

## Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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# Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024



## **WHO IS P&Cs QLD?**

P&Cs Qld is the peak body supporting, advocating for and representing more than 900,000 state school parents and wider school communities throughout Queensland. We support the achievement of quality educational outcomes for students through fostering parental and community engagement in a thriving and successful education system.

Through our state-wide network of 1264 P&C Associations, School Councils and some 44,000 plus volunteers, we have the localised presence and voice to lead and enact change to achieving our objective of giving every child every chance in education and life.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CLAUSES**

### Information Sharing (Transfer notes)

#### *New obligation for a principal to request a transfer note*

P&Cs Qld agrees with the intention of the drafting to ensure more effective communication when students are transferring to/from State Schools to non-Government Schools. We would pose that the 90-day timeframe proposed is too long given this equates almost to an entire term of schooling. We would seek consideration as to a shorter time frame of say 30-45 days to ensure the new school has adequate information in a timely manner to avoid issues or lost student days.

*Transfer note requested by a principal must include information to protect safety and welfare of the transferring student or other students, staff or other persons at the student's new school*

P&Cs Qld agrees with the proposed amendment to ensure safety and welfare of all impacted parties of the student's new school.

#### *Ensuring a consistent timeframe for principals to prepare a transfer note*

P&Cs Qld agrees with the proposed amendment.

#### *Information sharing with approved online services*

P&Cs Qld agrees with the intention of the amendments to a more practical solution to obtaining consent for student use of online services and APPs. We agree under the understanding that it only applies to all online solution providers that meet the Departments tight controls and security/privacy controls. We believe that at the point of enrolment consents can be gathered that apply to all approved solutions and Apps thus saving the impost on parents to provide consent to each solution or APP. We

understand that information to be disclosed is of a non-sensitive nature and if disclosed purely for the purpose of setting up students in user accounts to allow access to the solution or APP.

## School disciplinary absences and enrolment decisions

### *Access to education while enrolment is pending – proposed s163A*

P&Cs Qld supports the proposed amendment that ensures the prospective student is provided with access to education whilst a decision process is being followed.

### *Timeframes for disciplinary actions*

P&Cs Qld agrees with the proposed amendments as outlined below to ensure and apply timeframes for decisions to be made re disciplinary matters of students, understanding that these timeframes provide consistency, transparency and predictability for schools, parents and students.

### *Refusal to enrol:*

- specify that if a principal reasonably believes a prospective student may pose an unacceptable risk to safety and wellbeing of school community, they must refer enrolment application within five school days of receiving the application;
- require the chief executive to make a decision as to whether to allow the prospective student to enrol or, if the chief executive reasonably believes there is a risk to the school community, commence show cause processes within 10 school days of receiving a referral;
- specify the principal has one school day from the decision being referred back to them to notify the prospective student that the chief executive has decided to allow them to be enrolled and commence enrolment processes under section 156.

### *Suspension decisions:*

- clarify that notice in the approved form must be issued within one school day of the student being told of their suspension;
- specify the maximum time period by which an appeal must be lodged for eligible suspensions is 20 school days after student is issued with notice of their suspension and charge-related suspensions;
- specify that the chief executive must deal with a submission against a suspension within 40 school days; and
- for charge related suspensions, prescribe a maximum of five school days in which a decision must be made after a principal is aware charges have been dealt with.

### *Exclusion decisions:*

- specify a notice must be issued within one school day of the student and parent being told of the proposal to exclude;

- specify a maximum timeframe of 20 school days after providing a student with a notice of the proposal to exclude, for the principal to tell a student of their decision and provide a notice of their decision;

#### *Cancellation of enrolment decisions:*

- require a show cause process to be used at least 30 school days prior to any final decision about cancellation of enrolment;
- include maximum timeframe of 30 school days for an appeal submission be made to the chief executive following notice of decision to cancel enrolment; and
- include a maximum timeframe of 20 school days for the chief executive to review, decide and advise student of the outcome of the submission.

