthen student safety and allow for a more seamless transition, ultimately supporting greater continuity in student learning. QSPA looks forward to informing the process that will guide the sharing of relevant information across state and non-state schools.

QSPA is appreciative of the opportunity to provide a submission to the Committee and looks forward to the progression of this Bill and the intended improvements for state secondary schools.



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