



Comet State School

Student Code of Conduct 2024-2026

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 2020-2024



Contact Information

Postal address:	5 Water Shed Road, Comet, QLD 4702
Phone:	07 4984 5142
Email:	Principal@cometss.eq.edu.au
School website address:	www.cometss.eq.edu.au
Contact Person:	Bev Oldfield Principal

Endorsement

Principal Name:	Bev Oldfield
Principal Signature:	
Date:	

P/C President Name:	Keith Milner
P/C President Signature:	
Date:	

Contents

Purpose and Mission Statement	4
Whole School Approach to Discipline	5
PBW Expectations	5
Consideration of Individual Circumstances	7
Differentiated and Explicit Teaching	7
Behaviour Matrix	8
Mastery, Minor and Major Table	9
Focussed Teaching	10
Intensive Teaching	10
Student Wellbeing	11
Disciplinary Consequences	12
School Policies	15
Temporary removal of student property	15
Use of mobile phones and other devices by students	16
Preventing and responding to bullying	18
Appropriate use of social media	24
Attendance Policy	25
Restrictive Practices	29
Critical Incidents	29

Purpose

Comet State School is committed to providing a safe, respectful and disciplined learning environment for all students, staff, parents and visitors.

The Comet State School Student Code of Conduct sets out the responsibilities and processes we use in our school to promote a productive, effective whole school approach to discipline.

Its purpose is to facilitate high standards of behaviour from all in the school community, ensuring learning and teaching in our school is prioritised, where all students are able to experience success and staff enjoy a safe workplace.

Mission Statement

COMET STATE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Our Comet State School vision is to
“AIM HIGH”
and personalise each child’s development and enjoyment
of learning in an inclusive, safe and supportive
environment.

We consistently promote respectful, responsible, safe
and active learning.

AIM



HIGH

Whole School Approach to Discipline

Comet State School uses Positive Behaviour and Wellbeing (PBW) as the multi-tiered system of support for discipline in the school. This is a whole-school approach, used in all classrooms and programs offered through the school, including sporting activities and excursions.

PBW is an evidence-based framework used to:

- improve student behaviour and learning outcomes
- ensure that only evidence-based practices are used correctly by teachers to support students
- continually support staff members to maintain consistent school and classroom improvement practices.

At Comet State School we believe discipline is about more than punishment. It is a word that reflects our belief that student behaviour is a part of the overall teaching and learning approach in our school. Our staff take responsibility for making their expectations clear, for providing supportive instruction about how to meet these expectations and to use behavioural incidents as opportunities to re-teach.

The development of the Comet State School Student Code of Conduct is an opportunity to explain the PBW framework with parents and students, and gain their support to implement a consistent approach to teaching behaviour. The language and expectations of PBW can be used in any environment, including the home setting for students. Doing everything we can do to set students up for success is a shared goal of every parent and school staff member.

Any students or parents who have questions or would like to discuss the Student Code of Conduct or PBW are encouraged to speak with the class teacher or make an appointment to meet with the principal.

PBW Expectations

Our staff are committed to delivering a high quality of education for every student, and believe all adults in the school, whether visiting or working, should meet the same four Positive Behaviour and Wellbeing (PBW) expectations in place for students, being Respectful, Responsible, Safe & a Learner.

Students

Below are some examples of what these PBW expectations look like for students across the school. In addition, each classroom will have their own class rules to help students and visitors understand the expectations and meet the standards we hold for everyone at Comet State School.

We are Respectful <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen to fellow students' questions in class• Put rubbish in the bins provided• Respect others space and belongings	We are Responsible <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be prepared for class• Complete your homework and assignments on time• Follow teacher directions• Ask for help when you need
We are Learners <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look for opportunities to help others• Take different roles for group work activities• Encourage fellow students to do their best• Do your own work• Learn from your mistakes	We are Safe <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walk safely• Be honest• Use equipment correctly

Parents and staff

The table below explains the PBW expectations for parents when visiting our school and the standards we commit to as staff.

Respectful	
<i>What we expect to see from you</i>	<i>What you can expect from us</i>
You make an appointment to speak with the class teacher or principal to discuss any matters relating to your child.	We will respond as soon as practicable to your request for an appointment and negotiate a mutually agreeable date and time with you.
You are respectful in your conversations at home about school staff.	We will ensure positive behaviours are role modelled for all students.
You approach the class teacher or principal if you are concerned about the behaviour of a staff member, another student or parent.	We will work with every family to quickly address any complaints or concerns about the behaviour of staff, students or other parents.
You support your child to meet the learning and behavioural expectations at school.	We are clear about our learning and behavioural expectations, and contact you to provide regular feedback about your child's progress.
You take a positive, solution-focused approach to resolving complaints.	We will nominate a contact person for you to work with to resolve a school related complaint.
You respect school, student and staff privacy in your online communications.	We will act quickly to address social media issues that affect staff, students or families.

Responsible	
<i>What we expect to see from you</i>	<i>What you can expect from us</i>
You respect the obligation of staff to maintain student and family privacy.	We will maintain confidentiality about information relating to your child and family.
You ensure your children attend school every day and notify the school promptly of any absences or changes in contact details.	We will create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for every student.
You recognise people are different and will be non-judgemental, fair and equitable to others in the school community.	We will welcome and celebrate a diverse school community with recognition of significant social, cultural and historical events.
You stay informed about school news and activities by reading the school newsletter and other materials sent home by school staff.	We will use the electronic school newsletter as the primary means of notifying parents about school news, excursions or events
You leave and collect your child from the designated area at school.	We will give clear guidance about a designated area for parents to leave and collect students.
You share relevant information about your child's learning, social and behavioural needs with school staff.	We will share relevant information with you about your child's learning, social and behavioural progress at school.

