

Suspension of registration or permission to teach for unacceptable risk of harm

POLICY

Version: 1.0

Version effective: 4/09/2026

Audience: External - publicly available

1. Purpose

To ensure that a relevant teacher whom the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) reasonably believes poses an unacceptable risk of harm to children is immediately prevented from working as a teacher.

2. Rationale

The QCT has an obligation to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students in accordance with its legislative functions, and to uphold public confidence in the teaching profession.

The QCT has the power to suspend a teacher's registration or permission to teach where the QCT believes the teacher poses an unacceptable risk of harm to children.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all teachers who have registration with the QCT or who hold a permission to teach with the QCT when the QCT receives information that raises a reasonable belief that a teacher poses an unacceptable risk of harm to children.

This policy applies to decisions made pursuant to section 49 of the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005* (the Act).

This policy also applies to teachers who have been subject to suspension of their registration by a teacher regulatory authority in Australia or New Zealand and their Queensland teacher registration has been affected in the same way, pursuant to the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992* (Cth). Where that suspension is not continued by the home jurisdiction for any reason, but the risk of harm is not resolved, the QCT will consider effecting a suspension under section 49 of the Act.

4. Policy statement

The QCT will suspend an approved teacher's registration or permission to teach where the QCT reasonably believes the teacher poses an unacceptable risk of harm to children.

The QCT will weigh up all available information in exercising discretion to suspend a teacher pursuant to section 49 of the Act. This may mean that some information is not available to be relied upon or may be in dispute. Accordingly, suspension decisions may be made on the basis of incomplete and untested information such as while an investigation is ongoing or a proceeding for criminal charges is still pending.

The QCT will undertake continuing risk assessments as additional information is received.

The purpose of suspension proceedings is not to punish the teacher but to protect children from harm. In this way, a suspension decision is not determinative of whether an allegation will be pursued under QCT's disciplinary processes and no findings of fact are sought to be made in relation to a teacher's conduct giving rise to the unacceptable risk of harm consideration.

4.1 Unacceptable risk of harm

The QCT may form a reasonable belief that a teacher poses an unacceptable risk of harm to children.

Harm to a child is any detrimental effect on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.

Unacceptable risk is determined where the QCT assesses the chances of the risk occurring and the significance of the potential harm to any child if the risk did occur. The risk does not need to be intentional but may arise due to the teacher's failure to observe appropriate professional boundaries or expectations.

The QCT will consider and balance a range of factors to decide whether a teacher poses an unacceptable risk of harm to any child, including the nature of the alleged conduct and any other protective factors that are already in place, such as suspension by an employer.

Each case must be considered on its own merits. Whether a particular factor supports a determination that a teacher poses an unacceptable risk of harm will be dependent on the facts of the case. However, in the majority of cases an employer suspension will not be sufficient to mitigate the unacceptable risk of harm to children outside the parameters of the person's employment and a suspension of teacher's approval to teach will be necessary.

4.2 *Reasonable belief*

A reasonable belief is a state of mind based on reasonable grounds. Such a belief is formed when all available considerations, including matters of opinion, are objectively assessed and taken into account. Reasonable belief does not require proof of alleged conduct, only that the evidence or information available is sufficient to conclude on the balance of probabilities that the alleged conduct occurred. A reasonable belief is more than a suspicion; it is formed from information obtained from a reliable source or sources regarding conduct that was directly experienced or observed. The belief must be one that a reasonable person, with the same information, would hold.

Whether a reasonable belief is able to be established will depend on:

- the quality or strength of the evidence available to, or likely to be obtained by, the QCT; and
- the justification and reasons for determining that the risk of potential harm posed by the relevant teacher is unacceptable.

4.3 *Notice of the suspension*

In giving notice of the suspension, the QCT is not required to consider any practical implications of the suspension for the teacher, or their school, or any other individual or entity as a result of the suspension.

The QCT will provide notice of the suspension to the teacher once the decision has been made.

The notice will be sent to the teacher's email address that is nominated with the QCT for communications. A hard copy of the notice will also be sent to the nominated address via registered post.

Suspension takes effect once the notice has been sent.

The notice will include:

- reasons for the decision
- a list of evidence and/or material upon which the decision was based
- a statement confirming that it is an offence to teach in a Queensland school once suspended.

At the time that the notice is given to the teacher, the QCT is required, pursuant to the provisions of the Act, to notify the employing authority for, and the principal of, each school at which the teacher is employed.

