Information for Parents and Carers

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State Education – Shailer Park State High School

Shailer Park State High School strives to deliver high quality education to students enrolled in the Compulsory Schooling Phase (to end of Year 10) or Compulsory Participation Phase (years 11 and 12) of schooling. Our focus is upon learning that provides meaningful outcomes for students and aspires towards high achievement.

Compulsory Schooling years

The Queensland curriculum for the compulsory years of schooling is based on the Australian Curriculum for English, Mathematics, Science and History and the Essential Learnings for all other learning areas (Health and Physical Education, Languages Other than English, Technology and the Arts).

In Years 7 – 10 students are provided with a broad general curriculum in the core subjects together with the opportunity to explore and specialise in other electives. Year 10 is a transition year to the Senior Phase of Learning (Years 11 and 12).

Literacy

Literacy is at the heart of every student’s ability to learn and succeed in school and beyond. Literacy skills are explicitly taught in every subject. Literacy is integral to effective student learning.

Numeracy

Numeracy is an essential tool for learning and living. It is necessary for all students to develop numeracy skills when they use mathematical ideas in everyday situations. Numeracy is integral to effective student learning in every subject area.

Compulsory Participation Phase - Years 11 and 12

In Years 11 and 12, students choose a package of learning which may include Authority and Authority-registered subjects developed by the Queensland Studies Authority. The package may also include vocational education and training (VET) certificates in a variety of industry areas.

Years 11 and 12 students can also access school-based apprenticeships and traineeships which provide the opportunity to achieve nationally recognised vocational education and training (VET) qualifications while undertaking part-time paid employment.

Senior students can achieve VET competencies and qualifications delivered either by the school, local TAFE institute or private provider.

The complete range of subject and certificate offerings varies from school to school. Our Prospectus and Student Handbooks contain detailed information on school policies, courses offered and enrolment procedures.

Students who are focussing on tertiary studies may also have the opportunity to apply for enrolment in early entry courses.

Extracurricular activities

State schools throughout Queensland provide many opportunities for students to engage in activities outside the existing curriculum, such as instrumental music, choirs, drama,
debating and sport. The range of activities and experiences available at Shailer Park State High School are contained in the school Prospectus. Course Handbooks outline the range of experiences offered in each Year level and subject.

Extracurricular activities enrich learning processes and can be enhanced by parental support and encouragement.

Excursions and camps
An excursion or field trip is a curriculum activity usually conducted during a single school day at a location outside the school grounds. A camp is generally an outdoor activity conducted over more than a day. It usually requires a child to spend at least one night away from home. Camps are designed to enhance the experiences of students and to build relationships outside the school setting.

Parental permission
Schools are required to obtain written parental consent for all students under the age of 18 years participating in excursions and camps or any other extracurricular activities that require students to leave or be absent from the school. If a student is under 18 years of age and living independently, the consent form must be signed by the student and countersigned by the principal.

Assessment and reporting
Assessment is an ongoing and integral part of the teaching and learning process. Through this process schools are able to provide easy-to-understand reports to parents about individual student learning outcomes.

The type of assessment and report varies at different times during a student's school life. Formal reporting to parents will occur at least once every semester. A progress report is provided at the end of Term 2 each year. Parents are encouraged to discuss their children's progress and needs with teachers at any time.

Parent and teacher partnerships are proven mechanisms for maximising student performance and results. Teachers will provide feedback to parents where required when monitoring academic progress, including completion and performance in assessment. Parents are advised to always take written communications from teachers with regard to student performance very seriously.

School and student reporting
The following is a guide to assist parents to understand recent developments in reporting in Queensland schools, and to enable them to discuss their child's progress and needs with teachers.

Queensland schools are improving the way they report on student and school performance, by providing parents and the community with easy access to information about the achievements of students and schools.

These changes will ensure Queensland parents receive the information they need to help their children throughout their schooling and make informed choices about schools.