Learner	
<i>What we expect to see from you</i>	<i>What you can expect from us</i>
You seek out opportunities to provide positive feedback to the classroom teacher about their work with the class, a student or colleagues.	We will work closely with families to accommodate their personal needs, including work commitments, finances and family structure.
You help your child to see the strengths and benefits in diversity and difference in their classmates.	We will promote every child's individuality and build a cohesive, inclusive classroom and school culture.
You notice when others need help, parents, staff and students, and ask if there is anything you do to assist.	We will check in with you about your child's needs or any support your family may require.

Consideration of Individual Circumstances

Staff at Comet State 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.

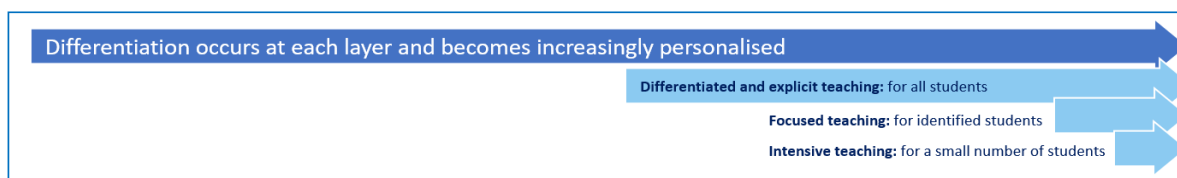
If you have concerns about the behaviour of another student at the school, or the way our staff have responded to their behaviour, please make an appointment with the principal to discuss the matter.

Differentiated and Explicit Teaching

Comet State 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 Comet State 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 PBW 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.

Every classroom in our school uses the PBW Expectations Matrix, illustrated below, as a basis for developing their behaviour standards. Using this matrix, the class teacher works with all students to explain exactly what each of the expectations look, sound and feel like in their classroom. The completed matrix is on display in all school buildings, it is used as the basis of teaching expectations throughout the year and revisited regularly to address any new or emerging issues. The Behaviour matrix and the Mastery, Minor and Major charts illustrated below gives some examples of behaviours for each section. This is not a limited list and may change.

COMET STATE SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR MATRIX

AIM HIGH

	ALL AREAS	CLASSROOM	EATING TIME	PLAY TIME	TOILETS
WE ARE LEARNERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Am High" Role model appropriate behaviour Be organised and prepared for lessons Always try your best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole body listeners Be a problem solver Raise hand for help Complete your work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eat healthy foods first Drink plenty of water Make sure your area is clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the playground rules Play in the appropriate area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get back to class quickly Use your break time to go to the toilet
WE ARE RESPECTFUL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use manners Be patient Use appropriate language Be an active listener Consider others Follow teacher instruction Take turns and share Be truthful Listen to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hands up to ask question Whole body listening Leave learning space as it was found 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put rubbish in bin Put your hand up and wait to be dismissed by a teacher Make sure your area is clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect equipment Play within the rules of the game Respect gardens and wildlife Play fairly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the correct toilets Leave toilets clean Respect others privacy
WE ARE SAFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself Stay calm Use equipment appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sitting safely on your chair Walking in the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sitting on chair Sit down when eating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone gets a turn Be aware of others around you Always wear a hat outside Change activities to suit children's age Wear shoes and socks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a partner to the toilet In and out as quickly as possible Wash hands Toilets only used for going to the toilet
WE ARE RESPONSIBLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are responsible when we are active listeners and are respectful to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep your area clean Keep room tidy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eat your own lunch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports Captain loans sports equipment Take sports equipment back to sports shed to the Sports Captain When we are not sharing hats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use your break time to go to the toilets



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 Comet State School 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.

Comet State 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:

- Building Character and Resilience through PBW
- Functional Behaviour Assessment

For more information about these programs, please speak with the school Principal.

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.

Student Wellbeing

In collaboration with our school community Comet State School has developed a Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework as shown below.

Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework			
 <p>At Comet State School we value a safe, supportive and connected school community in which wellbeing is everyone's responsibility. We recognise the importance of developing healthy, confident and resilient young people. By supporting the health and wellbeing of our diverse students we are enabling them to respond positively and succeed in a changing world. At Comet State School student wellbeing is supported across 3 domains:</p>			
	<p>1. CREATING SAFE, SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We provide safe environments where diversity is valued, positive social interactions are promoted, and risk of injury or harm is minimised through our <i>shared beliefs, responsibility and accountability, CARA and WHS tools completed yearly</i> and student engagement in Japanese lessons. We have an approach to wellbeing that supports the collective action of parents, support services and the wider community by meeting for regular consultation with the <i>P&C, Principal Cluster, Busbuddies support and collaborative planning for teachers</i>. We demonstrate and communicate positive respectful relationships between staff, students, parents and members of the community through the implementation of our <i>Student Code of Conduct, PBL framework, four school expectations</i> (we are learners, we are respectful, we are responsible, we are safe) and meeting norms. We recognise and reward positive behaviours for learning using tangible rewards that include <i>Dojo points, weekly certificates, star of the week award, high tea with Principal</i> and an <i>end of year rewards</i>. We explicitly teach and model social and emotional skills, values and expectations for behaviour through our <i>weekly PBL lessons, Friends Program</i> and <i>Zones of Regulation</i> (check your engines) to support student wellbeing. We make sure the physical environment and school policies and practices are accessible and inclusive of students and families. We plan for opportunities to promote and celebrate the traditions, values and cultures of the school community including <i>ANZAC Day, National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence, Daniel Applegate Day</i> and <i>Remembrance Day</i>. We provide learning opportunities and environments that promote healthy lifestyle choices particularly through our <i>HFE curriculum, and eating together as a whole school</i>. We recognise the varying abilities of our students and plan curriculum that is responsive to the needs of individual students. We plan and implement the cross curriculum priorities in the Australian Curriculum, promoting <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia, and Sustainability</i>. We celebrate the academic, sporting and cultural achievements of our students at <i>school assemblies</i> and with the community through the <i>fortnightly newsletter, and school website, school leader awards and end of year award celebrations</i> 	<p>2. BUILDING THE CAPABILITY OF STAFF, STUDENTS AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We provide health and wellbeing learning opportunities for students through curriculum focused on mental health, food and nutrition, benefits of physical activity, and safety through the use of curriculum materials aligned with Prep – Year 10 <i>Acara HPE learning area</i> and the <i>Life Ed</i> unit. We identify opportunities to build the capabilities of teachers and school leaders to support a whole school approach to student wellbeing and its connection to learning including the support from the <i>Emerald QALW, ESNC, Super Cluster, Highway Cluster, and the CQ PBL team</i>. We communicate information and advice on the benefits of supporting young people to be healthy, confident and resilient through the <i>curriculum, participation in days of recognition, fortnightly newsletters, year 6/7 transition program with feeder primary and High schools and school website</i>. We respond positively to the needs of different groups within the school community, including flexible learning spaces, IBSP, intervention programs, accessing and utilising the multi-age small school curriculum, <i>elabook, transition activities</i> and offering the <i>Playgroup</i> for children under 5 We strengthen connections with parents through regular <i>parent-teacher meetings, Open classrooms, P&C consultation for SLAW and PACE</i> to support early intervention for students whose wellbeing is at risk We increase the visibility of local support services to families whose children have higher levels of need, sharing services and providing referrals where required including connections with our <i>school based nurse who provides staff and parent training and support with individual health plans</i>. We support staff health and wellbeing and recognise the resulting benefits for students through the collaborative development of our staff wellbeing framework and <i>SLAW</i>. We are committed to continual improvement using evidence-based strategies to improve student wellbeing, seeking ways to develop and share new ideas. We collect and analyse a range of data, including data from the <i>School Opinion Survey</i>, to identify areas for capability building. We encourage student participation and develop their wellbeing through their involvement in the <i>Student Council</i> We participate in <i>school camps</i> that develop the confidence, resilience and teamwork of students. We seek out opportunities for our students to engage in the community, including through our <i>Community breakfast, catering fundraisers (Comet Camp Craft, Comet Cutting, Comet Rodeo, Comet and Emerald Show</i>. 	<p>3. DEVELOPING STRONG SYSTEMS FOR EARLY INTERVENTION...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We plan and document school processes to support staff to respond appropriately to students at risk, including <i>student protection training, Guidance Officer and HOSSES support, student code of conduct development, PBL implementation</i> including minor and major behaviour matrix. We recognise the early signs that a student's wellbeing is at risk and responding appropriately by noticing, inquiring, planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharing responsibility for supporting students at risk by seeking support from Guidance Officers and the leadership team as first responders encouraging students and families to access support services using a wrap-around approach for students involving parents, school support services, health professionals and other agencies. We integrate DoE support services to assist in planning and implementing practices that improve outcomes for students, including support from our <i>Speech and Language Pathologist, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist and Advisory Visiting Teachers</i>. We employ a <i>school Chaplain</i> through Scripture Union, to assist students' social and emotional wellbeing and development. The school chaplain engages students in <i>gardening programs, chess club and Friends program</i> We actively maintain partnerships with community medical services including <i>Hearing and Vision Screening, and our community health nurse</i>. We engage specialist organisations, including <i>Autism Queensland and Busbuddies</i>, for student support. We refer students and families to support organisations, including <i>Family-Child Connect, Lifeline, Headspace, Busbuddies and Centcare</i> Teachers develop support plans for students, including <i>Personalised Learning, Individual Curriculum Plans, Health Management and Support Provisions</i>.
<p>At Comet State School, we monitor our school culture and student wellbeing and engagement through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance rates Student retention data Days lost due to student disciplinary absences School Opinion Survey responses 			

Disciplinary Consequences

The disciplinary consequences model used at Comet State School follows the same differentiated approach used in the proactive teaching and support of student behavioural expectations.

The majority of students will be confident and capable of meeting established expectations that are clear, explicitly taught and practised. In-class corrective feedback, sanctions and rule reminders may be used by teachers to respond to low-level or minor problem behaviours.

Some students will need additional support, time and opportunities to practise expected behaviours. Approximately 15% of the student population may experience difficulty with meeting the stated expectations, and even with focussed teaching, in-class corrective feedback, sanctions and rule reminders continue to display low-level problem behaviour. A continued pattern of low-level behaviour can interfere with teaching and learning for the whole class, and a decision may be needed by the class teacher to refer the student to the school administration team immediately for determination of a disciplinary consequence.

For a small number of students, approximately 2-5%, a high level of differentiated support or intensive teaching is required to enable them to meet the behavioural expectations. This may be needed throughout the school year on a continuous basis. The determination of the need will be made by the principal in consultation with staff and other relevant stakeholders. On occasion the behaviour of a student may be so serious, such as causing harm to other students or to staff, that the principal may determine that an out of school suspension or exclusion is necessary as a consequence for the student's behaviour. Usually this course of action is only taken when the behaviour is either so serious as to warrant immediate removal of the student for the safety of others, and no other alternative discipline strategy is considered sufficient to deal with the problem behaviour.

The differentiated responses to problem behaviour can be organised into three tiers, with increasing intensity of support and consequences to address behaviour that endangers others or causes major, ongoing interference with class or school operations.