4.4 *Procedural fairness*

The QCT is not required to afford procedural fairness at the point of suspension.

The QCT will refer the suspension to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) for review, and the teacher will receive notification from QCAT of that review and be provided with the opportunity provide submissions to QCAT that the teacher does not pose an unacceptable risk of harm to children.

Pursuant to section 53(3) of the Act, QCAT must continue the suspension unless satisfied that the teacher does not pose an unacceptable risk of harm to children. There are strict time limitations that apply to the filing of material and for QCAT to make its decision, meaning that the capacity of QCAT to resolve any evidential conflict is constrained.

The purpose of the proceedings is not to test the allegations themselves, but to consider submissions in relation to the risk of harm posed to children and, if such risk is posed, whether it is considered unacceptable.

4.5 Information sharing

As the regulatory authority of the teaching profession in Queensland and a sector regulator for Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme (RCS), the QCT will proactively share information about suspensions with a range of entities including:

- screening Services e.g. Blue Card Services (BCS)
- Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC)
- teacher regulatory authorities in Australia and New Zealand.

5. Responsibilities

Role/Stakeholder	Responsibilities
Chief Executive Officer – QCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercising delegated authority to suspend a teacher who poses an unacceptable risk of harm to children. • Report to the Board on suspensions. • Providing written notice to the teacher setting out reasons for suspension and the evidence relied upon.
Chair/Deputy Chair of the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold alternate delegations and are responsible for exercising these in the event that the CEO has a conflict of interest or there is a reasonable apprehension of bias. • Providing written notice to the teacher setting out reasons for suspension and the evidence relied upon.
QCT staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting case-by-case risk assessments upon receipt of relevant information and evidence. • Notifying the teacher's employing authority and principal/s at the time the suspension notice is given. • Notifying BCS, QFCC and interstate and New Zealand teacher regulatory authorities at the time the suspension notice is given. • Referring the suspension to QCAT for review and ensure the teacher is notified of that review process.
Employing authorities/principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the teacher does not continue working in a teaching capacity upon notification of the teacher's suspension.
Teachers subject to a suspension of registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return the Certificate of Registration to the QCT. • Comply with QCT's suspension decision.

6. Definitions

Term	Definition
Approved teacher	A person who holds full registration, provisional registration, or permission to teach under the <i>Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005</i> .
Child	A person under eighteen (18) years of age.
Employing authority	The authority responsible for employing a teacher at a school, as defined by the QCT Act.
Harm	Any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm can be the result of one or a number of acts, omissions or circumstances. Harm could be realised immediately, or at some later date in the future.
Permission to teach	Is a special and temporary approval to teach which is limited to a specific position in the school where the relevant school has demonstrated it has not been able to find a registered teacher to fill the vacancy.
Risk assessment	The structured consideration of factors including the nature, frequency, recency and impact of alleged conduct and the likelihood that potential harm would continue.
Suspension	The temporary cessation of a teacher's registration or permission to teach under s49 of the QCT Act.

Unacceptable risk of harm	A risk of harm to children that is sufficiently serious that it cannot be mitigated by measures short of suspension.
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7. Legislation

- [Education \(Queensland College of Teachers\) Act 2005](#)
- [Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009](#)

8. Considerations

Commitment to Human Rights, Multiculturalism, Equity, and Child Safety

The QCT is committed to upholding the principles of the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)*, the *Queensland Multicultural Recognition Act 2016*, and the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)*. This policy has been developed to ensure fairness, inclusivity, and the safety and wellbeing of all individuals, including children and young people.

In line with these commitments, this policy:

- respects, protects, and promotes human rights
- supports equitable access to services and opportunities for all individuals, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- embeds principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in its design and implementation
- prioritises the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of children and young people, ensuring compliance with Child Safe Standards.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with these principles and to reflect the evolving needs of Queensland's communities, including children and young people.

9. Related documents

- [Suspension of registration or permission to teach information sheet](#)

10. Document details

Title	Suspension of registration or permission to teach for unacceptable risk of harm policy
Record number	2026/734666
Owner – Unit/Role	Anita Morrison – General Manager, Integrity
Approver	QCT Board
Approved on	03/09/2026
Effective from	04/09/2026
Next review date	

11. Version history

Version	Record number	Date	Author	Changes made
1.0	2026/734666	26/08/2026		Created