Comprehensive information using school and student reporting will be provided in three ways:

- state-wide reporting: parents and the community have access to information about:
  - the post-school destinations of school-leavers from Year 12, through the publication of the Next Step Destination Survey
a broad range of Year 12 outcomes for all Queensland schools, published annually in Queensland newspapers, and available on the Queensland Studies Authority website

school reporting: parents and the community can access information about individual schools through the publication of the school annual report on school websites. This information describes the school context, including student enrolment and distinctive curriculum offerings, as well as school and student performance information. The school performance information may include results in Years 3, 5 and 7 Literacy and Numeracy Tests, Year 12 outcomes and information on the post-school destinations of school-leavers from the Next Step Destination Survey.

student reporting: reporting of individual student achievement to parents or caregivers:

- twice-yearly student reports which are written in 'plain English'
- reports that will rate student achievement, effort and behaviour using a five-point scale and include teacher comments and days absent
- access to parent-teacher interviews twice a year.
- literacy and numeracy reports for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students that clearly present information about their child's achievement against the rest of the state and the national literacy and numeracy benchmarks.

Together this information will provide a comprehensive picture for parents to help them support their child's education, and make informed decisions about where their child may need additional support.

**ACARA**

The Australian Curriculum is currently being rolled out in Queensland schools. This curriculum mandates the study of particular subjects and time allocations of instruction that will by 2015 be comparable across any Australian educational jurisdiction. Parents should consult the ACARA website for detailed information at [www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au)

**Queensland Core Skills Test**

The Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test is a state-wide test based on the Queensland senior curriculum and is available to all Year 12 students regardless of subjects taken. However, students who are eligible for a Tertiary Entrance Statement, recording their Overall Position and Field Positions, must sit the test.

An Overall Position (OP) states a student's rank-order position based on overall achievement in Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) subjects. To qualify for an OP, students must have studied at least 20 semesters of QSA subjects including three subjects for all four senior semesters and have taken the QCS Test.

Field Positions (FPs) indicate a student's rank-order position based on overall achievements in QSA subjects in up to five fields: extended written expression, short written communication, basic numeracy, solving complex problems and practical performance. FPs are calculated for OP eligible students only.

**Secondary certification**

As well as regular end-of-semester reporting, students in secondary schools receive certificates marking significant milestones.
On completing Year 12, students who achieve at C or above in sufficient subjects and semesters and acquire 20 or more credit points will receive a Queensland Certificate of Education and, if eligible, a Tertiary Entrance Statement.

The Queensland Certificate of Education records individual subject results, including relevant vocational education and training results and the Queensland Core Skills Test results. The QCE is a broad-based qualification that requires young people to achieve a significant amount of learning, as well as meet specified requirements for literacy and numeracy, in order to achieve the qualification.

The QCE recognises broad learning options and offers flexibility in what, where and when learning occurs. Different types of learning attract different credit values. A credit is the minimum amount of learning at the set standard that can contribute towards the QCE. Students must have at least 20 credits to be awarded a QCE.

To find out more visit the Queensland Studies Authority website, www.qsa.qld.edu.au.

The Tertiary Entrance Statement is the key to university entrance and contains an Overall Position and Field Positions.

Some students will receive a Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement. A student is eligible to receive the Certificate of Post-Compulsory School Education if the student has at least 12 years of schooling and is identified by the school as having an impairment or difficulties in learning that are not primarily due to socioeconomic, cultural and/or linguistic factors.

A Record of Results, based on school records, may be issued to students who leave school prior to completing the requirements for a certificate.

**Next Step**

*Next Step is the Queensland* Government’s state-wide survey of every student who completed Year 12 in the previous year in Queensland, in state and non-state schools. The survey, which was initiated in 2005, collects information about the initial study and employment destinations of young people after leaving school.

The survey provides valuable information to improve the services that are available to young adults in the future. It assists:

- parents and the wider public to know the outcomes of students after Year 12 and the range of options available to students
- schools to review and plan their services for students, especially in the senior years of schooling
- school systems to review their education policies as they affect the transition from school to further study and employment
- training bodies, universities, business and industry, local government and regional planners to plan their services.

For further information visit the Next Step Survey at http://education.qld.gov.au/nextstep.

**Homework - State school policies**

Every state school in Queensland is required to develop a homework policy in consultation with the school community, particularly the Parents and Citizens’ Association (P&C).

 Principals are required to distribute the school homework policy to staff, students, and parents and caregivers, particularly at the time of student enrolment. They must ensure
the homework policy is effectively implemented throughout the school, and include an up-to-date school homework policy as part of their annual school reporting.