Differentiated

Class teacher provides in-class or in-school disciplinary responses to low-level or minor problem behaviour. This may include:

- Pre-correction (e.g. "Remember, walk quietly to your seat")
- Non-verbal and visual cues (e.g. posters, hand gestures)
- Whole class practising of routines
- Ratio of 4 positive to 1 negative commentary or feedback to class
- Corrective feedback (e.g. "Hand up when you want to ask a question")
- Rule reminders (e.g. "When the bell goes, stay seated until I dismiss you")
- Explicit behavioural instructions (e.g. "Pick up your pencil")
- Proximity control
- Tactical ignoring of inappropriate behaviour (not student)
- Revised seating plan and relocation of student/s
- Individual positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour
- Class wide incentives
- Reminders of incentives or class goals
- Redirection
- Reduce verbal language
- Break down tasks into smaller chunks
- Provide positive choice of task order (e.g. "Which one do you want to start with?")
- Prompt student to take a break or time away in class
- Model appropriate language, problem solving and verbalise thinking process (e.g. "I'm not sure what is the next step, who can help me?")
- Provide demonstration of expected behaviour
- Peer consequence (e.g. corrective feedback to influential peer demonstrating same problem behaviour)
- Reprimand for inappropriate behaviour
- Warning of more serious consequences (e.g. removal from classroom)

Focussed

Class teacher is supported by other school-based staff to address in-class problem behaviour. This may include:

- Functional Behaviour Assessment
- Individual student behaviour support strategies (e.g. Student behaviour plan)
- Targeted skills teaching in small group
- Token economy (Cosmo Koala Coins)
- Behavioural contract
- Counselling and guidance support
- Self-monitoring plan
- Check in Check Out strategy
- Teacher coaching and debriefing
- Referral to Student Support Network for team based problem solving
- Stakeholder meeting with parents and external agencies

Intensive

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 Comet State 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 school 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 Comet State 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.

It is not mandatory for the student or their parents to attend a re-entry meeting. It may be offered as a support for the student to assist in their successful re-engagement in school following suspension.

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-entry 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.

Comet State 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
- Preventing and responding to bullying
- Social Media
- Use of mobile phones

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 Comet State 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

State school staff at Comet State 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 Comet State 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 Comet State 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 Comet State 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 Comet State School 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 and other devices. However, the benefits brought about through these diverse technologies can be easily overshadowed by deliberate misuse which harms others or disrupts learning.

Mobile phones and other devices are not permitted to be brought to school by students. If devices are brought to school parents will be contacted and students will be asked to place the device in the Principal's office until home time.

Comet State School has determined that explicit teaching of responsible use of some devices is a critical component of digital literacy. The knowledge and confidence to navigate and use these technologies safely while developing digital literacy is a responsibility shared between parents, school staff and students.

Responsibilities

Comet State School will provide students with required devices to use at school during school time. The responsibilities for students using school devices at school or during school activities, are outlined below.

It is **acceptable** for students at Comet State School to:

- use other devices for
 - assigned class work and assignments set by teachers
 - developing appropriate literacy, communication and information skills
 - authoring text, artwork, audio and visual material for publication on the intranet or internet for educational purposes as supervised and approved by the school
 - conducting general research for school activities and projects
 - communicating or collaborating with other students, teachers, parents or experts in relation to school work
 - accessing online references such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, etc.
 - researching and learning through the department's eLearning environment
- be courteous, considerate and respectful of others when using a devices
- switch off and place devices in correct storage locations unless the device is being used in a teacher directed activity to enhance learning
- seek teacher's approval where they wish to use a device

It is **unacceptable** for students at Comet State School to:

- use a mobile phone or other devices in an unlawful manner
- download, distribute or publish offensive messages or pictures
- use obscene, inflammatory, racist, discriminatory or derogatory language
- use language and/or threats of violence that may amount to bullying and/or harassment, or even stalking
- insult, harass or attack others or use obscene or abusive language
- deliberately waste printing and internet resources
- damage computers, printers or network equipment
- commit plagiarism or violate copyright laws
- ignore teacher directions for the use of social media, online email and internet chat
- send chain letters or spam email (junk mail)
- knowingly download viruses or any other programs capable of breaching the department's network security
- use in-phone cameras anywhere a normal camera would be considered inappropriate, such as in change rooms or toilets
- invade someone's privacy by recording personal conversations or daily activities and/or the further distribution (e.g. forwarding, texting, uploading, Bluetooth use etc.) of such material

At all times students, while using ICT facilities and devices supplied by the school, will be required to act in line with the requirements of the Comet State School Student Code of Conduct. In addition students and their parents should:

- understand the responsibility and behaviour requirements (as outlined by the school) that come with accessing the department's ICT network facilities
- ensure they have the skills to report and discontinue access to harmful information if presented via the internet or email
- be aware that:
 - access to ICT facilities and devices provides valuable learning experiences for students and supports the school's teaching and learning programs
 - the school is not responsible for safeguarding information stored by students on departmentally-owned student computers or mobile devices
 - schools may remotely access departmentally-owned student computers or mobile devices for management purposes
 - students who use a school's ICT facilities and devices in a manner that is not appropriate may be subject to disciplinary action by the school, which could include restricting network access
 - despite internal departmental controls to manage content on the internet, illegal, dangerous or offensive information may be accessed or accidentally displayed
 - teachers will always exercise their duty of care, but avoiding or reducing access to harmful information also requires responsible use by the student.

Preventing and responding to bullying

Comet State School promotes positive relationships and the wellbeing of all students, staff and visitors at the school.

Our staff know student learning is optimised when they feel connected to others and experience safe and trusting relationships. Students who feel secure are more likely to be active participants in their learning and to achieve better physical, emotional, social and educational outcomes. Teachers who feel valued and supported are more likely to engage positively with students and build stronger connections within the school community. Parents who are positively engaged with their child's education leads to improved student self-esteem, attendance and behaviour at school. Enhancing the wellbeing of students and their educators delivers overall long-term social, health and economic benefits to the Australian community.

