

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

# Quality pathways for all young people:

A commitment to  
alternative education



Queensland  
Government



**Inclusive  
mainstream  
education**

**Targeted  
programs**

**Alternative  
education**

## ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SETTINGS

# Committed to success

**We, the leaders of Queensland education, are committed to supporting the educational success of every young person.**

**That success will look different for every young person and our education system must deliver a diverse, adaptive range of schooling options to support the range of pathways they need.**

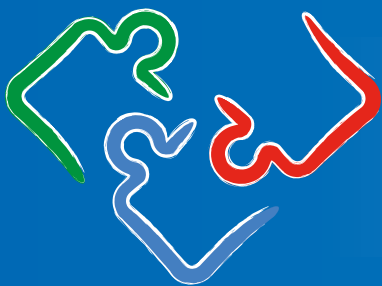
Alternative education options are a critical and complementary part of our diverse system. One important piece in a broad puzzle of education options and delivery.

While our quality mainstream schools work hard every day to provide diverse opportunities for the vast majority of young Queenslanders, some young people find a better fit within alternative education settings.

Alternative education settings are also an important option for young people experiencing life challenges so overwhelming that mainstream school is no longer a sustainable option.

For these young people addressing their complex health, safety and wellbeing needs in a tailored environment is an essential component to meeting their education needs.

Our alternative education settings are there for these young people, to provide a safe, nurturing, individualised learning environment to give each student the education pathway to a brighter future. They provide a broad range of high quality learning options, tailored programs, and wrap-around support. Most importantly, they provide hope to young people and their families when they need it most.



**Alternative education settings** are non-state special assistance schools and state schools offering an alternative learning environment.



CHAPTER THE  
THE KING'S DEED

It is a story about something that happened long ago when your  
grandfather was a boy. It is a very important story because it shows how  
people can help one another in our world and the land of Narnia.

When King Peter was still living in Narnia Street and the  
the corner of the Greenway Road, in those days, if  
you were a girl then called every day, and school  
for most were nice, and in the winter, I  
like very much because it would not make  
the days there lived in London a girl.

It is a story about something that happened long ago when your  
grandfather was a boy. It is a very important story because it shows how  
people can help one another in our world and the land of Narnia.

# The role of alternative settings

The majority of young people find success in a mainstream state or non-state school. High quality mainstream schools differentiate their teaching and learning strategies, innovate to keep young people focused, and individualise and tailor programs as needed to help young people get the most out of their learning. In some schools, this means developing bespoke delivery approaches and partnering with youth services to keep vulnerable young people at school.

However, not all young people thrive in mainstream schools, even with these adjustments. This is where alternative education settings step in. Young people who are disconnected from schooling and are not thriving in a mainstream school, even with adjustments and flexible arrangements, can enrol in alternative education settings.


Mainstream schools have critical responsibilities for every student – to know their students, assess their

learning needs, adjust programs and approaches to provide the best learning outcomes for each student, and – when a young person is disengaging – take targeted action to keep them engaged.

If a young person is still disengaging after all of these efforts, a careful assessment is conducted with the student and their parents/carers. The assessment considers the best options and pathways available for that young person. The assessment can also include the Department of Education's Regional Youth Engagement Hubs\*, and if alternative settings are being considered, these should be consulted.

Sometimes the best pathway for a disengaged young person will be an alternative education setting, but not always. Schools have a critical responsibility to not refer young people to alternative education settings without this careful consideration. If the student's enrolment is unsuccessful at the alternative education setting, they can feel an even greater loss of belonging and their disengagement can become entrenched. The department will set clear guidance for all state schools in implementing this responsibility.

\*Regional Youth Engagement Hubs support young people who are disengaged to reconnect with school, training or employment. They support the young person to identify potential pathways and can provide other services that may be required to get them back on track. Regional Youth Engagement Hubs do not replace the role played by schools, who have a responsibility to support the engagement and successful transition of every student.



**Alternative education settings are not for everyone, they're there for young people who need them the most.**

# Quality standards in

Every young person is entitled to a high quality education, and every state and non-state school, including alternative education settings, is required to deliver this high quality education.

All schools have core responsibilities to support the learning gain of every student. Every school is accountable for planned improvement and every educator has a professional responsibility to approach teaching and learning with a commitment to continuous improvement.

These are accountabilities that all schools are held to, and students can be assured that the same expectations apply in alternative education settings.

Every state and non-state alternative education setting is accountable to legislative requirements to provide quality education for its students, despite different legislation. Key requirements are outlined below and show comparable expectations for state and non-state alternative settings.

## Requirements for **state** alternative education settings

State alternative settings are schools under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (EGPA) with the same legislative and policy requirements as state schools.

