



Office of the
Director-General

Department of
Education

8 JUL 2021

Legal Affairs and Safety Committee
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Email: lasc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

Thank you for your email dated 18 June 2021 regarding the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's (the Committee) inquiry into serious vilification and hate crimes and providing information on the process for the Department of Education to make a submission.

I acknowledge the important work the Committee is undertaking to investigate the nature and extent of hate crimes and serious vilification in Queensland and note that the department places the highest priority on the safety and wellbeing of students, our staff and all members of our school communities.

The enclosed submission provides information on and links to key resources that assist staff in creating safe, supportive and inclusive school environments. This includes resources on protecting children from harm, responding to student behaviour, developing students' capacity to initiate and maintain respectful relationships, supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students and building an inclusive, diverse and culturally capable workforce.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, I invite you to contact [REDACTED]

I trust the department's submission will assist the Committee in your inquiry.

Yours sincerely

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Director-General

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SUBMISSION TO THE LEGAL AFFAIRS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE ON THE INQUIRY INTO SERIOUS VILIFICATION AND HATE CRIMES

The safety and wellbeing of students continues to be of the highest priority for the Department of Education (DoE). The following resources assist schools in creating safe, supportive and inclusive school environments for all students:

Behaviour

DoE has a clear commitment to ensuring every state school is a nurturing and disciplined environment where all students can learn, achieve and reach their full potential.

The *Student Discipline*¹ procedure sets out the responsibilities and processes to promote safe, supportive and disciplined learning environments in Queensland state schools. The procedure supports school staff to understand and meet their legislative obligations, to maintain good order and management of schools and provide access to state education to ensure all students can participate in and gain positive outcomes from schooling.

Every Queensland state school is required to have a *Student Code of Conduct*², outlining information about school rules, consequences and processes for addressing bullying and the use of technology.

*Positive Behaviour for Learning*³ (PBL) is a whole-school framework that promotes positive behaviour across a school and helps schools develop safe and supportive learning environments. Schools that implement the PBL framework make sure all students are explicitly taught the expected behaviours and establish clear and consistent boundaries.

Supporting LGBTIQ+

Every student is welcome and supported in our state schools, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students. A suite of resources is available for schools, families and students to ensure LGBTIQ+ students are appropriately supported in Queensland state schools including:

- Diversity in Queensland schools: information for principals⁴;
- Diversity in Queensland schools: policy template⁵;
- Diversity in Queensland schools: fact sheet for students⁶; and
- Diversity in Queensland schools: fact sheet for parents⁷.

Cultural capability

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Action Plan 2019–2022*⁸ recognises the importance of DoE becoming more representative and inclusive of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It establishes clear and effective actions to facilitate an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and supplements the Queensland Government's *Reconciliation Action Plan 2018–2021*⁹.

We all belong

The '*We All Belong*' *workplace inclusion and diversity framework*¹⁰ outlines DoE's commitment to building an inclusive, diverse and culturally capable workforce. When staff are treated fairly and feel empowered, they are able to deliver successful education services that meet the needs of all students.

Respectful relationships

The *Respectful relationships education program*¹¹ aims to develop students' capacity to self-regulate emotions, initiate and maintain respectful relationships, examine the nature and quality of relationships, and recognise the importance of ethics in relationships for positive and healthy interactions. For more senior students, the program provides opportunities to explore more complex concepts related to sexuality, power imbalance, types of abuse, gender inequality and stereotypes, and supports them to make healthy, safe choices.

Students at risk of radicalising to violent extremism

DoE recognises that the radicalisation of a young person is a complex process and our approach to managing the risk of radicalisation encompasses prevention, early response and urgent response. Inclusive and supportive school communities enact preventative approaches, and engage early response and urgent response approaches if the principal or school staff are concerned that a student may be in the process of becoming radicalised. The *School responses to students at risk of radicalisation to violent extremism* flowchart, which is available to DoE staff only, provides the process for effective response to concerns of radicalisation.

Child and student protection

The *Child and student protection* policy¹² outlines DoE's approach to keeping children and students safe by protecting them from harm in Queensland state schools and State Delivered Kindergartens. This policy is supported by the *Student protection* procedure¹³, which provides 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. Staff also have access to a suite of supporting resources, including guidelines, training materials, fact sheets and links to key partner agency websites, to help inform their actions and decisions when protecting children and students from harm.

Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy

The *Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy*¹⁴ reinforces DoE's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, and identifies how the national principles for child safe organisations are implemented. The actions outlined in the strategy reflect the response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and additional initiatives to enhance DoE's culture of awareness, protection and safety for all Queensland children and young people.

Disclosing personal information to law enforcement agencies

The *Disclosing personal information to law enforcement agencies* procedure¹⁵ outlines the protocols for disclosing student personal information to police in circumstances related to preventing, detecting or punishing a criminal offence or in circumstances related to emergencies and in the public interest.

¹ *Student Discipline Procedure*, www.ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/student-discipline-procedure.

² *Student Code of Conduct*, www.ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/fact-sheet-student-code-of-conduct.pdf.

³ *Positive Behaviour for Learning*; www.behaviour.education.qld.gov.au/supporting-student-behaviour/positive-behaviour-for-learning.

⁴ *Diversity in Queensland schools: information for principals*; www.education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/diversity-information-for-principals.pdf.

⁵ *Diversity in Queensland schools: policy template*; www.education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/diversity-policy-template.pdf.

⁶ *Diversity in Queensland schools: fact sheet for students*; www.education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/diversity-student-fact-sheet.pdf.

⁷ Diversity in Queensland schools: fact sheet for parents; www.education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/diversity-parent-fact-sheet.pdf.

⁸ *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Action Plan*; <https://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/publications/categories/plans/cultural-capability-action-plan.aspx>.

⁹ *Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2021*; www.datsip.qld.gov.au/publications-governance-resources/policy-governance/reconciliation-action-plan.

¹⁰ *'We All Belong' workplace inclusion and diversity framework*; www.qed.qld.gov.au/workingwithus/induction/workingforthedepartment/humanresources/Documents/we-all-belong-framework.pdf.

¹¹ *Respectful relationships education program*; www.education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/stages-of-schooling/respectful-relationships.

¹² *Child and student protection policy*; www.ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/child-and-student-protection-policy.

¹³ *Student protection procedure*; www.ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/student-protection-procedure.

¹⁴ *Aware. Protective. Safe. Strategy*; www.qed.qld.gov.au/programsinitiatives/department/Documents/aware-protective-safe-strategy.pdf.

¹⁵ *Disclosing personal information to law enforcement agencies procedure*; www.ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/disclosing-personal-information-to-law-enforcement-agencies-procedure.