Comet State School has a **Student Council**, with diverse representatives from each year level meeting regularly with the school leadership team to promote strategies to improve student wellbeing, safety and learning outcomes.

Bullying

The agreed national definition for Australian schools describes bullying as

- ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm;
- involving an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening;
- happening in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records);
- having immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:

- mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance)
- not liking someone or a single act of social rejection
- one-off acts of meanness or spite
- isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

However, these conflicts are still considered serious and need to be addressed and resolved. At Comet State School our staff will work to quickly respond to any matters raised of this nature in collaboration with students and parents.

The following flowchart explains the actions Comet State School staff will take when they receive a report about student bullying, including bullying which may have occurred online or outside of the school setting. Please note that the indicative timeframes will vary depending on the professional judgment of staff who receive the bullying complaint and their assessment of immediate risk to student/s.

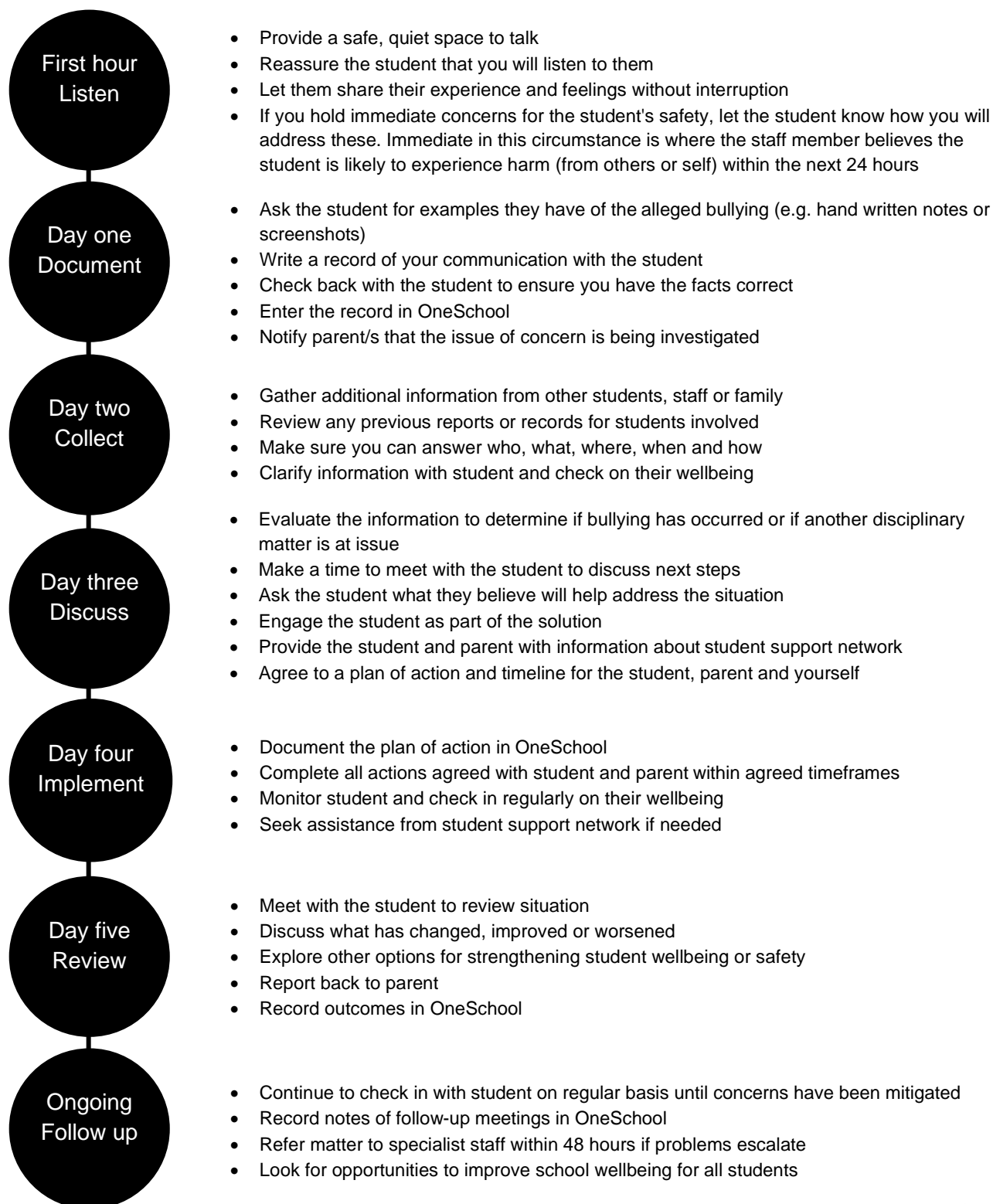
Comet State School – Suggested Bullying response flowchart for teachers

Please note these timelines may be adjusted depending on the unique circumstances and risk associated with each situation. This is at the professional judgment of the staff involved. Timeframes should be clearly discussed and agreed with student and family.

Key contacts for students and parents to report bullying:

Prep to Year 6 – Class teacher

Principal



Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is treated at Comet State 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 Comet State 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. Any questions or concerns about the school process for managing or responding to cyberbullying should be directed to the school Principal.

Comet State School - 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](#).