#### *Delegation of authority to notify a school disciplinary absence*

P&Cs Qld supports the proposed amendment that allows the Principal to delegate authority to notify of school disciplinary absences to Head of School, Deputy Principals or Head of Campus.

We believe that such delegation will improve efficiency and effectiveness of the systems and allow for matters to be dealt with in a timely way for all parties involved.

#### *Introducing a new appeal right for short term suspensions*

P&Cs Qld agrees with the amendment as we feel it provides an additional level of appeal to repeating accumulation of short-term suspensions as it does for long suspensions.

#### *Removing the default refusal to enrol*

P&Cs Qld agrees with the proposed amendment as it encourages further exploration of alternative measures for correcting behaviour prior to suspension but still maintains the ability to protect the wider school and other students.

#### *Matters to consider before an SDA decision*

P&Cs Qld supports the proposed amendment to provide explicit procedural guidance to considerations to suspension or expulsion. This will provide certainty to all parties involved.

#### *Chief Executive policy for student disciplinary decisions*

P&Cs Qld supports the proposed amendment as it provides for development of documented procedures and policies that will provide clarity and direction to all parties.

#### *Review of SDA amendments*

P&Cs Qld agrees with the proposed amendment as a necessary introduction to maintain currency and appropriate application of policies and procedures around SDA's.

#### *Student Support Plans*

P&Cs Qld agrees with and supports the proposed amendment to the EGP Act to introduce a requirement for Student Support Plans as an additional measure towards behaviour management. By this becoming legislation P&Cs Qld hopes that the government of the day would appropriately fund this.

## Parents & Citizens' Associations

### *Forming separate P&Cs for schools with multiple campuses*

P&Cs Qld supports the proposed amendment that allows Schools with multiple campuses to have multiple P&Cs that are suited to their local circumstances and communities.

### *Enabling donations between P&Cs*

P&Cs Qld supports this amendment in the case of adverse events.

### *Precluding a person convicted of an indictable offence from being a member of a P&C's Executive Committee or subcommittee*

P&Cs Qld supports this amendment which drives alignment between requirements for School Councils and P&Cs. This enables parents of children who have previously been convicted of and an indictable offence to be a general member of the P&C but not assume an executive role. Noting that Parents of current students at the school are NOT required to obtain a Blue Card. We believe this amendment is necessary to ensure there is a high level of governance over the funds of the P&C.

## Special Education

### *Provide for the chief executive to determine whether a prospective student is a student with disability*

The draft Bill amends the EGP Act so that the requirement for a principal of a special school to refer an enrolment application to the chief executive does not apply if the student is, or was immediately before making the enrolment application, enrolled in another Queensland state special school.

P&Cs Qld supports this amendment on the rationale that where a student has been enrolled in another special school previously that verification should not be re-required which is an unnecessary impost to parents.

## Clarifying and Technical Amendments

### *Gendered language*

P&Cs Qld supports the proposed amendment to remove or replace gendered language in the Act.

### *Guiding principles*

P&Cs Qld supports the adoption of the guiding principles for the EGP Act the new section provides that education should be provided to a child or young person in a way that recognises the educational needs of children and young people from all backgrounds, identities and abilities. Consideration is being given to whether

examples are needed for this subsection. The draft Bill also inserts a new section, which provides that education should be provided to a child or young person in a way that recognises wellbeing as a foundation of educational engagement.

#### *Technical Amendments*

P&Cs Qld confirms its support for the proposed amendments to the Sections as they relate and impact to privacy legislation and principles of the EGP Act more broadly and the technical amendments required.

#### **CONCLUSION**

P&Cs Qld appreciates the opportunity to provide this submission on behalf of P&C members, volunteers and parents/carers of Queensland state schools.

P&Cs Qld can make its resources available to support and assist any future Government campaigns or programs through our existing networks and connection with Queensland parents/carers and our P&C Associations.

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