

Underpinning Legislative & Best Practice Policy Frameworks

This Interim Policy Statement is underpinned by:

- Queensland Government legislation and DTIS policies
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Sport Integrity Australia's National Integrity Framework

Statement of Commitment

The Queensland Academy of Sport (QAS) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of QAS supported athletes.

We aim to create an environment where athletes of any age, background and ability can thrive, with the resources and support to reach their full potential.

We have zero tolerance of any harm or abuse and will work actively to prevent it.

We will take concerns about athletes' safety and wellbeing seriously and will respond sensitively and promptly.

We prioritise the safety of ALL QAS supported athletes, and we recognise athletes under the age of 18 require additional protection.

We will listen to our athletes, their families and our QAS community and continuously improve how we operate, always seeking to be better.

Current Policy Position

The purpose of this Interim Policy Statement is to speak to the QAS' current policy position in relation to the safeguarding of athletes and the safety and protection of children and young people.

This Interim Policy Statement provides an overview of the QAS' approach to safeguarding, in the absence of an endorsed policy framework.

QAS is currently working with Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) in relation to piloting the National Integrity Framework for non-national sporting organisations (the Framework). This Framework will include a suite of integrity policies including child safeguarding and member protection, consistent with other state institutes and the national sporting organisations currently partnering with the QAS.

It is anticipated that the QAS will commence the pilot of this policy framework in late 2023.

Additionally, the QAS is awaiting the outcome of several new departmental policies and state government legislative bills in relation to complaint handling and public interest disclosures that will determine the internal reporting and complaint requirements of the QAS, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Sport (DTIS) and the broader Queensland Public Service.

In the interim, QAS staff and contractors are expected to comply with the *QPS Code of Conduct* and the *QAS Safeguarding Expected Behaviours* and engage in the *QAS Safeguarding Education* provided. The work of the QAS is also supported by the *Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy* and all safeguarding matters are recognised, reported and managed via the *QAS Guide to Responding to Athlete Safeguarding Concerns Flowchart*.

Code of Conduct

In addition to the *QPS Code of Conduct*, all QAS staff and contractors are required to comply with the following *QAS Athlete Safeguarding Expected Behaviours*. These are actively provided through online and hard copy resources and education and training.

QAS Athlete Safeguarding Expected Behaviours

1. Listening and responding to athletes, prioritising their voice in decision making and taking what they say seriously.
2. Communicating safely and effectively with athletes.
3. Having firm professional boundaries when working with athletes.
4. Never intentionally harming an athlete physically, and only engaging in safe and appropriate physical contact with athletes, putting their safety and wellbeing first.
5. Never engaging in any behaviour of a sexual nature (physically, verbally non-verbally, or through online communication.)
6. Considering the safety of athletes and addressing any risks that may exist across all QAS environments including onsite, online and on the road.
7. Contributing to an inclusive environment for athletes from ALL backgrounds and treating everyone fairly.
8. Taking any concerns about the safety of an athlete seriously, and responding in line with policies, procedures, guidelines and the law.

Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Compliance Statement (the Strategy)

The QAS has a publicly available *Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy* that provides practical information and guidance concerning the risk mitigation strategies employed by QAS to deliver safe and supportive environments for all QAS supported athletes and any children or young people accessing QAS services or facilities.

The Strategy refers to the QAS':

1. Statement of Commitment
2. Code of Conduct
3. Recruitment, Selection, Training and Management of QAS Staff and Contractors
4. Handling Disclosures or Suspicion of and Actual Harm, Including Reporting Guidelines
5. Managing Breaches of the Strategy
6. High Risk Activities and Special Events

7. Compliance with requirements of the Blue Card System
8. Communication and Support

Education & Training

The *QAS Athlete Safeguarding Education Plan* (the Plan) identifies and maps out safeguarding education for QAS staff and contractors (Level 1- Awareness and Level 2 – Application) delivered annually by an external safeguarding specialist, skilled external training and education partners and internal staff.

The Plan is aligned with the *International Training Framework for Safeguarding Leads in Sport* and includes a customised approach covering the following topics:

- QAS Athlete Safeguarding – Safe Responses
- QAS Athlete Safeguarding – Safe Behaviours
- QAS Athlete Safeguarding – Safe Recruitment
- QAS Athlete Safeguarding – Culturally Safe Sport
- QAS Athlete Safeguarding – Inclusive Sport

The Plan is delivered across a variety of platforms and formats include all staff presentations, small group workshops delivered face to face and virtually to reach the QAS' mobilised workforce, new staff and contractor induction sessions and an online learning module.

In addition to staff and contractors, the Plan extends to the delivery of safeguarding education to QAS supported athletes and their families.

QAS staff and contractors are also provided with:

- Skills and knowledge training to perform their duties safely and competently, and meet specific requirements of their role.
- Training relating to relevant QAS service delivery procedures and guidelines and *Department Human Resource Policies and Procedures* (e.g. *Code of Conduct, Work Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy*).

Reporting and Complaint Handling

QAS is committed to supporting all QAS supported athletes, children and young people and their families who raise concerns or make disclosures or complaints. Protocols for athlete safeguarding concerns, allegations, disclosures and complaints have been developed to ensure that:

- QAS supported athletes, children, young people and their families are educated and empowered to know their rights, recognize concerning behaviours and speak up. This is demonstrated via the:
 - *QAS Athlete Safeguarding Resources for QAS Supported Athletes* (available in online PDF and Quick Flick format)
 - *QAS Athlete Safeguarding Education Plan* including the safeguarding education for athletes delivered at induction by the Athlete Wellbeing and Engagement team.

- Athlete and parent information sessions delivered to participants in the You for 32 Talent Identification Program.

QAS staff and contractors are provided education regarding their responsibility to recognise concerning behaviours, respond to a concern, allegation, disclosure or complaint raised with them and follow QAS, Queensland Government and Sport Integrity Australia reporting guidelines, particularly when it involves a risk to a child or young person under the age of 18. This is demonstrated through the:

- *QAS Responding to Safeguarding Concerns Flowchart* that aligns with the DTIS and QPS complaint handling policies and protocols (underpinned by the Public Sector Act 2022 and the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010) and the CYJMA Reporting child abuse policies and protocols (underpinned by the Child Protection Act 1999).
- *QAS Athlete Safeguarding Resources for QAS Staff and Contractors* (available in online PDF and Quick Flick format)
- *QAS Athlete Safeguarding Education Plan* including the QAS Athlete Safeguarding Education Staff and Contractor Sessions, delivered annually by an external safeguarding specialist.
- QAS Staff and Contractor Induction Sessions delivered by People & Culture.
- QAS Athlete Safeguarding Online Module live August 2023.

To discuss the QAS' response to safeguarding you can reach out via email to:

safeguardingQAS@dtis.qld.gov.au