In implementing their school’s homework policy, teachers are required to use homework that is varied, challenging and directly related to class work and appropriate to students’ learning needs. Teachers check homework regularly and provide timely and useful feedback. They are also required to discuss with parents and caregivers any developing problems concerning their child’s homework and suggest strategies to assist with their homework.

The guidelines for Queensland state schools about levels of student homework emphasise a need for balance between family life and consolidating classroom learning.

They provide a very solid basis for schools to develop their own individual homework policy in conjunction with the school community, particularly the P&C.

There is an emphasis on helping students establish a positive routine of regular, independent study, without going overboard.

**Junior Secondary (Years 7, 8 and 9)**

In Years 7, 8 and 9 some homework can be completed daily, over a weekly or fortnightly period and may:

- include daily independent reading
- be coordinated across different subject areas, for example setting a task such as writing a letter (English) to the local member of parliament (Civics) about a local environmental matter (Science)
- include extension of class work, projects and research.

In Year 7, 8 and Year 9, students should be taking more responsibility for their own learning than in primary school. They can be required to engage in independent learning to complement work undertaken in class. Homework in Years 7,8 and 9 could be up to but not more than five hours per week.

**Senior Secondary (Years 10, 11 and 12)**

In Years 10, 11 and 12 the amount of time devoted to homework and independent study will vary according to the student’s learning needs and individual program of learning, determined through their Senior Education and Training (SET) Plan, which is completed during Year 10.

While teachers may provide students with additional work relevant to their learning which the student may undertake at home, young people during this phase of their education should generally be independent learners exercising their own judgment as to the out-of-hours time they devote to their studies. Of course, care should be taken to ensure that a balance is maintained between the various demands of study, sport, recreational and cultural or part-time employment activities.

**Helping students take responsibility for their own learning**

Teachers can help students establish a routine of regular, independent study by setting homework on a regular basis, explicitly teaching strategies to develop organisational and time-management skills and providing opportunities to practise these strategies through
homework, while clearly communicating the purpose, benefits and expectations of homework.

Students can take responsibility for their own learning by:
- being aware of the school’s homework policy
- discussing homework expectations with their parents or caregivers
- accepting responsibility for the completion of homework tasks within set timeframes
- following up on comments made by teachers
- seeking assistance when difficulties arise
- organising their time to manage home obligations, participation in physical activity and sports, recreational and cultural activities and part-time employment.

How can you help your children to learn?

Through their Parents and Citizens’ Association, parents can have a key role in the development of a school's homework policy.

Parents and caregivers can help their children by:
- reading to them, talking with them and involving them in tasks at home including shopping, playing games and physical activity
- helping them complete homework tasks by discussing key questions, or directing them to resources
- encouraging them to take responsibility for their learning and organisation of time
- encouraging them to read and to take an interest in and discuss current local, national and international events
- helping them balance the amount of time spent completing homework, watching television, playing computer games, playing sport and engaging in other recreational activities, or working part-time, and
- contacting the relevant teacher to discuss any concerns about the nature of homework and their children's approach to the homework.

Behaviour management

Education Queensland is committed to providing school environments which maximise the educational opportunities and outcomes for all students. Queensland state schools have programs in place to address issues relating to bullying, harassment and discrimination. Behaviour at school is managed supportively to achieve a positive learning environment for the benefit of students, staff and parents. Corporal punishment is not allowed in Queensland state schools.

All state schools are required to have an approved Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students that articulates a range of responses including whole school, targeted and intensive behaviour support as a means of facilitating positive learning and responsible behaviour in students.

Each region has a number of behaviour specialists. Other support staff includes guidance officers, social workers, community welfare workers, youth workers, psychologists and teacher aides.

In extreme situations, where a range of strategies has already been used or in the case of serious inappropriate behaviour, the student may be suspended or excluded from school. The situations when this may occur are set out in Queensland’s Education (General Provisions) Act 2006.

In cases of long suspensions (six to 20 days) and where students are excluded, parents may appeal against these decisions. Appeals against long suspensions can be made to the
Executive Director (Schools) for the school concerned, while appeals against exclusions must be made to the Director-General of Education, Training and the Arts. Following the receipt of an appeal the Department will review decision processes.

