



Toowoomba West Special School

Student Code of Conduct 2025-2027

Every student succeeding

Every student succeeding is the shared vision of Queensland state schools. Our vision shapes regional and school planning to ensure every student receives the support needed to belong to the school community, engage purposefully in learning and experience academic success.

Queensland Department of Education
State Schools Strategy 2025

Purpose

Toowoomba West Special School is committed to providing a safe, respectful and disciplined learning environment for students and staff, where students have opportunities to engage in quality learning experiences and acquire values supportive of their lifelong wellbeing. Toowoomba West Special School is a Positive Behaviour for Learning school.

This Student Code of Conduct is designed to facilitate high standards of behaviour so that the learning and teaching in our school can be effective and students can participate positively within our school community.

Contact Information

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Contact Person: **Glenn Gatehouse (principal)**

Endorsement

Principal Name: **Glenn Gatehouse**

Principal Signature:



Date: 17.06.2025

P/C President and-or School
Council Chair Name: **Skye Ryan**

P/C President and-or School
Council Chair Signature: *Skye Ryan*

Date: 17.06.2025

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Learning and Behaviour Statement

All areas at Toowoomba West Special School are learning and teaching environments. We consider behaviour management to be an opportunity for valuable social learning as well as a means of maximising the success of academic education programs.

Our Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students outlines our system for facilitating positive behaviours, preventing problem behaviour and responding to unacceptable behaviours. Through our school plan shared expectations for student behaviour are plain to everyone, assisting Toowoomba West Special School to create and maintain a positive and productive learning and teaching environment, where ALL school community members have clear and consistent expectations and understandings of their role in the educational process.

Our school has set expectations, which can be understood by our students. The school community has agreed that these expectations are relevant within the Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students. These are: Safety, Respect, Responsibility & Resilience

Student Wellbeing and Support Network

Curriculum and pedagogy

Schools build the foundations for wellbeing and lifelong learning through curriculum embedding [personal and social capabilities](#) (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social management) in the implementation of the [P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework](#).

Schools acknowledge the positive impact that a meaningful relationship between teacher and students can have on students' academic and social outcomes.

Policy and expectations

Within a school community there are specific health and wellbeing issues that will need to be addressed for the whole school, specific students, or in certain circumstances.

Drug education and intervention

Toowoomba West Special School implements drug intervention measures for students involved in drug-related incidents at school, during school activities or while in school uniform. This is managed to protect the health and safety of the student/s involved, other students, school staff and the wider community.

Specialised health needs

Toowoomba West Special School works closely with parents to ensure students with specialised health needs, including those requiring specialised health procedures, have access to a reasonable standard of support for their health needs whilst attending school or school-based activities.

This means that appropriate health plans are developed and followed for students with specialised health needs, that staff are aware of the student's medical condition

and that an appropriate number of staff have been trained to support the student's health condition.

Medications

Toowoomba West Special School requires parent consent and medical authorisation to administer any medication (including over-the-counter medications) to students. For students requiring medication to be administered during school hours, the College can provide further information and relevant forms.

For students with a long-term health condition requiring medication, parents need to provide the school with a [Request to administer medication at school](#) form signed by the prescribing health practitioner.

Toowoomba West Special School maintains a minimum of one adrenaline auto-injector and asthma reliever/puffer, stored in the school's/campus first aid kit to provide emergency first aid medication if required.

Mental health

Toowoomba West Special School implements early intervention measures and treatments for students where there is reasonable belief that a student has a mental health difficulty. This includes facilitating the development, implementation and periodic review of a [Student Plan](#).

Suicide prevention

Toowoomba West Special School staff who notice suicide warning signs in a student should seek help immediately from the school guidance officer, senior guidance officer or other appropriate staff.

When dealing with a mental health crisis, schools call 000 when there is an imminent threat to the safety of student in the first instance, and where necessary provide first aid. In all other situations, Toowoomba West Special school staff follow suicide intervention and prevention advice by ensuring:

- *the student is not left alone*
- *their safety and the safety of other students and staff is maintained*
- *students receive appropriate support immediately*
- *parents are advised*
- *all actions are documented and reported.*

Suicide postvention

In the case of a suicide of a student that has not occurred on school grounds, Toowoomba West Special School enacts a postvention response, by communicating with the family of the student and ensuring immediate support is provided to students and staff who may be affected.

Where a suicide has occurred on school grounds or at a school event, Toowoomba West Special School staff immediately enact the School Emergency Management Plan and communicate with the family of the student and ensure immediate support is provided to students and staff who may be affected.

Consideration of Individual Circumstances

Staff at Toowoomba West Special School take into account students' individual circumstances, such as their behaviour history, disability, mental health and

wellbeing, religious and cultural considerations, home environment and care arrangements when teaching expectations, responding to inappropriate behaviour or applying a disciplinary consequence.

In considering the individual circumstances of each student, we recognise that the way we teach, the support we provide and the way we respond to students will differ. This reflects the principle of equality, where every student is given the support they need to be successful. This also means that not everyone will be treated the same, because treating everyone the same is not fair. For example, some students need additional support to interpret or understand an expectation. Others may benefit from more opportunities to practise a required skill or behaviour. For a small number of students, the use of certain disciplinary consequences may be considered inappropriate or ineffective due to complex trauma or family circumstances. These are all matters that our teachers and principal consider with each individual student in both the instruction of behaviour and the response to behaviour.

Our teachers are also obliged by law to respect and protect the privacy of individual students, so while we understand the interest of other students, staff and parents to know what punishment another student might have received, we will not disclose or discuss this information with anyone but the student's family. This applies even if the behavioural incident, such as bullying, involves your child. You can be assured that school staff take all matters, such as bullying, very seriously and will address them appropriately. We expect that parents and students will respect the privacy of other students and families.

If you have concerns about the behaviour of another student at the school, or the way our staff have responded to their behaviour, please make an appointment with the principal to discuss the matter.

Whole School Approach to Behaviour Management

Students come to school to learn. Behaviour support represents an important opportunity for learning how to get along with others.

