

# AQ School Bullying Policy and Procedure

## 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect Autism Queensland (AQ) students from bullying and ensure appropriate responses when bullying occurs.

## 2.0 Scope

This Policy applies to all employees of AQ. 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.

This Policy applies to all students who access services provided by AQ.

## 3.0 Definitions

**Bullying:** is when a person (or group of people) repeatedly and intentionally uses words or actions against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their wellbeing. These actions are usually done by people who have more influence or power over someone else, or who want to make someone else feel less powerful or helpless.

Bullying is not the same as conflict between people (like having a fight) or disliking someone, even though people might bully each other because of conflict or dislike.

**Physical bullying:** is when a person (or group of people) uses physical actions to bully, such as hitting, poking, tripping or pushing. Repeatedly and intentionally damaging or stealing someone's belongings is also physical bullying.

**Verbal bullying:** includes repeated or systematic name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks and verbal abuse.

**Covert bullying:** is lying about someone, spreading rumours, playing a nasty joke that makes the person feel humiliated or powerless, mimicking or deliberately excluding someone.

**Psychological bullying:** for example, threatening, manipulating or stalking someone.

**Cyber bullying:** (also known as online bullying) using technology, such as email, mobile phones, chat rooms, social networking sites to bully verbally, socially or psychologically.

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## 4.0 Policy

AQ has a zero tolerance approach to bullying. AQ is committed to taking action to protect students from bullying and to respond appropriately when bullying does occur.

To prevent bullying from occurring, AQ will implement the following actions:

- Raise awareness of the school community's shared understanding of what bullying is, how it impacts on people and how bullying is responded to at the school;
- Develop and promote effective social interactions and positive relationships amongst students.

To respond appropriately to any incidences of bullying, AQ will:

- provide an appropriate mechanism for students and parents to report bullying;
- educate students and parents on how to respond, in the first instance, to incidences of bullying, and how to then report all incidences of bullying;
- educate employees on how to appropriately respond to reports of bullying;
- investigate and act upon all reports of bullying;
- take appropriate action, which might include support for targets of bullying and perpetrators and/or disciplinary measures.

## 5.0 Responsibilities

### 5.1 AQ School

AQ acknowledges its responsibility to:

- raise awareness of bullying and how the school will respond to it;
- take action to help prevent bullying;
- provide a reporting mechanism for students and parents;
- educate students and parents on how to respond to bullying and how to report it;
- support employees on how to appropriately respond to bullying;
- investigate and act upon all reports of bullying, including providing appropriate support and consequences.

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## 5.2 AQ Employees

Employees have a responsibility to:

- uphold and consistently apply this Policy;
- respond appropriately to reports of bullying, including by investigating and acting upon reports of bullying, and by providing appropriate support.

## 5.3 Parents

At AQ, parents have a responsibility to:

- encourage their child not to bully others;
- encourage their child to report bullying to themselves or others.

## 5.4 Students

At AQ, students have a responsibility to:

- not engage in bullying behaviour towards others;
- report bullying occurring to them or others.

## 6.0 Procedure

### 6.1 Reporting

AQ provides a range of methods to report bullying. Students and employees can report instances of bullying via:

- reporting directly to an AQ staff member, including Principal, Head of Campus, Teacher, Teacher Aide, Bus Aide /Driver, Student Wellbeing Facilitator, Therapist, Behaviour Support Facilitator and Admin staff;
- email to the relevant school email;
- the complaints and feedback form on the [AQ website](#).

AQ employees must also report all instances and disclosures of bullying via the AQ Incident Management System and discuss with their line manager.

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## 6.2 Responding

AQ will take the following steps when responding to instances of bullying:

- Respond in line with all relevant AQ policies, procedures, and guidelines;
- Follow the [School Behaviour Support Guideline](#) when determining appropriate actions;
- Act in accordance with the [Child Protection \(School\) Procedure](#) to ensure student safety;
- Follow the [Incident Management Procedures](#) for documenting and managing bullying related incidents;
- Ensure compliance with the [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#) during all responses;
- Consider the [Discontinuation or Suspension of Services Policy & Procedure](#) where appropriate;
- Ensure procedural fairness and confidentiality is applied throughout all investigations of bullying allegations.

## 7.0 Related Documents

### Legislation

*Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*

*Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*

*Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)*

*Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*

*Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)*

*Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)*

*Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*

*Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*

### Standards and Principles

Australian Student Wellbeing Framework

National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian Schools

Queensland Child Safe Standards

### Internal

Child Protection (School) Procedure

# AQ School Bullying Policy and Procedure

Child Safeguarding Policy

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Complaints and Feedback Management Policy

Discontinuation or Suspension of Services Policy and Procedures

Incident Management Policy and Procedures

School Behaviour Support Guideline

Document	AQ School Bullying Policy and Procedure			Type	Policy & Procedure
Approver	Chief Operations Officer			Version	V1.0
Created	February 2026	Published	May 2026	Next Review	May 2028