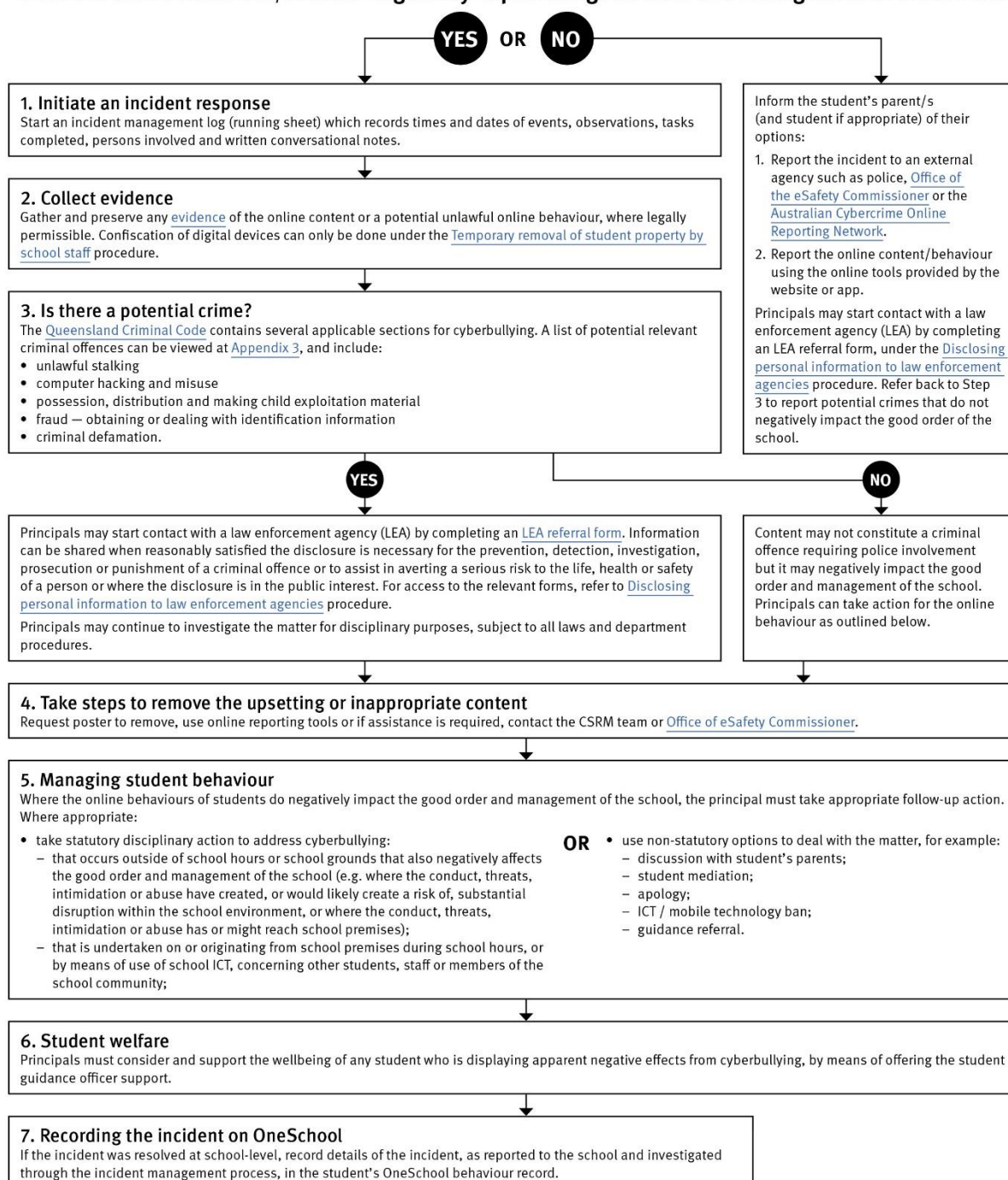
Explicit images

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](#).

Report

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?



Cybersafety and Reputation Management (CRM)

The Department of Education employs a dedicated team of experts to assist in maintaining the integrity of the department's reputation with regards to cybersafety and reputation management issues, effectively leading the development and implementation of departmental cybersafety processes.

This team provides **direct support for schools** to respond to concerns of inappropriate online behaviour and misuse of information and communication technology.

The team provides a [guide for parents](#) with important information about cybersafety and cyberbullying, and suggestions about what you can do if your child is a target or responsible for inappropriate online behaviour.

The team has also developed a [Cyberbullying and reputation management](#) (Department employees only) resource to assist principals in incident management.

For more information about cybersafety sessions at your school, or for assistance with issues relating to online behaviour, contact the [team](#) (Department employees only).

Student Intervention and Support Services

Comet State School recognises the need to provide intervention and support to all students involved in incidents of bullying, including cyberbullying.

Students who have been subject or witness to bullying have access to a range of internal support staff, as identified in the Student Support Network section earlier in this document. Students are, however, also encouraged to approach any staff member with whom they feel comfortable sharing their concerns, regardless of their role in the school. All staff at Comet State School are familiar with the response expectations to reports of bullying, and will act quickly to ensure students' concerns are addressed. Depending on the nature of the reported bullying incident, a formal plan of action may be developed and documented to support the implementation of strategies to assist the student.

Students who engage in bullying behaviours towards others will also be provided with support to assist them to use more socially acceptable and appropriate behaviours in their interactions. This includes counselling, social development programs, referral to mental health services or involvement in a restorative justice strategy. School disciplinary measures may also be used to reinforce the seriousness with which the community takes all incidents of bullying. These measures may include internal school suspension, withdrawal from social events or celebrations or more severe punishments such as suspension or exclusion from school.

Comet State School – Anti-Bullying Compact

The Anti-Bullying Compact provides a clear outline of the way our community at Exemplar State College works together to establish a safe, supportive and disciplined school environment. This compact is provided to all students and their parents upon enrolment, and may be revisited with individual students if particular problems around bullying arise.

Comet State School – Anti Bullying Compact

We agree to work together to improve the quality of relationships in our community at Comet State School. It is through intentional consideration of our behaviour and communication that we can reduce the occurrence of bullying, and improve the quality of the schooling experience for everyone.

