

Child & Youth Risk Management Strategy

A Strategy to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and to protect children from harm.

Adopted by the Management Committee on 26 June 2017.

This Strategy and its implementation must be reviewed annually under the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 s 171.

Document Control

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Prepared by: Management Committee

Reviewed by: Management Committee

1 Statement of Commitment

The Queensland Debating Union (QDU) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm. Our first priority must always be the welfare of students involved in our competitions and programs.

2 Code of Conduct

Everyone involved with the QDU must abide by the Code of Conduct in Appendix 1.

3 Recruitment, Selection, Training and Management Procedure

Our volunteers are primarily comprised of adjudicators in our primary and secondary school competitions. Adjudicators are required to be accredited to be involved in competitions.

Accreditation involves:

- training conducted by accredited adjudicators, including covering selected child safety risks;
- formal assessment of adjudication ability, incorporating key child safety components; and
- satisfaction of Blue Card and related requirements.

Once accredited, we promote continuous learning, involving:

- re-training and re-accreditation processes;
- updates and refreshers;
- feedback and response processes; and
- in some cases, discipline or de-accreditation.

Certain QDU programs also involve the provision of coaches or other persons. The QDU ensures that selection, training and management for these programs is appropriate to the specific program.

4 Policy and Procedure for Disclosures and Reporting

Disclosure and reporting requirements are contained in the Code of Conduct to ensure all participants are aware of them.

The QDU minimises the risk of harm by:

- ensuring students are in a safe environment;
- taking students seriously and following up any concerns; and
- listening to students and letting them know there are staff available to help with concerns.

If the QDU receives a report of a disclosure or suspicion of harm it will disclose this to and follow up with the debating coordinator at the relevant school. If imminent harm is threatened, the QDU will seek the intervention of the police or emergency services.

The QDU will offer support to any person who reports a disclosure or suspicion of harm, and will work with schools to ensure students are supported and counselled.

5 Breach Management Plan

An act or omission of any person involved in QDU competitions or programs contrary to any part of this Strategy, including the Code of Conduct, constitutes a breach. Potential breaches will be investigated and managed in a fair, unbiased and supportive way, including:

- advising all parties of the process;
- hearing from all parties involved and keeping records of their accounts;
- ensuring appropriate confidentiality; and
- reaching an outcome appropriate in the circumstances, which may include:
 - re-training;
 - supervision;
 - mediating between involved parties;
 - termination, de-accreditation or expulsion; or
 - reviewing this Strategy to ensure it achieves its aims.

While the QDU will generally follow this process, where immediate action is required to address a potential risk to child safety, this action may require some expedition or adjustment of the process.

6 Policy and Procedure for *Working with Children Act*

Compliance with the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (Qld) is an essential aspect of the QDU's child protection strategy. A standing agenda item for the first Management Committee meeting of each year is the implementation and review of this Strategy.

The QDU maintains an updated Blue Card Register for all persons involved in our competitions and programs. This process is also incorporated in the QDU Competition Management System software.

7 Risk Management Plans for High Risk and Special Events

The QDU has adopted an NSDC Risk Management Plan to address any unique risks to students regarding preparation for or participation in the National Schools Debating Championships.

The QDU regularly considers child safety and will develop plans for any new high risk events.

8 Communication and Training Strategy

This Strategy will be made available on the QDU website at www.qdu.org.au.

The Code of Conduct in Appendix 1 is structured as a training document to help everyone identify risks of harm, handle disclosures or suspicions of harm and understand this Strategy. The Code and Strategy are deliberately concise to ensure they are effective, clear and easily disseminated.

The Code of Conduct will be handed to all adjudicators and coaches at training seminars.

Code of Conduct

This Code applies to everyone involved with the QDU, including coaches, parents and students.

Paramount Duty

Your paramount duty is always the welfare of students.

Standards of Appropriate Behaviour

Category	Appropriate	Inappropriate
Language	Be respectful and encouraging with your words and non-verbal cues	Insults or name-calling Bullying or yelling Swearing or abusive language Sexually suggestive comments/jokes
Relationships	Be a trusted and positive role model that helps empower students	Favouritism 'Grooming' students Any contact outside debating (eg messaging)
Physical Contact	Only ever in a medical emergency or to protect from imminent physical harm	Violent or aggressive behaviour around students Hitting, kicking or pushing Kissing or touching of a sexual nature
Other	Communicate and project an appropriate image	Photographing or filming at debates Being under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances during engagement with the QDU Making inappropriate comments to others about specific teams, students or other stakeholders

Handling Disclosures or Suspicions of Harm

If you have a suspicion or receive a disclosure of harm relating to the QDU, report it **immediately** to the QDU office (by telephone and follow up email) and relevant coordinators at your current location. 'Harm' includes physical, emotional or psychological abuse or neglect or sexual abuse.

You might suspect harm based on unexplained injuries or significant changes in behaviour.

When receiving a disclosure (which may begin with eg "I think I saw...", "Someone told me..."):

- remain calm and find a private and safe place to talk, but don't promise to keep a secret;
- say they have done the right thing to tell you and you will need to tell someone who can help;
- only confirm the need to report: further questions may cause distress or affect later enquiry;
- do not attempt to conduct your own investigation.

Child & Youth Risk Management Strategy

This Code is part of the QDU's Child & Youth Risk Management Strategy, online at www.qdu.org.au.

Breaches of this Code or the Strategy are taken very seriously, and will be dealt with according to the Breach Management Plan in the Strategy.

Remember: children are vulnerable and require your care to protect them.