Re-directing low-level and infrequent problem behaviour

When a student exhibits low-level and infrequent problem behaviour, the first response of school staff members is to remind the student of expected school behaviour, then ask them to change their behaviour so that it aligns with our school's expectations.

Our preferred way of re-directing low-level problem behaviour is to help them to recall our four school expectations, in conjunction with a verbal and / or visual prompt eg "safe hands". Once the student demonstrates the desired behaviour, the student is then immediately rewarded with verbal praise and a STAR stamp (refer to PBL flow chart).

Targeted behaviour support:

Each year a small number of students at Toowoomba West Special School are identified through our OneSchool Incident Referral data as needing a little bit extra in the way of targeted behavioural support. In most cases the problem behaviours of these students may not be immediately regarded as severe, but the frequency of their behaviours may put these students' learning and social success at risk if not addressed in a timely manner.

Students who receive targeted behaviour support are identified through OneSchool data. A process, which is employed at TWSS, is the use of a Classroom Problem Solving Team (CPST). This team consists of the deputy principal, internal PBL coach, classroom teachers and external behaviour coach. The purpose of this team is to:

- Review current pedagogical practices (whole school, classroom)
- Identify strategies to teach expected behaviour
- Assist the classroom teacher to implement these strategies
- Identify additional support required (external agencies, environment adjustments)

Individual students are referred to this team through the use of a threshold system. Individual student data on OneSchool is reviewed each Monday by the deputy principal. For a student to be automatically referred to the CPST the student needs to have the following behaviour incidents reported on OneSchool:

- 5 x Minor Behaviours within a 10 day period

or

- 2 Major Behaviours within a 10 period

In addition to these thresholds, classroom teachers can refer an individual student to the CPST with supporting data.

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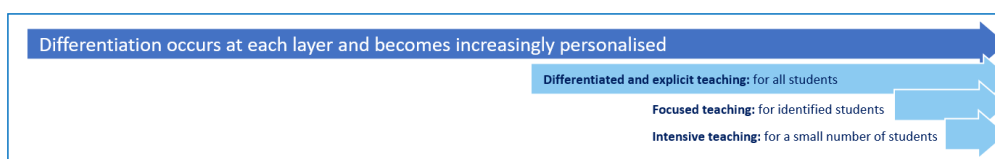
If you have concerns about the behaviour of another student at the school, or the way our staff have responded to their behaviour, please make an appointment with the principal to discuss the matter.

Differentiated and Explicit Teaching

Toowoomba West Special School is a disciplined school environment that provides differentiated teaching to respond to the learning needs of all students. This involves teaching expected behaviours and providing opportunities for students to practise these behaviours. Teachers reinforce expected behaviours, provide feedback and correction, and opportunities for practise.

Teachers at Toowoomba West Special School vary what students are taught, how they are taught and how students can demonstrate what they know as part of this differentiated approach to behaviour. These decisions about differentiation are made in response to data and day-to-day monitoring that indicates the behavioural learning needs of students. This enables our teachers to purposefully plan a variety of ways to engage students; assist them to achieve the expected learning; and to demonstrate their learning.

There are three main layers to differentiation, as illustrated in the diagram below. This model is the same used for academic and pedagogical differentiation.



These three layers map directly to the tiered approach discussed earlier in the Learning and Behaviour section. For example, in the PBL framework, Tier 1 is differentiated and explicit teaching for all students, Tier 2 is focussed teaching for identified students and Tier 3 is intensive teaching for a small number of students. Each layer provides progressively more personalised supports for students.

Focused Teaching

Approximately 15% of all students in any school or classroom may require additional support to meet behaviour expectations, even after being provided with differentiated and explicit teaching. These students may have difficulty meeting behavioural expectations in a particular period of the day or as part of a learning area/subject, and focused teaching is provided to help them achieve success.

Focused teaching involves revisiting key behavioural concepts and/or skills and using explicit and structured teaching strategies in particular aspects of a behaviour skill. Focused teaching provides students with more opportunities to practise skills and multiple opportunities to achieve the intended learning and expected behaviour. Support staff, including teachers with specialist expertise in learning, language or development, work collaboratively with class teachers at Toowoomba West Special School to provide focused teaching. Focused teaching is aligned to the PBL Expectations Matrix, and student progress is monitored by the classroom teacher/s to identify those who:

- no longer require the additional support
- require ongoing focussed teaching
- require intensive teaching.

Toowoomba West Special School has a range of Student Support Network staff in place to help arrange and deliver focused teaching to students who need more support to meet expectations. In addition, the school invests in the following evidence-informed programs to address specific skill development for some students:

- Zones of Regulation
- Functional Based Assessment

Intensive Teaching

Research evidence shows that even in an effective, well-functioning school there will always be approximately 5% of the student population who require intensive teaching to achieve behavioural expectations. Intensive teaching involves frequent and explicit instruction, with individuals or in small groups, to develop mastery of basic behavioural concepts, skills and knowledge.

Some students may require intensive teaching for a short period, for particular behaviour skills. Other students may require intensive teaching for a more prolonged period. Decisions about the approach will be made based on data collected from their teacher or teachers, and following consultation with the student's family.

For a small number of students who continue to display behaviours that are deemed complex and challenging, then individualised, function-based behaviour assessment and support plans and multi-agency collaboration may be provided to support the student. This approach will seek to address the acute impact of barriers to learning and participation faced by students who are negotiating a number of complex personal issues.

Students who require intensive teaching will be assigned an individual mentor at the school that will oversee the coordination of their program, communicate with stakeholders and directly consult with the student.

Legislative Delegations

Legislation

- [Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 \(Old\)](#)
- [Child Protection Act 1999 \(Old\)](#)
- [Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)
- [Criminal Code Act 1899 \(Old\)](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2017](#)
- [Human Rights Act 2019 \(Old\)](#)
- [Information Privacy Act 2009 \(Old\)](#)
- [Judicial Review Act 1991 \(Old\)](#)
- [Right to Information Act 2009 \(Old\)](#)
- [Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 \(Old\)](#)
- [Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011 \(Old\)](#)
- [Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2011 \(Cwth\)](#)

Delegations

Under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, state school principals are responsible for “controlling and regulating student discipline in the school”.