The Code of School Behaviour

The Code of School Behaviour outlines a consistent standard of behaviour for all state school communities in Queensland, inclusive of students, staff and parents, and recognises the close relationship between learning, achievement and behaviour. The Code of School Behaviour has been developed to deliver the best possible outcomes for students and promote the development of responsible behaviour.

School communities use the code as a basis for providing:
- positive support to promote high standards of achievement and behaviour
- clearly articulated responses and consequences for inappropriate behaviour.

The Code of School Behaviour can be accessed via our school website, is reproduced in extract in our School Student Diary & Planner and is provided to parents/carers in full in our Prospectus pack upon enrolment.

By signing our school’s Enrolment Agreement as provided for in the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 students commit to behaving responsibly while enrolled as a student at our school. Any problems related to behaviour should be brought to the attention of school staff to enable schools to respond effectively and implement practices to maintain a safe learning environment.

Alternative educational programs for students at risk

For some students, alternative placements and pathways are needed for them to reach their educational goals. Districts employ a variety of strategies to support students at risk of disengaging from learning, including:
- **Positive Learning Centres**
  Positive Learning Centres (PLCs) are one provision in an array of regional services that aim to provide an alternative program for some students who, at a given point in time, require intervention beyond the capacity of a mainstream classroom. The overall aim of the PLCs is to reintegrate students into mainstream schooling or into more appropriate learning or vocational pathways.
- **District-based Centres** (including Alternative Programs for six to 20-day suspensions)
  A number of district-based services, programs and centres have been established throughout Queensland to also provide alternative programs for students at risk.
- **Flexible Learning Services**
  Flexible learning services focus on programs to re-engage disengaged 15 to 17-year-old youth. The program has been successful in re-engaging previously disengaged young people, retaining students who were at risk of disengaging from learning, and assisting young people to attain qualifications (achievement).

Resources available to support students

Bullying. No Way!

Bullying. No Way! is a resource created by Australia’s educational communities as well as students, staff, agencies, education officers and community members. It is intended to support young people to be safe, supported, respected, valued - and free from bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination. The Bullying. No Way! website contains
information and support for students on how to handle situations of bullying. For more information visit the Bullying. No way! website, www.bullyingnoway.com.au

**Keeping informed**

The Department provides many formal and informal opportunities for parents to find out about their children's progress at school. Some of these include:

*Reports on student performance*
Schools provide reports to parents to inform them of their children's progress. All schools are required to provide parents with a written report on their child's performance at least twice a year. Our school provides three opportunities for this to occur each year.

*School annual reports*
All schools must publish a minimum set of information for parents and the community to read.

This publication is accessible on our school’s website. The information includes:
- distinctive curriculum offerings
- extracurricular activities
- staff development priorities
- social climate of the school, including pastoral care programs
- strategies used for involving parents in their child’s education
- reading, writing, and numeracy results for Years 3, 5 and 7 must be published, including the average score for the school
- a range of information about the performance of Year 12 students from the previous year.

*Newsletters*
An ‘on-line’ regular newsletter, fortnightly is published to inform parents, caregivers and community members about school activities, developments and initiatives.

*Letters*
Schools often communicate information about specific issues relating to a student by way of a personal letter. Teachers will communicate with parents where academic or personal performance is of concern. Teachers also contact parents to deliver messages of encouragement and acknowledgement for effort and outcome.

*Personal appointments*
Parents are encouraged to meet with any staff member at a mutually convenient time at their child's school to discuss relevant issues and concerns. Every school must offer parent-teacher interviews each semester.

*Parent-teacher nights*
Schools may hold these nights at the start of the year to discuss class or year programs with parents. There are also other opportunities, such as parent-teacher interviews to talk about issues or concerns, and to ask how children are performing and progressing at school.

*Schools + Parents magazine*
This magazine is distributed to parents of students in all Queensland State and nonstate schools in Term 2 and Term 4. The magazine provides timely and relevant information to parents about issues affecting the education of their children.

*Schools + Parents online*
Schools + Parents online is a free monthly e-newsletter focusing on current and upcoming news, events, education programs and policies for parents of Queensland state school students.
Becoming involved

School activities
Parents can be involved in a range of school activities such as assisting in the classroom, helping with excursions and camps, or offering their expertise to help organise extracurricular activities such as sports carnivals and musicals.

