

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline Autism Queensland's commitment to supporting diversity and ensuring access and inclusion for all clients.

Autism Queensland (AQ) is committed to providing all clients with access to high-quality services free from discrimination and accessed in a supportive environment that ensures safety and wellbeing. AQ is dedicated to supporting the understanding of both employees and clients of client rights and responsibilities.

2.0 SCOPE

This Policy applies to all employees and clients who access AQ services. A reference to "employees" includes permanent, fixed-term, temporary and casual employees, directors, contractors, volunteers and other representatives acting on behalf of AQ in any capacity.

For the purpose of this document, "clients" may refer to: service users; school students; the parents, guardians or carers of clients or organisations.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Diversity - is what makes each of us unique, including our backgrounds, personalities, and beliefs and other factors such as ethnicity, gender, age, race, religion, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also refers to individual characteristics and experiences such as communication style, career path, and life history that influence how we see the world.

Inclusion - when individuals feel valued and respected, regardless of their personal characteristics or circumstances. In an inclusive environment:

- people have the chance to reach their full potential, both individually and collectively;
- they have access to opportunities and resources;
- they can bring their best to every interaction; and
- there is a sense of belonging.

4.0 POLICY

AQ recognise that every person is an expert in their own lives, we respect all aspects of the person when providing individualised supports. When working with clients we aim to understand their world view, values, beliefs, and diverse needs. Support is tailored to the diverse needs of each client to enable them to feel safe, heard, and able to express themselves in a way they are most comfortable.

AQ is committed to ensuring all policies, practices, services, and supports are responsive, respectful, and inclusive of all clients. This commitment extends to ensuring employees are supported to understand the diverse needs of all clients by providing appropriate training and professional development, resources, and linkages to specialist community support. AQ is inclusive of all clients, irrespective of their individual status or characteristics, including but not limited to:

- a) ability;
- b) age;
- c) breastfeeding;
- d) cultural background;
- e) family structure;
- f) gender identity or intersex status;
- g) impairment;

- h) marital or relationship status;
- i) political beliefs;
- j) pregnancy;
- k) race, including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status;
- l) religious beliefs and ideologies;
- m) sex or
- n) sexual orientation.

AQ aims to minimise barriers to clients accessing service in all areas of the organisation. AQ reviews and adjusts practice, policy, services and supports where barriers are identified and welcomes feedback from clients, employees, and the community.

5.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation

- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)*
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)*
- Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- Disability Discrimination and Other Human Rights Legislation Amendment Act 2009 (Cth)*
- Disability Services Act 2006 (Qld)*
- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)*
- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)*
- Education and Care Services Act 2013 (Qld)*
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*
- Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)*
- Industrial Relations Act 2016 (Qld)*
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)*
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)*

Standards and Principles

- Australian Privacy Principles
- National Disability Standards (Cth)
- NDIS Quality & Safeguarding Framework
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

NDIS Modules and Practice Standards

Core 1: Rights and Responsibilities

- 06 Person-centred Supports
- 07 Individual Values and Beliefs

Internal

- Child Protection (Non-School) Procedure
- Child Protection (School) Procedure
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Client Protection (Adult) Procedure
- Client Safeguarding (Adult) Policy
- Client Service Charter
- Clients' Rights Policy + Easy Read
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints & Feedback Management Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy & Procedure
- Whistleblower Policy & Procedure

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