Principals are afforded a number of **non-delegable powers** to assist them to meet this obligation, including the authority to suspend, exclude or cancel the enrolment of a student at the school. These decision-making responsibilities cannot be delegated to other staff in the school, such as deputy principals.

The details of these responsibilities are outlined in the legislative instruments of delegation and instruments of authorisation provided below:

- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 Director-General's delegations](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 Minister's delegations](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 Director-General's authorisations](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2006 Minister's delegations](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2017 Director-General's delegations](#)

Disciplinary Consequences

The disciplinary consequences model used at Toowoomba West Special School follows the same differentiated approach used in the proactive teaching and support of student behavioural expectations. Behaviours that require immediate intervention from administration staff are considered to be major behaviours. All other behaviours, when not consistently recurring, are considered to be minor behaviours.

Intensive Disciplinary Responses

School leadership team work in consultation with Student Support Network to address persistent or ongoing serious problem behaviour. This may include:

- *Functional Behaviour Assessment based individual support plan*
- *Complex case management and review*
- *Stakeholder meeting with parents and external agencies including regional specialists*
- *Temporary removal of student property (e.g. mobile phone)*
- *Short term suspension (up to 10 school days)*
- *Long term suspension (up to 20 school days)*
- *Charge related suspension (student has been charged with a serious criminal offence is suspended from school until the charge has been dealt with by the relevant justice authorities)*
- *Suspension pending exclusion (student is suspended from school pending a decision by the Director-General or delegate (principal) about their exclusion from school)*
- *Exclusion (student is excluded from a particular state school site, a group of state schools or all state schools in Queensland for a defined period of time or permanently)*
- *Cancellation of enrolment for students older than compulsory school age who refuse to participate in the educational program provided at the school.*

School Disciplinary Absences

A *School Disciplinary Absence (SDA)* is an enforced period of absence from attending a Queensland state school, applied by the Principal as a consequence to address poor student behaviour. There are four types of SDA:

- *Short suspension (1 to 10 school days)*
- *Long suspension (11 to 20 school days)*
- *Charge-related suspension*
- *Exclusion (period of not more than one year or permanently).*

At Toowoomba West Special School, the use of any SDA is considered a very serious decision. It is typically only used by the Principal when other options have been exhausted or the student's behaviour is so dangerous that continued attendance at the school is considered a risk to the safety or wellbeing of the school community.

Parents and students may appeal a long suspension, charge-related suspension or exclusion decision. A review will be conducted by the Director-General or their

delegate, and a decision made within 40 schools days to confirm, amend/vary or set aside the original SDA decision by the Principal.

The appeal process is a thorough review of all documentation associated with the SDA decision and provides an opportunity for both the school and the family to present their case in the matter. Time is afforded for collection, dissemination and response to the materials by both the school and the family. It is important that the purpose of the appeal is understood so that expectations are clear, and appropriate supports are in place to ensure students can continue to access their education while completing their SDA.

Re-entry following suspension

Students who are suspended from Toowoomba West Special School may be invited to attend a re-entry meeting on the day of their scheduled return to school. The main purpose of this meeting is to welcome the student, with their parent/s, back to the school. It is **not a time** to review the student's behaviour or the decision to suspend, the student has already received a punishment through their disciplinary absence from school. The aim of the re-entry meeting is for school staff to set the student up for future success and strengthen home-school communication.

Arrangements

The invitation to attend the re-entry meeting will be communicated via telephone and in writing, usually via email. Re-entry meetings are short, taking less than 10 minutes, and kept small with only the Principal or their delegate attending with the student and their parent/s.

A record of the meeting is saved in OneSchool, under the Contact tab, including any notes or discussions occurring during the meeting.

Structure

The structure of the re-meeting should follow a set agenda, shared in advance with the student and their family. If additional items are raised for discussion, a separate arrangement should be made to meet with the parent/s at a later date and time. This meeting should be narrowly focussed on making the student and their family feel welcome back into the school community.

Possible agenda:

- *Welcome back to school*
- *Check in on student wellbeing*
- *Discuss any recent changes to school routine or staffing*
- *Offer information about supports available (e.g. guidance officer)*
- *Set a date for follow-up*
- *Thank student and parent/s for attending*
- *Walk with student to classroom*

Reasonable adjustments

In planning the re-entry meeting, school staff will consider reasonable adjustments needed to support the attendance and engagement of the student. This includes selecting an appropriate and accessible meeting space, organising translation or interpretation services or supports (e.g. AUSLAN), provision of written and/or pictorial information and other relevant accommodations. The inclusion of support staff, such as guidance officers or Community Education Counsellors, may also offer important advice to ensure a successful outcome to the re-entry meeting.

School Policies

Toowoomba West Special School has tailored school discipline policies designed to ensure students, staff and visitors work cooperatively to create and maintain a supportive and safe learning environment. Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the responsibilities for students, staff and visitors outlined in the following policies:

- *Temporary removal of student property*
- *Use of mobile phones and other devices by students*
- *Preventing and responding to bullying*
- *Appropriate use of social media*

Temporary removal of student property

The removal of any property in a student's possession may be necessary to promote the caring, safe and supportive learning environment of the school, to maintain and foster mutual respect between all state school staff and students. The ***Temporary removal of student property by school staff procedure*** outlines the processes, conditions and responsibilities for state school principals and school staff when temporarily removing student property.

In determining what constitutes a reasonable time to retain student property, the principal or state school staff will consider:

- *the condition, nature or value of the property*
- *the circumstances in which the property was removed*
- *the safety of the student from whom the property was removed, other students or staff members*
- *good management, administration and control of the school.*

The Principal or state school staff determine when the temporarily removed student property can be returned, unless the property has been handed to the Queensland Police Service.

