

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitted by: Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network
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Submission to: [Education \(General Provisions\) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024](#)

About Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network

The Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network (QIS Parents Network) is the peak body representing the families of the more than 147,000 students enrolled in Queensland's 234 independent schools.

While independent schools are often referred to as "private schools", Queensland independent schools are as diverse as the communities they serve, with schools catering for families from a variety of social and economic backgrounds and income levels. More families than ever before are also choosing to send their children to independent schools. Enrolments in the Queensland independent sector have increased 75%, from 83,841 students in 2003 to 147,268 in 2023. This ongoing growth signifies the importance parents place on choice when it comes to where they send their children to school.

QIS Parents Network is regularly consulted by government and other education stakeholders on policy matters that affect the parents and carers of independent school children and attend a range of government and education sector meetings and taskforces.

We are also a strong advocate for positive and respectful learning partnerships between schools, parents and children – a burgeoning area of research known as 'parent engagement', which shows that learning and wellbeing benefits for children improve significantly when parents are engaged effectively by their child's school.

We fund research and provide practical support for independent schools who are wanting to improve their parent engagement practices. [Read more](#) about our parent engagement work with schools.

The QIS Parents Network is governed by a Board of Directors and our Executive Director is supported by a Consultative Committee of parents from small and large independent schools across Queensland, which helps ensure our views are reflective of the diverse independent school sector. QIS Parents Networks thanks the Queensland Government for their ongoing funding since 2014 which allows us to fulfill our important work on behalf of Queensland families.

Our submission in relation to 'transfer notes'

- QIS Parents Network **strongly supports** any legislative change that strengthens the sharing of information to safeguard vulnerable students and protect all staff and families.
- We also acknowledge The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse found the transfer of a student's relevant information to be a significant factor in the successful transition of a student between schools, and particularly critical where a student has engaged in harmful sexual behaviours and may pose risks to other students.

- However, regarding the proposed mandatory transfer note amendments, we would like to be assured that the Queensland Government has given thought to the provision of a secure mode to allow for data sharing between school sectors and between non-state schools, given the inherent security issues with email, which will arguably increase with mandatory transfer notes for new students.
- While the transfer note in of itself may not contain sensitive data, accompanying documents such as individual education plans, health plans or incident reports would contain sensitive data.
- While Queensland state schools have the OneSchool online student and school data management system, non state schools do not have access to OneSchool.
- We are also concerned about the significant financial and workload burden on independent schools to request, receive and respond to transfer notes and their accompanying documentation, particularly in large intake years e.g. Year 7 or 5 (imagining the workload for a school requesting and receiving files on 250 students entering at year 7 for example, and then actioning that information) and would ask if financial support will be provided to independent schools to offset this increased workload.
- We recognise there would be a significant education piece to be undertaken by the Education Department to ensure all schools are aware of, and comply with, the mandatory time frames for transfer notes and would expect that non state school sectors will be consulted in this education piece to ensure that all education sectors understand and receive the same information.
- Families would also like to be reassured that schools in all sectors will be educated about what types of information and documents should - and should not - be shared under the transfer note system.

Amanda Watt | Executive Director