



Queensland's reportable conduct scheme: how organisations must report and respond to child abuse

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From 1 July 2026, the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 introduced obligations for organisations that work with children. These organisations are obliged to create and use systems for responding to, and investigating, allegations of child abuse.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse found that there were great difficulties in reporting, and responding to, allegations of child abuse in institutions.

Following this finding, the Commission recommended that all States and Territories implement reportable conduct schemes.

Queensland followed that recommendation by creating the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024.

In this article, we explain what the scheme covers, how it works, and what organisations and workers need to know about reporting and responding to allegations under it.

What is a reportable conduct scheme?

A reportable conduct scheme is a government-led scheme for reporting and responding to allegations of child abuse.

The scheme has two parts. First, organisations that work with children must create their own system for reporting and responding to allegations of child abuse with their organisation. And second, the Queensland Family and Child Commission - an independent government body - ensures that the organisations' systems work properly.

What organisations does the reportable conduct scheme cover?

The scheme covers any entity that cares for, supervises or exercises authority over children, and that is one of the following:

1. An accommodation or residential service.
2. A religious body.
3. An early childhood education and care service.
4. A child protection service
5. A service for children with disability.
6. An education service.
7. A health service.
8. A justice or detention service.
9. A government entity.

Any organisation that fits the above description is a "**reporting entity**".

Which allegations does the reportable conduct scheme cover?

Put simply, the scheme covers allegations against workers who someone suspects has abused a child, or has been convicted of an offence involving child abuse, while working for a reporting entity.

But put in the language of the Child Safe Organisations 2024, the scheme covers "reportable allegations" about, and "reportable conviction" of, a "worker".

A "worker" includes someone who works for a reporting entity. It also includes a former worker if the reportable allegation or the reportable conviction occurred while the worker worked for the reporting entity.

A "reportable allegation" exists where there is an allegation that a worker has engaged in reportable conduct. Likewise, a "reportable conviction" exists where a worker is convicted of an offence involving reportable conduct.

"Reportable conduct" is, effectively, any form of child abuse.

How can I report child abuse under the scheme?

If you suspect that a worker of a reporting entity has abused a child or has been convicted of an offence involving child abuse, then under the scheme, you can report that suspicion. You report that suspicion to the Family and Child Commission.

If you are a worker in a reporting entity, then under the scheme, you must report any suspicion that a co-worker is abusing a child. You either report to the head of your organisation or to the Family and Child Commission. However, you do not need to report this if you reasonably believe someone else has already reported the suspected child abuse.

What protections do I have if I make a report?

Under the scheme, you are protected if you make a report. A person cannot publish information about someone who makes a report. It is also illegal for a person to harm another person because the other person makes, or wants to make, a report.

How does this interact with other mandatory reporting laws?

Whilst this article specifically addresses reportable conduct under the reportable conduct scheme, it is important to be aware that there are separate laws which also govern the reporting of child abuse. For example, the Criminal Code Act 1899 makes it an offence, punishable by imprisonment, for any adult to "fail to disclose information to a police officer" as soon as reasonably practicable after gaining information that would cause the adult to reasonably believe that a child sexual offence is or has been committed against a child (without reasonable excuse). For more information please see

<https://www.gnl.com.au/articles/2021/august/new-child-sex-offences/>

How do reporting entities respond to suspected child abuse under the scheme?

Under the scheme, once the "head of a reporting entity" becomes aware of a reportable allegation against, or reportable conviction of, a worker, they must start [investigating](#) it. They must also notify the Queensland Family and Child Commission of the reportable allegation or reportable conduct.

The "head of a reporting entity" is usually the chief executive of that entity. However, it can also be whoever holds the head position of that entity. For example, the police commissioner is the head of the reporting entity for the police service.

Once the head of the reporting entity finishes investigating the reportable allegation or reportable conviction, then they must prepare a written report about that investigation. They must then give this report to the Queensland Family and Child Commission.

What if the reporting entity cannot or should not carry out the investigation?

Under the scheme, the Queensland Family and Child Commission can ask a "sector regulator" to do the investigation. A "sector regulator" is usually a government body that regulates the reporting entity, or a government department that funds the reporting entity. The Queensland Family and Child Commission can also do the investigation themselves.

Where can I get help?

Matters like these are often sensitive and tricky to navigate. Even those with the best of intentions may contravene the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 if they are not careful.

Whether you are reporting child abuse, or are responding to such reports, we can assist you to navigate this sensitive and tricky area. Please contact our office if you would like assistance navigating the reportable conduct scheme.

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