The following items are explicitly prohibited at Toowoomba West Special School and will be removed if found in a student's possession:

- *illegal items or weapons (e.g. guns, knives*, throwing stars, brass knuckles, chains)*
- *imitation guns or weapons*
- *potentially dangerous items (e.g. blades, rope)*
- *drugs** (including tobacco)*
- *alcohol*
- *aerosol deodorants or cans (including spray paint)*
- *explosives (e.g. fireworks, flares, sparklers)*
- *flammable solids or liquids (e.g. fire starters, mothballs, lighters)*
- *poisons (e.g. weed killer, insecticides)*
- *inappropriate or offensive material (e.g. racist literature, pornography, extremist propaganda).*

** No knives of any type are allowed at school, including flick knives, ballistic knives, sheath knives, push daggers, trench knives, butterfly knives, star knives, butter knives, fruit knives or craft knives, or any item that can be used as a weapon, for example a chisel. Knives needed for school activities will be provided by the school, and the use of them will be supervised by school staff. In circumstances where students are required to have their own knives or sharp tools for particular subjects or vocational courses, the school will provide information about the procedures for carrying and storing these items at school.*

*** The administration of medications to students by school staff is only considered when a prescribing health practitioner has determined that it is necessary or when there is no other alternative in relation to the treatment of a specific health need. Schools require medical authorisation to administer any medication to students (including over-the-counter medications such as paracetamol or alternative medicines).*

Responsibilities

School Staff at Toowoomba West Special School:

- do not require the student's consent to search school property such as lockers, desks or laptops that are supplied to the student through the school;
- may seize a student's bag where there is suspicion that the student has a dangerous item (for example, a knife) in their school bag, prior to seeking consent to search from a parent or calling the police;
- consent from the student or parent is required to examine or otherwise deal with the temporarily removed student property. For example, staff who temporarily remove a mobile phone from a student are not authorised to unlock the phone or to read, copy or delete messages stored on the phone;
- there may, however, be emergency circumstances where it is necessary to search a student's property without the student's consent or the consent of the student's parents (e.g. to access an EpiPen for an anaphylactic emergency);
- consent from the student or parent is required to search the person of a student (e.g. pockets or shoes). If consent is not provided and a search is considered necessary, the police and the student's parents should be called to make such a determination.

Parents of students at Toowoomba West Special School:

- ensure your children do not bring property onto schools grounds or other settings used by the school (e.g. camp, sporting venues) that:
 - is prohibited according to the Toowoomba West Special School Student Code of Conduct
 - is illegal
 - puts the safety or wellbeing of others at risk
 - does not preserve a caring, safe, supportive or productive learning environment
 - does not maintain and foster mutual respect;
 - collect temporarily removed student property as soon as possible after they have been notified by the Principal or state school staff that the property is available for collection.

Students of Toowoomba West Special School:

- do not bring property onto school grounds or other settings used by the school (e.g. camp, sporting venues) that:
 - is prohibited according to the Exemplar State College Code of Conduct
 - is illegal
 - puts the safety or wellbeing of others at risk
 - does not preserve a caring, safe, supportive or productive learning environment
 - does not maintain and foster mutual respect;
- collect their property as soon as possible when advised by the Principal or state school staff it is available for collection.

Use of mobile phones and other devices by students

Digital literacy refers to the skills needed to live, learn and work in a society where communication and access to information is dominated by digital technologies like mobile phones. However, the benefits brought about through these diverse technologies can be easily overshadowed by deliberate misuse which harms others or disrupts learning.

This policy reflects the importance the school places on students displaying courtesy, consideration and respect for others whenever they are using personal technology devices.

Mobile Phones

All mobile phones are to be clearly labelled and given to front office staff at the beginning of the day and collected at 3:00. All care but no responsibility will be taken for equipment.

Confiscation

Permitted personal technology devices used contrary to this policy on school premises will be confiscated by school staff. They will be made available for collection from the school office at the end of the school day unless required to be kept for purposes of disciplinary investigation, when it will only be returned in the presence of a parent.

Devices potentially containing evidence of criminal offences may be reported to the police. In such cases police may take possession of such devices for investigation purposes and students and parents will be advised to contact Queensland Police Service (QPS) directly.

Students who have a personal technology device confiscated more than once will not be permitted to have a personal technology device at school for at least one month, or longer if deemed necessary by the Principal.

Personal Technology Device Etiquette

Bringing personal technology devices to school is not encouraged by the school because of the potential for theft and general distraction and/or disruption associated with them.

However, if they are brought to school, they must be turned off and out of sight during assemblies or classes unless given permission from teaching staff. Personal technology devices may be used at morning tea and lunch breaks and before and after school.

Recording Voice and Images

Every member of the school community should feel confident about participating fully and frankly in all aspects of school life without concern that their personal privacy is being invaded by them being recorded without their knowledge or consent.

We uphold the value of trust and the right to privacy at Gilston. Students using personal technology devices to record inappropriate behaviours or incidents (such as vandalism, fighting, bullying, staged fighting or pranks etc) for the purpose of dissemination among the student body or outside the school, by any means (including distribution by phone or internet posting) builds a culture of distrust and disharmony.

Students must not record images anywhere that recording would not reasonably be considered appropriate (e.g. in change rooms, toilets or any other place where a reasonable person would expect to be afforded privacy).

Recording of events in class is not permitted unless express consent is provided by the class teacher.

A student at school who uses a personal technology device to record private conversations, ordinary school activities (apart from social functions like graduation ceremonies) or violent, illegal or embarrassing matter capable of bringing the school into public disrepute is considered to be in breach of this policy.

Even where consent is obtained for such recording, the school will not tolerate images or sound captured by personal technology devices on the school premises or elsewhere being disseminated to others, if it is done for the purpose of causing embarrassment to individuals or the school, for the purpose of bullying or harassment, including racial and sexual harassment, or where without such intent a reasonable person would conclude that such outcomes may have or will occur.

Students involved in:

- recording; and/or
- disseminating material (through text messaging, display, internet uploading etc); and/or,
- knowingly being a subject of a recording

Breach of this policy may be subject to discipline (including suspension and recommendation for exclusion).

Students should note that the recording or dissemination of images that are considered indecent (such as nudity or sexual acts involving children), is against the law and if detected by the school will result in a referral to QPS.

Text Communication

The sending of text messages that contain obscene language and/or threats of violence may amount to bullying and or harassment or even stalking, and will subject the sender to discipline and possible referral to QPS. Students receiving such text messages at school, should ensure they keep the message as evidence and bring the matter to the attention of the school office.