The agreed national definition for Australian schools describes bullying as

- ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm;
- involving an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening;
- happening in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records);
- having immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

We believe that no one deserves to be mistreated and that everyone regardless of race, colour, religion, immigration status, nationality, size, gender, popularity, athletic capability, academic outcomes, social ability, or intelligence has the right to feel safe, secure, and respected.

I agree to:

- Treat everyone with kindness and respect.
- Abide by the school's anti-bullying policies and procedures.
- Support individuals who have been bullied.
- Speak out against verbal, relational, physical bullying and cyber bullying.
- Notify a parent, teacher, or school administrator when bullying does occur.

Student's signature

Parent's signature

School representative signature

Date

Appropriate use of social media

The internet, mobile phones and social media provide wonderful opportunities for students to network and socialise online. While these technologies provide positive platforms for sharing ideas, they also have the potential to cause pain and suffering to individuals, groups or even whole communities.

It's important to remember that sometimes negative comments posted about the school community have a greater impact than expected. This guide offers some information about how to use social media in relation to comments or posts about the school community. Reputations of students, teachers, schools, principals and even parents can be permanently damaged — and in some cases, serious instances of inappropriate online behaviour are dealt with by police and the court system.

Being aware of a few simple strategies can help keep the use of social media positive and constructive:

- Before you post something online, ask yourself if the community or individual really need to know. Is it relevant, positive and helpful?
- Remember that what you post online is a direct reflection of who you are. People will potentially form lasting opinions of you based on what you post online.
- Be a good role model. If things get heated online consider logging out and taking a few moments to relax and think. Hasty, emotive responses could inflame situations unnecessarily.
- Be mindful when commenting, try to keep general and avoid posting anything that could identify individuals.
- A few years ago parents may have discussed concerns or issues with their friends at the school gate. Today with the use of social media, online discussions between you and your close friends can very quickly be shared with a much wider audience, potentially far larger than intended.
- Taking a few moments to think about the content you are about to post could save upset, embarrassment, and possible legal action.
- As a parent you have a role in supervising and regulating your child's online activities at home and its impact on the reputation and privacy of others. Parents are their child's first teachers — so they will learn online behaviours from you.

Is it appropriate to comment or post about schools, staff or students?

Parental and community feedback is important for schools and the department. If you have a compliment, complaint or enquiry about an issue at school, the best approach is to speak directly to the school about the matter, rather than discussing it in a public forum.

While many schools use social media to update parents of school notices, the department prefers that parents contact schools directly with a compliment, complaint or enquiry due to privacy considerations. Imagine if your doctor, accountant or banking institution tried to contact you to discuss important matters via Facebook.

If you have raised an issue with a school or know that another person has, consider refraining from discussing those details on social media, particularly the names of anyone involved.

Keep comments calm and polite, just as you would over the telephone or by email. If you encounter negative or derogatory content online which involves the school, hinders a child's learning and/or affects the school community at large, contact the school principal.

Possible civil or criminal ramifications of online commentary

A serious instance of inappropriate online behaviour may constitute a criminal offence and become a police matter. For example, online content may substantiate the offence of 'using a carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence' (Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth) s. 474.17). School staff may contact their union or obtain personal legal advice if they feel that online content seriously impacts their reputation. Defamatory online content may give rise to litigation under the Defamation Act 2005 (Qld).

What about other people's privacy?

If you upload photos of your children, be mindful of who might be in the background. You might be happy to share your child's successes with your friends and family via social media, but some parents are not. If you are tagging or naming students, consider that other parents may not want their child's name attached to images online.

What if I encounter problem content?

Taking the following steps may help resolve the issue in a constructive way:

- refrain from responding
- take a screen capture or print a copy of the concerning online content
- if you consider problem content to be explicit, pornographic or exploitative of minors, you should keep a record of the URL of the page containing that content but NOT print or share it. The URL can be provided to the school principal, or police, as needed for escalation of serious concerns
- block the offending user
- report the content to the social media provider.

Attendance Policy

Rationale

All schools in Queensland are committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments for all students which address their educational needs. Research shows that regular attendance is integral to successful academic, employment and social outcomes. Accordingly, it is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of regular student attendance

Comet State School expects that every student will attend school every day of the school year unless prevented by reasonable circumstances from doing so.

Comet State School attendance policy aims to maximise participation in learning programs by all students to ensure all children can access equitable educational outcomes.

At Comet State School we are committed to achieving the target of 95% or greater attendance for all students.

The importance of attending school

At Comet State School we believe that students need to attend school regularly in order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from schooling. Regular attendance enables children to access a full education and assists them to reach their full potential. School staff set an example for students by encouraging and emphasising attendance and punctuality.

A child between the ages of six and sixteen years is of compulsory school age, irrespective of distance from the school or whether the student has a disability. All students are required to be enrolled at a registered government or non-government school and must attend on every day instruction is provided, unless the minister has granted an exemption from school attendance.

The responsibility for enforcing school attendance is with the Department of Education and Children's Services. The Department therefore has a legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of non-attendance.

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. Comet State School is committed to promoting the key messages of the Queensland State-wide initiative *Every Day Counts* which promotes four key messages:

- ⇒ All children be enrolled at school and attend on every school day.
- ⇒ Schools monitor, communicate and implement strategies to improve regular school attendance.
- ⇒ Truancy can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices.
- ⇒ Attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.



