

2026 Official Queensland Inter-School Chess Championships – Rules and Regulations

The Queensland Inter-School Chess Championships are coordinated by Gardiner Chess on behalf of the Chess Association of Queensland (CAQ) under a licensing agreement running from 2023 to 2027.

Zones:

There are 10 zones based in regional Queensland with another 12 located in South-East Queensland (Brisbane and Gold Coast).

Regional:

- Wide Bay South (Bauple through to Hervey Bay)
- Gympie (Federal through to Bauple)
- Wide Bay North (Childers to Agnes Water)
- Central QLD (Rockhampton and Gladstone out to Emerald and to Marlborough)
- Mackay/Whitsundays (Sarina to Bowen and out to Clermont)
- North Queensland (Bowen to Cardwell and out to Hughenden)
- Far North Queensland (Cardwell to Cooktown and including Cairns Hinterland)
- North-West Queensland (Region surrounding Mount Isa)
- Central-West Queensland (Region surrounding Longreach)
- South-West Queensland (Region surrounding Roma and Charleville)

South-East Queensland:

- Brisbane Secondary North (North of river, as far as Caboolture)
- Brisbane Secondary South (South of the Brisbane River, down as far as Loganholme)
- Brisbane Primary North (North of river, as far as Caboolture)
- Brisbane Primary West (South of Brisbane River from Graceville, Oxley, Durack and West)
- Brisbane Primary Logan Primary (South of Kessels Road to Beenleigh)
- Brisbane Primary South (South of river through to Kessels road as west as Oxley road)
- Gold Coast Secondary
- Gold Coast Primary North (Yatala down to Smith Street and across to coastline)
- Gold Coast Primary Coastal (East of Heavy rail from Smith Street to Tweed Heads)
- Gold Coast Primary Hinterland (West of Heavy rail from Smith Street to Tweed Heads)
- Darling Downs (Region surrounding Toowoomba)
- Sunshine Coast (Beerburrum to Pomona)

Schools (and students) will play in their designated zones.

Schools close to borders may permanently move to the other zone if it is significantly easier to get to – not for the reason of it being an easier zone. These changes must be applied for in writing and must be approved by the Inter-School Director and CAQ Council.

A school with multiple campuses is subject to the following conditions:

- If a school has two (or more) campuses, one with Prep to Year 5 at one and year 6 at the other, the students may all play as one school.
- Where a school has two (or more) campuses, each with the same year levels, the campuses are considered to be separate entities and must play separately.

Player Eligibility:

- Students must be bona fide students of the school being represented.
- Students must be in the appropriate year level for the tournament (e.g. primary students cannot participate in secondary events).
- If a student splits time between two campuses, the campus represented must be the campus at which the student receives the majority of their schooling.
- Breaches of the above will result in disqualification of that team.
- Students may be suspended from future events pending behavioural issues.
- For primary competitions, no player aged 13 or older may be permitted to take part.
- For secondary competitions, no player aged 19 or older may be permitted to take part.

Player Eligibility – Homeschool:

- Homeschool students are permitted to take part in the Queensland Inter-School Chess Championships.
- Students may only play in their geographic region of residence, with a requirement for proof to be provided prior to taking part in the event.
- Homeschool teams may be formed, however, all students in a team must be schooled via the same organisation/method (thus sharing a schools unique school ID number)
 - For example, if there are 10 players within a region with the following mix:
 - 4 schooled via Home Education Unit
 - 2 via Australian Christian College Distance Education
 - 3 via Faith Distance Education
 - 3 via Riverside Christian College
 - Each cohort of students may only form a team with others from the same educational organisation.

Tournament Divisions:

- Wherever possible, there will be separate tournament for Primary and Secondary students.
- Wherever possible, a Premier Division, consisting of between 8 and 20 (preferably 12) teams will be held.
- Premier Divisions will not be held in term 1, will be run as an individual Swiss in term 2 and a team v team competition in term 3, except in exceptional circumstances.
- The Premier Divisions will consist of the strongest teams in each zone, with a maximum of 2 teams per school allowed (except in exceptional circumstances).
- Below the Premier Divisions, Open Divisions will be held for all remaining players.

- Qualification for Premier Divisions are subject to the scores of teams from the previous term, with each year starting afresh. A promotion and relegation system is in place at the discretion of the Tournament Directors.

State Final Qualification:

- Schools must participate in 2 of the 3 term tournaments to qualify for the State Finals, held in term 4.
- Qualifiers will come from the highest possible division in each zone in term 3.
- Schools are only permitted to have a maximum of 2 teams in Open state finals
- Participants must represent the school at least once in a qualifying event and be attending the school from no later than the first day of term 3.

Australian Schools Teams Championship Qualifiers:

- The Queensland Inter-School State Finals will be held in four divisions: Primary Open, Primary Girls, Secondary Open and Secondary Girls.
- The Champion team from each of these tournament will be invited to represent Queensland at the Australian Schools Teams Championships.
- CAQ will not endorse any teams made up of players from multiple campuses.

Team Composition:

- Teams will comprise 4 players, eligible as per the 'player eligibility' section above.
- When playing in a team v team format, players will play in Queensland Junior Rating order, with variation allowed if players are within 100 points.
- For regions with a low accuracy of rating, the rating variation may be expanded at the discretion of the arbiter/organiser.
- To compete in a Premier division, the team must contain the full 4 players.
- In Open divisions, there is no requirement to field a full team. Part teams will always be accepted – though may not have a realistic chance of a team prize.