Recording Private Conversations and the Invasion of Privacy Act 1971

It is important that all members of the school community understand that under the *Invasion of Privacy Act 1971*, 'a person is guilty of an offence against this Act if the person uses a listening device to overhear, record, monitor or listen to a private conversation'. It is also an offence under the Act for a person who has overheard, recorded, monitored or listened to a conversation to which s/he is not a party to publish or communicate the substance or meaning of the conversation to others.

Students need to understand that some conversations are private and therefore to overhear, record, monitor or listen to such private conversations may be in breach of this Act, unless consent to the recording is appropriately obtained.

Special Circumstances Arrangement

Students who require the use of a personal technology device in circumstances that would contravene this policy (for example to assist with a medical condition or other disability or for a special project) should negotiate a special circumstances arrangement with the Deputy Principal or Principal.

** Personal Technology Devices includes, but is not limited to, games devices (such as Portable gaming devices, Tamagotchis®, laptop computers, PDAs, Blackberrys®, cameras and/or voice recording devices (whether or not integrated with a mobile phone or MP3 player), mobile telephones, iPods® and devices of a similar nature.*

Preventing and responding to bullying

Anti-bullying and Harassment Approach (including Cyberbullying)

A safe and supportive school environment is enhanced if Bullying and Harassment are targeted by appropriate strategies, inclusive practices, and consistent management. To be effective, our approach relies on the implementation of the following:

- a whole school consensus of what is bullying and harassment;
- an understanding of who the bully is and why they bully;
- compassion and understanding for who the victims are;
- consistent consequences for bullying and harassment;
- teaching of skills to replace bullying and victim behaviour; and
- reinforcement for positive interactions.

Our school community has agreed upon the following broad definition of bullying and harassment taken from the Bullying. No Way! national website:

...both involve a more powerful person or group oppressing a less powerful person or group, often on the grounds of 'difference' ...These differences can be related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, personality, age, marital status, parenting status or economic status. (Cited at <http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au> on 22/06/06)

Outward demonstrations of bullying and harassment behaviour include but are not exclusive to; name calling; teasing; hitting, pushing, pulling, pinching or kicking; taking possessions; taking money or other things; forcing others to do things they don't want to do; and ignoring or leaving others out.

(Cited at <http://www.childline.org.uk/pdfs/info-bullying-professionals.pdf>)

Children bully for a range of complex reasons and have often been bullied or abused themselves.

Sometimes they are children experiencing life situations they can't cope with, that leave them feeling helpless and out of control. They may be children with poor social skills who do not fit in, or can't meet the expectations of their family or school. They bully to feel competent, successful, to control someone else or to get relief from their own feelings of powerlessness. (Stan Davis. Preventing Bullying and harassment. Cited at <http://www.geocities.com/EnchantedForest/Cottage/5207/antiviolence.html>)

Bullying Intervention

At Toowoomba West Special School we believe that bullying behaviour requires adult intervention. We have identified a range of strategies to deal with bullying situations.

These include:

- intervene quickly and decidedly in bullying situations;
- allow all parties a quiet place to calm down;
- consistently apply consequences;
- provide praise and positive reinforcement for the diffusion of bullying;
- provide adequate supervision at unstructured times of the day (before school, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea);
- initiate serious talks with victims and parents as well as bullies and parents to identify underlying problems and implement appropriate support; and
- promote classroom discussions of bullying behaviour

(Stan Davis. Stop Bulling Now. *Cited at*
<http://www.geocities.com/EnchantedForest/Cottage/5207/antiviolence.html>

If bullying and harassment behaviour is ongoing, an ISP social skills goal may be devised. If the behaviour becomes persistent and prolonged then an Individual Positive Behaviour Support Plan is developed.

The Bully

The consistent response to any bullying incident by teaching staff is vital. Appropriate outcomes and actions for students that show bullying and harassment behaviours include:

- a) Name the behaviour.
- b) Redirect to an appropriate area under supervision.
- c) Within 15 minutes, relevant staff member (home group teacher, deputy principal, principal) speak to the student about the incident – more time maybe necessary for calming down.
- d) Student and adult negotiate consequence where appropriate eg, apologising, detention time, missing out on a preferred activity.
- e) After the incident relevant staff devise action plan to incorporate positive behaviour strategies across problematic environments.
- f) Adjust HRE content to reflect bullying and harassment issues.
- g) Teaching staff identify if an Individual Support Plan goal or Individual Positive Behaviour Support Plan is required.
- h) Case Managers of the plan are responsible for the dissemination of information to all teaching staff so that consistency across environments is maintained.
- i) The principal may suspend a student if the bullying or harassment behaviour has been ongoing with increased intensity. Other attempts to decrease the behaviour have been unsuccessful at this time. Suspension in these circumstances is seen as an ecological or environmental change.

Victim Support

Not all children are equally likely to be victimised by bullying behaviour. Stan Davis (*Cited on 22/06/06*) suggests that those children who are more prone to be picked upon tend to have the following characteristics:

- Low self-esteem
- Insecure
- Lack of social skills including minimal communication skills
- Cry or become emotionally distraught easily
- Unable to defend or stand up for themselves

Our social skilling programs attempt to teach our students better social and conflict management skills. Included within the program are the six steps of how to deal with a bully. These are:

- a) Ignore them when possible.
- b) Tell them you don't like it.
- c) Move away from them.
- d) Ask them to stop.
- e) Tell them firmly to stop.
- f) Ask for adult assistance.

