



Fraud Strategy Statement

The Department of Education has a responsibility to ensure the appropriate use of public resources to achieve its goals and promote financial integrity. We are committed to preventing, detecting and responding to fraud and corruption. To achieve this, we rely on the collective effort of staff, contractors, external service providers and the community.

What is fraud?

Fraud is defined as *'dishonestly obtaining a benefit, or causing a loss, by deception or other means'*¹. Fraud requires an intent to obtain a benefit (tangible or intangible) which can also be obtained by a third party. It is not the result of carelessness, accident, or error.

Fraud can be perpetrated internally (by employees) or externally (by service providers, contractors, individual recipients of departmental funding or organised crime groups). Examples of fraud include:

- customers providing false information (such as falsely claiming eligibility in an application)
- misuse of the government's money (through spending money on something it was not intended for)
- contractors inflating invoices for services
- unauthorised access to sensitive information (including personal information of individuals)
- misuse of corporate resources (such as corporate credit cards)
- provision of false medical certificates or
- misusing departmental information.

Fraud and corruption

Fraud can include corrupt conduct which is marked by the misuse of power and authority by public officials. The *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022* defines corrupt conduct as:

- a) any conduct of any person (whether or not a public official) that adversely affects, or that could adversely affect, either directly or indirectly:
 - i) the honest or impartial exercise of any public official's powers as a public official; or
 - ii) the honest or impartial performance of any public official's functions or duties as a public official;
- b) any conduct of a public official that constitutes or involves a breach of public trust;

¹ [Commonwealth Fraud Control Framework 2017](#), *Commonwealth Fraud Control Policy*, p. B1

- c) any conduct of a public official that constitutes, involves or is engaged in for the purpose of abuse of the person's office as a public official;
- d) any conduct of a public official, or former public official, that constitutes or involves the misuse of information or documents acquired in the person's capacity as a public official.

What are the consequences of fraud and corruption?

When fraud or corruption is committed, the effects can be wide ranging. When fraud or corruption results in a financial loss, it increases the cost to the public and can reduce the benefit to the community. For those who commit fraud or corruption, consequences can include jail sentences, pecuniary penalties, civil or administrative sanctions and loss of job opportunities.

What are your responsibilities?

We expect everyone who engages with us to act with honesty and integrity and report suspected fraud or corruption.

If you receive funding or financial assistance from us, you have an obligation to provide accurate information to be a recipient of, or to continue receiving, Commonwealth money. Failure to provide correct information, or update information that may change the status of your eligibility, may constitute fraud.

If you are a contractor or external service provider, you are required to adhere to all contractual obligations, program guidelines and/conditions of funding that governs your relationship with us. You are required to ensure all information requested by us is provided in a timely manner, is accurate and that you report to us when you are obligated to.

External providers should have in place a risk-based approach to minimise potential loss of Commonwealth money as well as mechanisms to identify and report suspected fraud. Providers delivering services on behalf of the department should consider communicating to clients their policies and procedures relating to fraud, ensuring awareness of obligations and fraud control responsibilities.

How do you report suspected fraud and corruption?

You can report suspected fraud and corruption to the department's Fraud Team by:

Email: fraud@education.gov.au

Phone: (02) 6121 5450

Anonymously: online through [Whispli](#), an anonymous reporting tool

Post: Fraud Team, PO Box 9880, Canberra ACT 2601.

The department also provides a Child Care Tip-off Line that can be used by parents, providers or their employees to raise concerns about practices relating to the management of subsidies:

Phone: 1800 664 231

Email: tipoffline@education.gov.au

Providing as much information as possible will assist the department in assessing matters efficiently. If possible, include the following information:

- Who is involved? Include the name/s of the person/s or organisation/s, address/es and phone number/s
- What fraud do you think has occurred? Including how, when and where it occurred
- If you believe the behaviour is continuing
- How you came to know about the matter

If you have supporting documentation, it is beneficial to provide that information, you should not however, conduct your own investigation. You do not need to provide your contact details, but it can enable the department to follow up with you if necessary.

What happens if you report suspected fraud or corruption?

The department will assess each allegation of suspected fraud or corruption to determine if the matter should be investigated. Not all allegations will be taken forward to be investigated, but where allegations are substantiated, it may result in a range of outcomes. This includes recovering overpaid funds, cancelling a service provider's registration, taking other action for breach of contract or pursuing a criminal fraud prosecution.

Safeguards for persons reporting suspected fraud or corruption

The department takes all allegations of fraud and corruption seriously, including providing disclosers with adequate support and confidentiality. If you provide a service under a Commonwealth contract, the protections and immunities of the Public Interest Disclosure (PID) scheme may be available to you. Information on the PID scheme is available from the [Commonwealth Ombudsman website](#). Informants wishing to make a disclosure under PID are encouraged to contact the department's Authorised Officers or by emailing PID@education.gov.au to ensure PID protections are applicable.

Privacy Notice

Your personal information is protected by law, including the Privacy Act 1988, and is collected by the department for the purposes of investigating allegations of suspected fraud. We may disclose the information you provide to other Commonwealth, state or territory bodies (including law enforcement bodies) for appropriate assessment or action. Your information may also be used by the department or given to other parties if it is required or authorised by law.

For more information about how the department manages personal information (including information on accessing or correcting information) and how to make a complaint, please view our full privacy policy or you can request a copy from the department by sending an email to privacy@education.gov.au.