All state schools must:

- ▶ deliver the Australian Curriculum from Prep to Year 10
- ▶ deliver QCAA endorsed syllabus for senior secondary education (Years 11 and 12)
- ▶ where appropriate, deliver vocational education and training that complies with the Australian Skills Quality Authority requirements
- ▶ comply with the reporting and accountability obligations detailed in the *P-12 Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework*.
- ▶ participate in a four-year school planning and review cycle
- ▶ have a School Strategic Plan, outlining a four-year overview of the school's explicit improvement agenda
- ▶ have an Annual Implementation Plan, outlining a year's worth of school improvement initiatives.
- ▶ publish their School Annual Report each year
- ▶ publish their endorsed School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan
- ▶ comply with the complete Schedule of Corporate Data Collections.



School improvement review processes and regional office leadership oversights each school's compliance and performance.

# alternative education

Every school is accountable for planned improvement and every educator has a professional responsibility to approach teaching and learning with a commitment to continuous improvement.\*

\*For more information, visit [www.nssab.qld.edu.au/Accreditation/NewSchool.php](http://www.nssab.qld.edu.au/Accreditation/NewSchool.php) or see the *School Planning, Reviewing and Reporting Framework* for further detail.

## Requirements for **non-state** alternative education settings

A special assistance school is a school accredited to provide a fee-free specialised education program for school-age disengaged young people who are not enrolled or attending other eligible education, training or employment options. They are governed by the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017*.

Non-state special assistance schools must deliver:

- ▶ the Australian curriculum and/or a curriculum recognised by ACARA for students from Prep to Year 10
- ▶ QCAA endorsed syllabus for senior secondary education (Years 11 and 12).

A non-state special assistance school's education program may also include:

- ▶ a vocational education and training course under the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Non-state special assistance schools must have a demonstrable and systematic approach to improvement processes, outlining:

- ▶ strategies to achieve school improvement
- ▶ setting priorities to achieve the strategies
- ▶ regular monitoring of the achievement of strategies
- ▶ annual reporting about the achievement of the strategies to the school's community.

Special assistance schools must also have a written standard of service that deals with:

- ▶ regular tracking and assessment of work submitted by students
- ▶ regular monitoring of attendance, participation in the educational program, and achievement of the learning standards under the educational program
- ▶ strategies for engaging and keeping students engaged.



The special assistance school's governing body must be able to demonstrate how the school is meeting the standard of service.

# What does a high quality alternative setting look like?

Second chance school does not have to be second best. High quality alternative settings strive to deliver exemplary services that meet or exceed all of the below quality standards.



Holding explicit high expectations and aspirations for every student



Offering multiple certification options to cater for the learning potential of all students including QCE, VET qualifications and higher education pathways



Implementing quality and contemporary teaching practices, with differentiated and individualised education programs



Offering students opportunities to participate in NAPLAN and other benchmark testing



Working with other schools and education providers to maximise the opportunities and pathways available to students



Providing expert guidance, career advice and further education transition support



Ensuring broad curriculum offerings, providing every young person a breadth of opportunities, based on the Australian Curriculum or ACARA accredited programs



Participating in proactive self-review and continuous improvement planning



Utilising robust wellbeing measurement tools to measure and evaluate the overall wellbeing of the student cohort



Developing a strong school culture, with a focus on positive relationships and relational pedagogy



Monitoring individual student learning progress throughout each term, through a mix of formative assessment and benchmark measures



Working with families and other significant adults to support every student to succeed



Monitoring individual and whole-school data to measure and plan for targeted initiatives and strategies



# Scenario



‘Alex’

Alex was enrolled and sporadically attending a mainstream school. Alex was no longer proud of herself, or the person she was becoming, she mixed with the wrong crowd, got into trouble with the law and was falling precariously behind at school.

Alex’s mainstream school had put in place a number of in-school adjustments to support Alex to re-engage with education. This included a flexible timetable, differentiated curriculum and connection to a local youth service. Unfortunately, even with these adjustments, Alex was unable to re-engage with her education. After exhausting all their options, the mainstream school initiated discussions with Alex and her parents about her aspirations, future options and alternative pathways to plot a course to success.

A further meeting was conducted between the mainstream school, Alex and her parents, the Department of Education’s Regional Youth Engagement Hub and a local alternative education setting that had been identified in previous discussions. They met to carefully assess Alex’s needs and the best options/pathways available to her and any transition support required.

With everyone in agreement, Alex was transitioned from mainstream school to the Queensland Pathways State College (QPSC), a state alternative education setting. A comprehensive transition support plan and handover was developed between the mainstream school and QPSC, to give Alex the best chance at re-engaging, and future success.