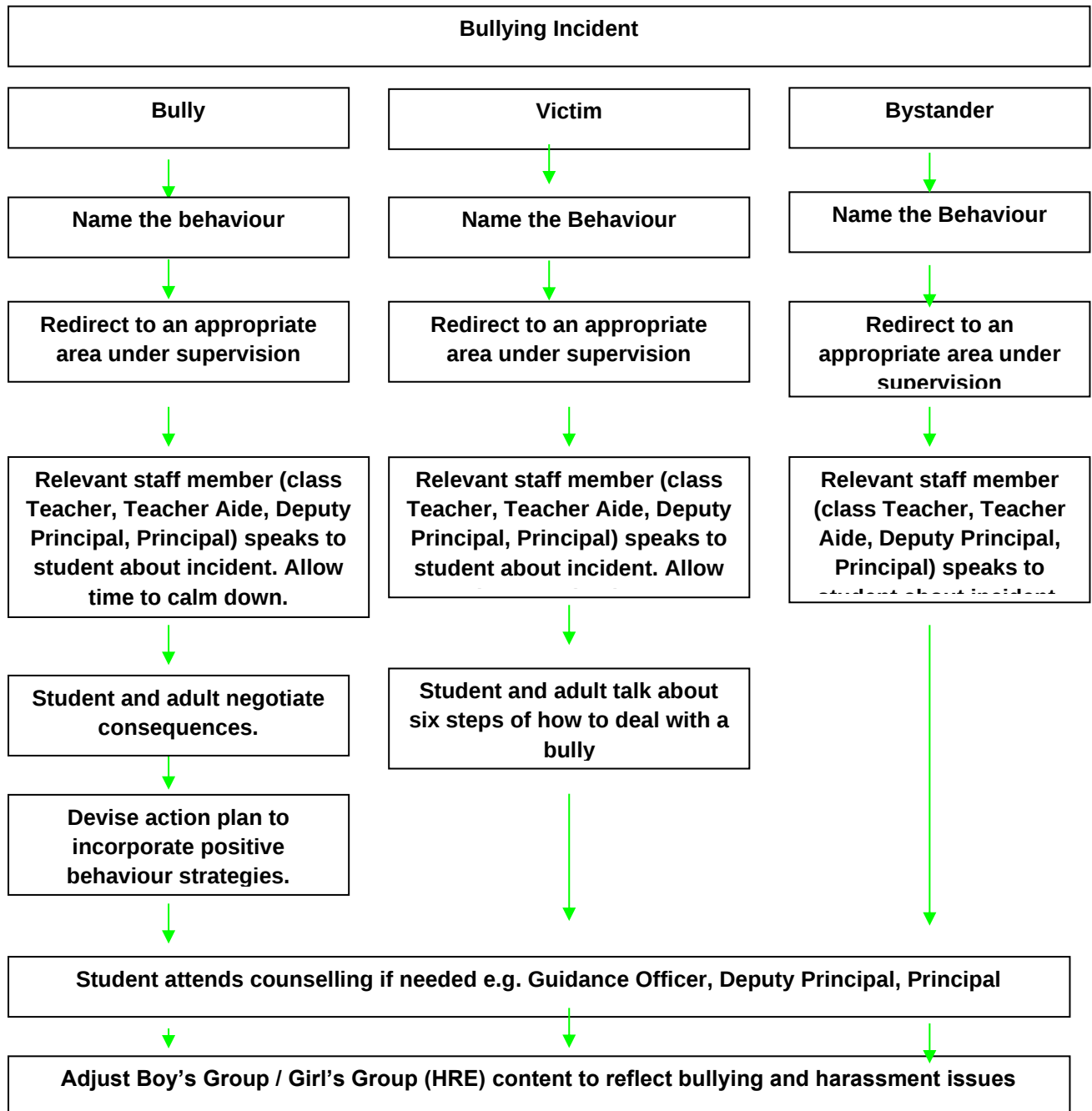
(Davis, S, Preventing Bullying and Harassment. A Learning Resource for Teachers and Students,
Cited at <http://www.geocities.com/EnchantedForest/Cottage/5207/antiviolence.html>

The Bystander

At Toowoomba West Special School, we have decided that our response to bystander behaviour when a bullying incident occurs requires specific attention. After naming their behaviour, bystanders are initially redirected to a different location and/or activity so that the bullying incident can be diffused. Students are later spoken to about their behaviour and further positive programming is instigated.

The following flow chart summarises our response to bullying incidences at Toowoomba West Special School.

RESPONDING TO BULLYING INCIDENTS



Bullying response flowchart for teachers

Key contacts for students and parents to report bullying:

- Student/child's teacher
- Internal Behaviour Coach
- Deputy Principal
- Principal

First hour
Listen

- Provide a safe, quiet space to talk
- Reassure the student that you will listen to them
- Let them share their experience and feelings without interruption
- If you hold immediate concerns for the student's safety, let the student know how you will address these. Immediate in this circumstance is where the staff member believes the student is likely to experience harm (from others or self) within the next 24 hours

Day one
Document

- Ask the student for examples they have of the alleged bullying (e.g. hand written notes or screenshots)
- Write a record of your communication with the student
- Check back with the student to ensure you have the facts correct
- Enter the record in OneSchool
- Notify parent/s that the issue of concern is being investigated

Day two
Collect

- Gather additional information from other students, staff or family
- Review any previous reports or records for students involved
- Make sure you can answer who, what, where, when and how
- Clarify information with student and check on their wellbeing

Day three
Discuss

- Evaluate the information to determine if bullying has occurred or if another disciplinary matter is at issue
- Make a time to meet with the student to discuss next steps
- Ask the student what they believe will help address the situation
- Provide the student and parent with information about student support network
- Agree to a plan of action and timeline for the student, parent and yourself

Day four
Implement

- Document the plan of action in OneSchool
- Complete all actions agreed with student and parent within agreed timeframes
- Monitor the student and check in regularly on their wellbeing
- Seek assistance from student support network if needed

Day five
Review

- Meet with the student to review situation
- Discuss what has changed, improved or worsened
- Explore other options for strengthening student wellbeing or safety
- Report back to parent
- Record outcomes in OneSchool

Ongoing
Follow up

- Continue to check in with student on regular basis until concerns have been mitigated
- Record notes of follow-up meetings in OneSchool
- Refer matter to specialist staff within 48 hours if problems escalate
- Look for opportunities to improve school wellbeing for all students

Appropriate use of social media

Cyberbullying is treated at Toowoomba West Special School with the same level of seriousness as in-person bullying. The major difference with cyberbullying however, is that unlike in-person bullying, cyberbullying follows students into their community, their homes and their bedrooms, giving them no opportunity to escape the harassment or abuse during the evening, weekends or holidays.

