



Reporting child abuse

Queensland

What gets reported?

You should report your concerns to Child Safety if you reasonably suspect that a child may be in need of protection, or that an unborn child may be in need of protection after they are born.

A child who may be in need of protection has suffered, is suffering, or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm **and** may not have a parent able and willing to protect them from harm. **You don't have to have proof.** If you suspect that a child (and that includes anyone under 18) is in need of protection then you should report it immediately.

Who is required to report?

Although people working in sporting or recreation organisations are not mandatory reporters, there may be some individuals who do have this responsibility as a result of their employment with other organisations (e.g. teachers who coach the local team).

Even though not required by law anyone who suspects that a child or young person is at risk of neglect or abuse should report it to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

How do I make a report?

If you have a reason to suspect a child in Queensland is experiencing harm, or is at risk of experiencing harm, you need to contact Child Safety Services:

- **During normal business hours** - contact the Regional Intake Service.
- **After hours and on weekends** - contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on **1800 177 135** or (07) 3235 9999. The service operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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You can also report your concerns to Child Safety by completing an [online report form](#).

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation, contact the Queensland Police Service immediately by dialling **000**.

Queensland Police Service has a number of child protection and investigation units across Queensland. To contact the Queensland Police Service, contact the [Police District Communication Centre](#) nearest you.

If you aren't sure who to call, or for assistance to locate your nearest child safety service centre, contact Child Safety Services' Enquiries Unit on **1800 811 810**. Child safety service centres have professionally trained child protection staff who are skilled in dealing with information about harm or risk of harm to children.

When you make a report to Child Safety Services or the Queensland Police Service, your details are kept confidential and your identity is strictly protected. Useful information

Responding to child abuse

Child Safety Services is the lead child protection agency in Queensland and is required by law to ensure that children and young people are safe from abuse, neglect and harm in their homes.

When we receive information about harm or risk of harm to a child or young person up to 18 years of age, and suspect that they may require protection, our child safety officers will complete an investigation and assessment to determine the ongoing safety of the child.

Our role in protecting children and young people is to:

- investigate and assess concerns that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of significant harm
- provide ongoing services to children and young people who are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing significant harm.
- Child safety officers conduct thorough investigations and assessments to determine the protection and care needs of children and young people.
- In deciding if a child is in need of protection, child safety officers will determine whether:
 - the child or young person has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at risk of suffering significant harm
 - does not have a parent or carer able and willing to protect them from harm.

If a child or young person's parents are unable or unwilling to protect them, we will provide help and support for the child, young person and their family.

Child-safe environment strategies

Child-safe environment strategies are put in place to prevent and minimise opportunities for child abuse within your organisation including preventing offenders from gaining access to your organisation. They include ensuring your staff and volunteers understand their child protection obligations and that staff and volunteers know who to go to should they have suspicions a child may be at risk of harm.

Every child and young person has the right to grow up in a safe and supportive family and to have opportunities that assist them to reach their full potential.

One of the ways this can be achieved is through supporting families to provide for the physical, social and emotional needs of children and young people.

- If a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, it is important for the whole family to be supported.
- Support networks can work to strengthen families and can consist of friends, family members, community or non-government services.

If you suspect that a child or young person has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm or is at risk of suffering significant harm, contact us to [report your concerns](#).

- If the person responsible for the harm is a child or young person, reporting your concerns may enable them to get help to address their behaviour.
- When you report concerns to us or the [Queensland Police Service](#), your details are kept confidential and your identity is protected.

What does establishing a child-safe environment involve?

Basically it requires putting strategies in place to prevent offenders from gaining access to your organisation and reducing opportunities for abuse.

These strategies include:

Understanding the different types of child abuse.

Identifying potential risks and dangers to children (e.g. going away on camps) and managing those risks.

Developing guidelines and processes that clearly outline how to respond to child protection issues.

Choosing your staff with care.

- State your commitment to a child safe environment when advertising vacant positions.
- Seek criminal history checks for employees/volunteers working with children. For information on Queensland's "blue card" system, visit: www.bluecard.qld.gov.au.
- Conduct referee checks (particularly with previous child-related employers, if possible).

Nominating a child protection officer or Member Protection Information Officer who people can trust and go to with concerns.

Ensuring that all staff (paid and volunteers) understand their mandatory/ethical reporting obligations for suspected child abuse.

Ensuring staff have a clear understanding of acceptable/ unacceptable behaviour and know who to contact to about concerns they may have.

Talking openly about the importance of ensuring the safety of children within your organisation.

Resources

Where can I get further information or resources on reporting?

There are a range of useful resources on the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services website”

<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/protecting-children/resources-and-publications>

Also see the Blue Card Services website - <http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au>