Community participation officers
Community participation officers based in district offices, and school-based workers such as parent liaison officers, focus on increasing parent and community participation in schools.

Parents and Citizens' Associations
State schools offer opportunities for parents to join a Parents and Citizens' (P&C) Association. These associations are involved in a variety of school activities from policy to financial planning as well as tuckshops, fundraising, school functions and out-of-school-hours care.

Tuckshops
Most state schools have a canteen or tuckshop staffed by parent volunteers. The Queensland Association of School Tuckshops (QAST) is a non-profit, community-based organisation developed to assist tuckshop workers and school communities to provide great-tasting and healthy foods.

The service to members includes regular magazines, special events specifically for tuckshop workers, support for the Smart Choices strategy, and advice on tuckshop management issues including volunteer workforce strategies, menu development, pricing, healthy food ideas and marketing. For more information visit the QAST website or phone 3324 1511.

Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens' Associations
The Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens' Associations (QCPCA) is a state-wide organisation representing Parents and Citizens' Associations. Members can help shape QCPCA policy and have their views represented at state and local levels. The QCPCA is represented on a number of key education bodies, including the Queensland Studies Authority Board and the Queensland College of Teachers.

Making a complaint

During the course of your child's school years, you may have cause to make a complaint about an issue you feel is adversely affecting your child's education.

Education Queensland is committed to ensuring that all complaints - whether they relate to a school staff member or a school's operations - are dealt with in a fair and equitable manner.

- When making a complaint, you have a responsibility to:
  - provide complete and factual information in a timely manner
  - deliver your complaint in a nonthreatening manner
  - not make frivolous or vexatious complaints or include deliberately false or misleading information.

Lodging a complaint concerning teacher behaviour or professionalism

In most instances
- staff members are told of complaints made about them and offered the right of reply.
- A complainant also has the right to have a support person throughout the process.
- If your complaint relates to suspected official misconduct or criminal activity, then you should direct your complaint directly to the Crime and Misconduct Commission or the Queensland Police Service.

The following five-step procedure assists parents, guardians, staff and school personnel in reaching an outcome that is in the best interests of the student:

1. **Discuss your complaint with the class teacher**
   If your complaint is with your child's teacher or an issue concerning your child's experience at school, make an appointment with that teacher as soon as possible through the school administration to resolve the problem at this level.

   The teacher will make a record of the complaint and report your meeting and any outcomes to the school principal. Where the teacher has been approached but the issue remains unresolved, make an appointment with the school principal to discuss the issue further.

2. **Discuss your complaint with the principal**
   If your complaint is related to the school more generally, you should raise your complaint directly with the principal. The principal will make a record of your complaint and work with you to resolve the issue.

   Complaints to the principal may be lodged by telephone, writing or in electronic format. Email addresses can be accessed through the [Schools Directory](#).

3. **Contact District Office**
   If you have discussed the issue with the principal and still feel that your complaint has not been addressed, you have the right to contact the Executive Director (Schools) who is the supervisor of the principal and oversees activities of schools.

   Complaints may be lodged by telephone or in writing. Complaints should be specific in detail, and outline the steps taken to date to resolve the issue.

   When you contact the district office you will be advised that your name and the nature of your issue will be reported back to the principal of your school. Staff at the District Office will attempt to resolve the issue.

   Addresses and telephone numbers of district offices are listed on pages 45-46 of this publication.

4. **Complaint still not resolved?**
   If you feel that your issue has not been resolved through the district office process, you have a further right to make a complaint to the central office of Education Queensland.

   You may choose to progress your complaint in writing to the:
   - Deputy Director-General Education
   - PO Box 15033
   - City East QLD 4002
   - Ph (07) 3237 0618
   - Fax (07) 3221 4953.

5. **Independent review**
   If, as a complainant you feel that your issue has not been resolved through these formal processes the Queensland Ombudsman provides an avenue for an independent review of the Department's decision.
A role for Parents and Citizens' Associations

Parents and guardians may sometimes feel overwhelmed when approaching a school or the Department with a complaint. While the Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens' Associations (QCPCA) does not advocate on behalf of individual parents or caregivers, individuals can request their own Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) to provide support in these circumstances.

Complaints about services that are run or managed by the P&C at your school - for example, after-school care or tuckshop - should be directed to the P&C in the first instance.