In the first instance, students or parents who wish to make a report about cyberbullying should approach the regular class teacher.

It is important for students, parents and staff to know that state school principals have the authority to take disciplinary action to address student behaviours that occur outside of school hours or school grounds. This includes cyberbullying. Parents and students who have concerns about cyberbullying incidents occurring during school holidays should immediately seek assistance through the [Office of the e-Safety Commissioner](#) or the Queensland Police Service.

Students enrolled at Toowoomba West Special School may face in-school disciplinary action, such as detention or removing of privileges, or more serious consequences such as suspension or exclusion from school for engaging in behaviour that adversely affects, or is likely to adversely affect, other students or the good order and management of the school. This includes behaviour such as cyberbullying which occurs outside of school hours or settings, for example on the weekend or during school holidays. It also applies to inappropriate online behaviour of enrolled students that is directed towards other community members or students from other school sites.

Parents or other stakeholders who engage in inappropriate online behaviour towards students, staff or other parents may be referred to the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner and/or the Queensland Police Service. State school staff will be referred for investigation to the Integrity and Employee Relations team in the Department of Education.

Cyberbullying response flowchart for school staff

How to manage online incidents that impact your school

Student protection

If at any point the principal forms a reasonable suspicion that a student has been harmed or is at risk of harm, they have a responsibility to respond in accordance with the [Student protection procedure](#).

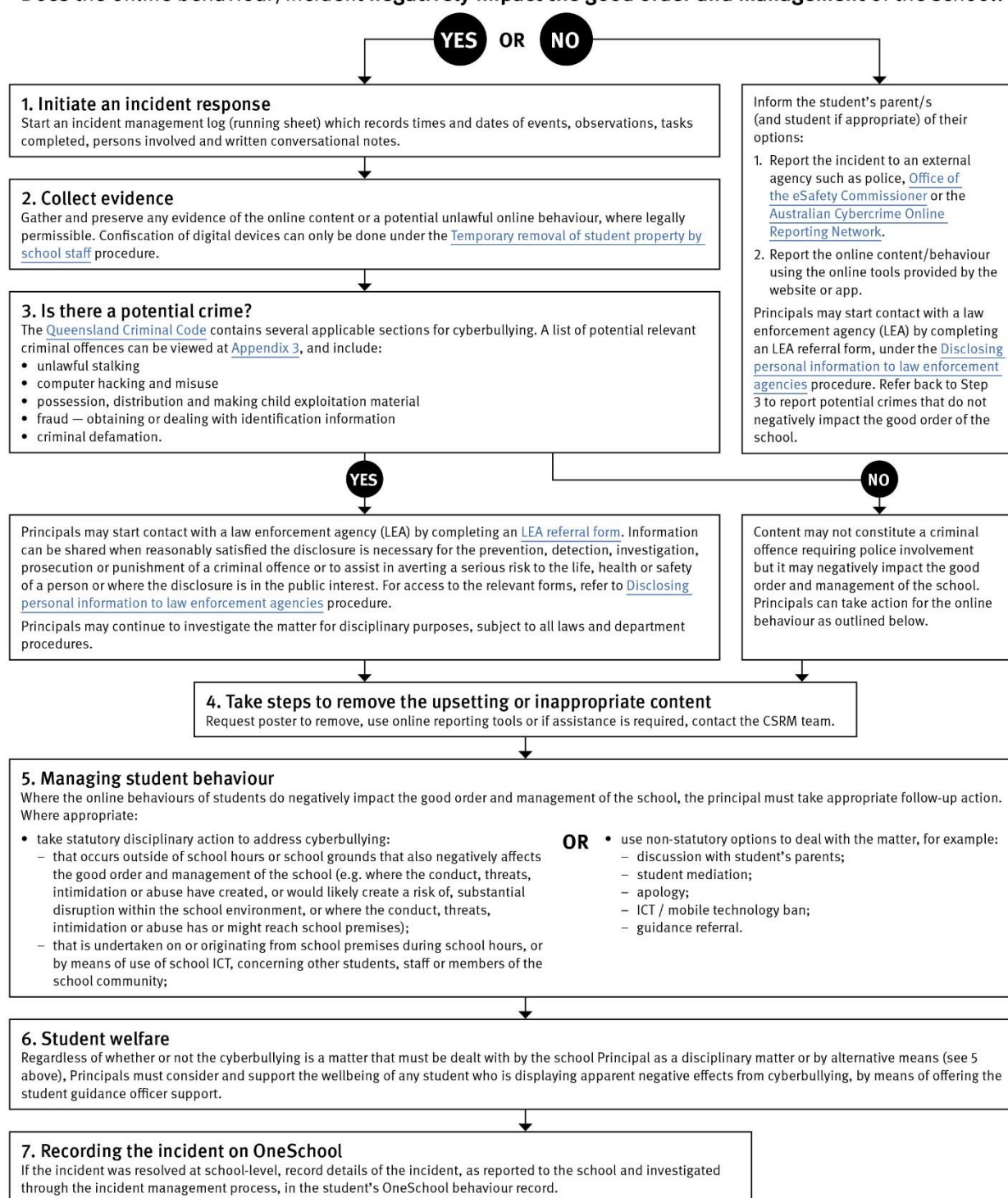
Explicit images

If the investigation involves naked or explicit images of children, staff should not save, copy, forward or otherwise deal with the content, as per the [Temporary removal of student property by school staff procedure](#). This includes onto OneSchool records. Refer to the investigative process outlined in 'Responding to incidents involving naked or explicit images of children' from the [Online Incident management guidelines](#).

Help

Refer to the [Online incident management guidelines](#) for more details, or if assistance is required, contact the Cybersafety and Reputation Management (CSRM) team on 3034 5035 or Cybersafety.ReputationManagement@qed.qld.gov.au.

Does the online behaviour/incident **negatively impact the good order and management of the school?**



Restrictive Practices

School staff at Toowoomba West Special School need to respond to student behaviour that presents a risk of physical harm to the student themselves or others. It is anticipated that most instances of risky behaviour can be de-escalated and resolved quickly. On some rarer occasions, a student's behaviour may continue to escalate and staff need to engage immediately with positive and proactive strategies aimed at supporting the student to manage their emotional arousal and behaviour.