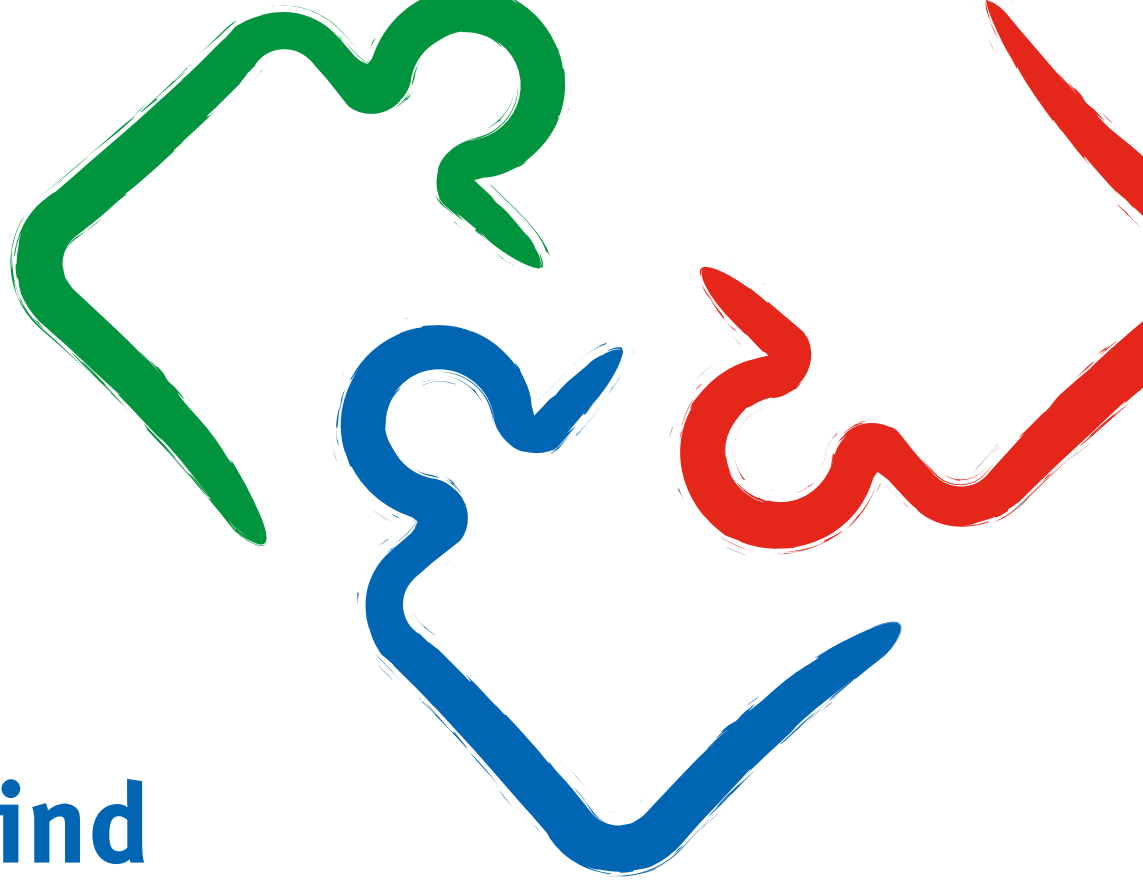
QPSC offered Alex an opportunity to achieve her QCE and post-school goals through a flexible learning environment, individually paced learning and integrated youth worker support. Two years on and Alex is now thriving. She is proud of the achievements she has made, including graduating with a QCE, working fulltime, training in the gym everyday and being selected in a professional sporting academy.

Alex attributes much of her success to the QPSC and the staff for all their individualised support and guidance. She is also grateful to her previous mainstream school for putting her interests first and giving her the best chance of success at QPSC.

# supporting every young person's SUCCESS

The department is deeply committed to supporting quality practice in all alternative education settings and is offering the following supports:

- ▶ **Regional Youth Engagement Hubs**, [[www.advancingeducation.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/youth-engagement-hub-information-sheet.pdf](http://www.advancingeducation.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/youth-engagement-hub-information-sheet.pdf)] to provide local assistance in enrolment practices and referral decisions
- ▶ **School Improvement Unit** [[siu@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:siu@qed.qld.gov.au)] reviews to help identify areas of achievement and directions for continuous improvement against the National School Improvement Tool, available to all non-state alternative education settings on a cost recovery basis
- ▶ Best practice sharing and informative resources, available at the **Youth Engagement** website [[www.advancingeducation.qld.gov.au/youth-engagement](http://www.advancingeducation.qld.gov.au/youth-engagement)]
- ▶ Queensland forum, to generate discussion on innovation, research and best practice sharing in the field of alternative education.



## To find out more

For young people and families wanting to know more about alternative education, contact your local **Regional Youth Engagement Hub** [[www.advancingeducation.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/youth-engagement-hub-information-sheet.pdf](http://www.advancingeducation.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/youth-engagement-hub-information-sheet.pdf)].

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