Responsibilities

Parents/Carers Responsibilities:

- Ensure that their child attends school every school day.
- Provide a satisfactory explanation for all absences, lateness or early departure. If child is absent from school a message from the schools mobile phone will be sent via SMS. Parents/ Cares are encourage to reply via the SMS school phone or direct phone call to the school.
- Contact the school prior to any planned absence. Where this is not possible, parents must provide the reason for any absences prior to 9.30 a.m. on the day of absence, or within 2 days of the student's return to school. This may take the form of a medical certificate or a satisfactory explanation for the absence.
- Contact the Principal if student absence is to be for an extended period of time (e.g. family reasons or illness) and request school work - at least 2 days' notice should be given to prepare work.
- Contact the Principal if a student is refusing to attend school. Initiate or attend meetings to seek support and discuss their child's attendance or participation in their educational program.
- Provide evidence in the form of text, phone (message can be left on phone) a written note (signed and dated) from parents/carers explaining their lateness.
- Contact the school via phone text, phone (message can be left on phone) or a written note (signed and dated), if their child is required to leave school early.
- Advise the school of any change of address or phone numbers to ensure school records are accurate. Up to date data is essential in an emergency.

Student Responsibilities:

- Under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, students must attend school each day. They must be on time and have all necessary equipment.
- Never leave school during school hours without permission from parents/carers or the school.
- Report to class on arrival and where possible provide an explanation for lateness followed up by parent contact.
- Ensure all missed school work is completed.
- Ensure absence records are accurate and all absences have been explained by parents/carers.

School Responsibilities:

- Regularly inform students, staff and parents/carers about the Comet State School *Attendance Policy and Procedures* (including the Policy and Procedures for *late arrival, early departure and truanting*) and make this publicly available through the school's website, newsletters and enrolment package.
- Monitor student attendance daily through marking the roll at the beginning of each day and again after lunch.
- Notify parents/carers via the school phone or a letter home of any unexplained absence, requesting a satisfactory explanation for their child's absence.
- Discuss individual attendance with students and offer support and help to parents and students when school attendance is identified as reoccurring.
- Provide students with school work when they are absent for legitimate extended periods of time.
- Notify the relevant authorities if non-attendance persists.

Strategies

At Comet State School, we are committed to achieving our attendance target and continually improving and promoting attendance and achievement by:

- Ensuring consistent follow up of absences with parents/caregivers.
- Working with students and families to reduce absenteeism.
- Recognising and rewarding students who are on target and maintain attendance of 95% or greater.
- Monitoring attendance through regular data checks.
- Ensuring work that is missed due to absence is completed at school when possible and in some cases for homework.

Responses to absences

Absences for which a satisfactory reason has been provided are considered *explained absences*, and the student's enrolment is viewed as continuous. Undertaking a leisure activity such as shopping, family holidays, visiting friends and relatives, fishing or camping, is not considered a satisfactory explanation for an absence. An absence for which a satisfactory reason has not been provided is considered an *unexplained absence and be recorded as an unauthorised absence*.

If there is no explanation from the Parent/Caregiver regarding a student's absence or lateness for that day this will be followed up with an additional SMS requesting a reason. On the third day of an unexplained absence, lateness or if a regular pattern of non-attendance is observed, the Principal will contact home by phone.

Where there is a continuation of unexplained absences, or absences without satisfactory reasons, parents will be required to attend a meeting with the Principal to address issues contributing to these absences and to discuss implementation of appropriate strategies and support mechanisms.

Where unsatisfactory attendance still continues, the Principal may commence Formal processes associated with *Enforcement of Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation* as per Education Queensland policy up to and including referral by the Director General for prosecution under the Education (General Provisions) Act. and monitoring attendance.

Reporting and monitoring attendance

At Comet State School reports of absence or truanting are taken seriously. Parents, members of community and school staff may report an absence in the following ways:

- SMS school mobile (0474 933 306),
- Telephone the school office and leave message if not in direct contact with staff
- Signed/dated note sent with the student
- In person to a staff member

Departmental Policies and Procedures

Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools

<https://ppr.ged.qld.gov.au/education/management/Pages/Managing-Student-Absences-and-Enforcing-Enrolment-and-Attendance-at-State-Schools.aspx>



Regular school attendance

Information for parents and carers

Did you know? Research shows that in Queensland, higher student attendance at school is associated, on average, with higher student achievement.

Why is regular attendance at school important?

Regular school attendance will mean that your child has a better chance in life. Your child will achieve better when they go to school all day, every school day.

- they learn better
- they make friends
- they are happier
- they have a brighter future.

Why must I send my child to school?

Under Queensland law, you must make sure your child of school age is enrolled and attends school all day, every school day unless they have an acceptable reason. Illness, doing work experience or competing in a school sporting event are acceptable reasons for being absent from school.

Principals decide if the reason given for your child's absence is acceptable.

Avoid keeping your child away from school for:

- birthdays, shopping, visiting family and friends, if they sleep in, looking after other children, minor check ups or care such as hair cuts.

Routine medical or other health appointments should be made either before or after school or during the school holidays.

What should I do if our family is going on a holiday in school time?

You are encouraged not to schedule holidays during school time. If your family holiday is during school time, let the school know in advance and talk about what arrangements

can be made for your child. Depending on the circumstances the school may be able to provide tasks for your child to complete while they are absent or assist you to organise an exemption from schooling.

Do I need to let the school know if my child has been away from school?

Yes, you must let the school know the reason why your child has been absent from school within two school days of their return. If possible, advise the school beforehand.

Are you having problems getting your child to school for some of these reasons?

- won't get out of bed in the morning
- won't go to bed at night
- can't find their uniform, books, school bag ...
- slow to eat breakfast
- haven't done their homework
- watching TV
- have a test or presentation to do, have an assignment to hand in
- it's their birthday.

If so, a set routine can help

- have a set time to go to bed
- have a set time to get out of bed
- have uniform and school bag ready the night before
- have a set time for starting and finishing breakfast
- set a time for daily homework activities
- speak about school positively
- be firm, send your child to school every school day including their birthday and the last day of term!

What should I do if my child won't go to school?

You should contact the school as soon as possible for advice and support.

Every day counts – Is your child at school today?

www.education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts



Restrictive Practices

School staff at Comet State 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.
5. 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.