In some very rare situations, where there is immediate risk of physical harm to the student or other people, and when all other alternative strategies have failed to reduce the risk, it may be necessary for staff to use restrictive practices.

The use of restrictive practices will always be as a last resort, when there is no other available option for reducing immediate risk to the student, staff or other people. Restrictive practices are not used for punishment or as a disciplinary measure.

The department's **Restrictive practices procedure** is written with consideration for the protection of everyone's human rights, health, safety and welfare. There are six fundamental principles:

1. *Regard to the human rights of those students*
2. *Safeguards students, staff and others from harm*
3. *Ensures transparency and accountability*
4. *Places importance on communication and consultation with parents and carers*
5. *Maximises the opportunity for positive outcomes, and*
6. *Aims to reduce or eliminate the use of restrictive practices.*

Very rarely restrictive practices will be planned and staff will employ, when necessary, pre-arranged strategies and methods (of physical restraint/ mechanical restraint/ clinical holding) which are based upon behaviour risk assessment or clinical health need and are recorded in advance. The use of planned strategies will only be where there is foreseeable immediate risk consistent with the **Restrictive practices procedure**.

Seclusion will not be used as a planned response and will only be used in serious circumstances for managing an unforeseeable situation in an emergency. It will be used for the shortest time possible and in a safe area that presents no additional foreseeable risk to the student. In such emergencies, a staff member will observe the student at all times and seclusion will cease as soon as possible.

Following the use of any restrictive practice, a focused review will help staff to understand how they responded to the risk in any incident that involved the use of a restrictive practice. Staff will consider whether there are other options for managing a similar situation in the future. This strategy works well for reducing the use of restrictive practices.

All incidents of restrictive practices will be recorded and reported in line with departmental procedures.

Critical Incidents

It is important that all school staff have a consistent understanding of how to respond in emergencies involving student behaviour that seriously endangers the student or others. This consistency ensures that appropriate actions are taken to ensure that both students and staff are kept safe.

A critical incident is defined as an occurrence that is sudden, urgent, and usually unexpected, or an occasion requiring immediate action (e.g. in the community, on the road). The aim in these situations is to bring the behaviour of the student under rapid and safe control. It is not a time to try and to punish or discipline the student; it is a crisis management period only.

Staff should follow the documented plan for any student involved in regular critical incidents, which should be saved and available for staff to review in OneSchool.

For unexpected critical incidents, staff should use basic defusing techniques:

- 1. Avoid escalating the problem behaviour: Avoid shouting, cornering the student, moving into the student's space, touching or grabbing the student, sudden responses, sarcasm, becoming defensive, communicating anger and frustration through body language.*
- 2. Maintain calmness, respect and detachment: Model the behaviour you want students to adopt, stay calm and controlled, use a serious measured tone, choose your language carefully, avoid humiliating the student, be matter of fact and avoid responding emotionally.*
- 3. Approach the student in a non-threatening manner: Move slowly and deliberately toward the problem situation, speak privately to the student/s where possible, speak calmly and respectfully, minimise body language, keep a reasonable distance, establish eye level position, be brief, stay with the agenda, acknowledge cooperation, withdraw if the situation escalates.*
- 4. Follow through: If the student starts displaying the appropriate behaviour briefly acknowledge their choice and re-direct other students' attention towards their usual work/activity. If the student continues with the problem behaviour, then remind them of the expected school behaviour and identify consequences of continued unacceptable behaviour.*

Debrief: At an appropriate time when there is low risk of re-escalation, help the student to identify the sequence of events that led to the unacceptable behaviour, pinpoint decision moments during the sequence of events, evaluate decisions made, and identify acceptable decision options for future situations.

Conclusion

Toowoomba West Special School staff are committed to ensuring every student is supported to feel safe, welcome and valued in our school. There may, however, be occasions where parents need to raise a concern or make a complaint about an issue you feel is adversely affecting their child's education.

All Queensland state schools are committed to ensuring that all complaints - whether they relate to a school staff member or a school's operations - are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. As a parent or carer, you can express dissatisfaction with the service or action of the Department of Education or its staff, including decisions made or actions taken in a school and/or by the local regional office.

As a complainant, it is your responsibility to:

- give us a clear idea of the issue or concern and your desired solution
- provide all the relevant information when making the complaint
- understand that addressing a complaint can take time
- cooperate respectfully and understand that unreasonable, abusive, or disrespectful conduct will not be tolerated
- let us know if something changes, including if help is no longer needed.

The Department of Education may not proceed with your complaint if your conduct is unreasonable.

In most instances, staff members are told of complaints made about them and offered the right of reply. A complainant also has the right to have a support person throughout the process.

The following three-step approach assists parents and school staff in reaching an outcome that is in the best interests of the student:

1. **Early resolution:** discuss your complaint with the school
The best place to raise any concerns is at the point where the problem or issue arose. You can make an appointment at the school to discuss your complaint with your child's teacher or the principal. You are also welcome to lodge your complaint in writing or over the phone. You can also make a complaint through [QGov](#).

Complaints may be lodged by telephone, writing or in electronic format. Email addresses can be accessed through the [schools directory](#).
2. **Internal review:** [contact the local Regional Office](#)
If, after taking the early resolution step, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint or how the complaint was handled, you can ask the local [regional office](#) to conduct a review. You need to submit a [Request for internal review form](#) within 28 days of receiving the complaint outcome.
3. **External review:** contact a review authority
If you are dissatisfied after the internal review, you may wish to contact a review authority, such as the Queensland Ombudsman, and request an independent, external review. More information about external review options is available at www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au.

Some matters need to be handled in a different way to school matters and will be referred to other areas in the department. These include:

- issues about harm, or risk of harm, to a student attending a state school, which must be managed in accordance with the [Student protection procedure](#).
- complaints about corrupt conduct, public interest disclosures; or certain decisions made under legislation, which will be dealt with as outlined in the [Excluded complaints factsheet](#).