Media:

- Gardiner Chess will undertake to contact media within each region where possible. Students who DO NOT have media permission must be sent through to Gardiner Chess in advance of the tournament.
- Students who DO NOT have media permission will be given a coloured band for their wrist.
- Photos will be taken at events and will be published on the Gardiner Chess Facebook page, and could subsequently be shared onto the CAQ page.
- Results will be added to the Gardiner Chess page at the conclusion of each event.
- Names that require suppression online must be notified in writing to Gardiner Chess.

Entering Events:

- Schools must send through their list of player names complete with dates of birth and team name, no later than 5pm of the specified registration date
- Entries should be sent through on an excel spreadsheet.
- Schools failing to do so may be excluded from the tournament or have an additional late fee of \$50 charged to the school.

Schedule for Event Days:

- Registration for tournaments will begin as close as possible to 8.30am.
 - Registration is to be done by the school coordinator once all students have arrived.
- Schools arriving after 9.20am may be given a round one bye and thus begin playing from round 2 (if practicable).
- Schools running late must notify Gardiner Chess via phone call as soon as possible.
- The tournament will run from 9.30am through to 2.30pm (approximately).
- Presentations will begin at 2.00pm or as close as possible. Any schools that need to leave for transport reasons must email the Inter-School coordinator as soon as possible after the event requesting merit ribbons be sent.
- The goal is to have all schools away by 2.30pm.

Scoring:

- Players will score one (1) point for a win, a half point (1/2) for a draw and zero (0) for a loss.
- Team scores are the accumulated scores for all four players in that team added together

Clocks:

- Chess Clocks will be used in Premier Divisions and on the top boards of the Open Divisions
- Chess Clocks will be set for 13 minutes per player, with 2 seconds added per move.
- In the case of an illegal move, 1 minute will be deducted from a player's time, or if under 2 minutes, half the remaining time will be removed.

Prizes:

- Teams: Medals for members of each team finishing first, second and third.
- Individual Prizes: Medals for each division for players finishing first, second and third.
- In team events, board prizes will be awarded to the top player on each of the 4 boards.
- Merit ribbons will be awarded to players scoring at least 4.5/7 or 5/8 depending on the number of rounds.
- Teams are only eligible to win 1 prize, for example at state finals a team cannot win both Open and regional prizes. In this instance the team will be consulted and asked their preference prior to presentation.

Adjudication:

- Due to the limited number of clocks that can be provided at tournaments, there comes a need for arbiters to adjudicate games once games reach approximately the 25-minute mark (given that game duration is a 30-minute maximum).
- Adjudication involves the arbiter stopping play, asking whose move it is to play, and assessing the position and declaring a winner or draw based upon the position. The arbiter may choose to observe the continuation of a game for several moves before making a decision.
- This decision is based upon what the arbiters can see for (and from) both sides and NOT solely on the number of points (pieces) for each player. For example, if a player shows no signs of being able to checkmate a draw may be declared.
- Players may appeal the decision on the spot but will have to show good reason for the appeal to be upheld. The Chief Arbiter's decision is final.

Rules of Inter-school Chess:

- The touch move rule applies:
 - If you touch a piece and can legally move it, you must do so*.
 - If you touch one of your opponent's pieces and can legally capture it, you must do so*.
 - When you move a piece to a new square and take your hand off it, that is the square your piece is now on.
 - ** If the touching of a piece is obviously accidental, this is waived at the discretion of the arbiter*
 - To put a piece back in the centre of a square, players must say 'adjust' (or similar) before touching their piece. This should also be done on their own turn, not their opponents.
- Interference by players or spectators will not be accepted under any circumstances – this includes trying to help players by correcting illegal moves or pointing out a player has forgotten to press their clock.
 - Players interfering in games may have points docked from both them and their team.
 - For repeated cases, players may also be sat out of the next round.
- Stalling is a tactic that is not allowed for games without clocks – players experiencing this must raise their hand for an arbiter's assistance.
- If players have any problems, they need to raise their hand and an arbiter will assist them – we can't help after the game has finished!
- Once players shake and agree the result, the result will stand.
- Draws by threefold repetition or 50 move rule cannot be claimed unless moves are being written down, the players 100% agree or an arbiter has seen the repetition.
- To offer a draw to an opponent the procedure is; play your move, offer your opponent a draw, press your clock (if you have one). The opponent can then accept or decline the draw offer. Do not simply stick out your hand asking for a draw.
- Results must be reported to the arbiters table by the winner immediately after the game has finished. When the game is drawn, both players are required to report the result together. Failure to do so may involve the game being scored 0-0.

Parents, Coaches and Staff:

- Each school must have a supervising adult present to look after their students.
- Teachers will be required to assist with a supervision on the duty roster.
- Interference by parents, teachers or other spectators will not be accepted under any circumstances – this includes trying to help players by correcting illegal moves or pointing out a player has forgotten to press their clock.
 - Parents or teachers may be asked to leave the area immediately.
 - For second or further instances, parents, teachers or spectators may be asked to leave the playing hall completely.

Tie Break Methods:

FIXED ROSTER TOURNAMENTS

- Ties Between Teams
 - Match points – 2 points for a win (2.5/4 or higher), 1 point for a draw, 0 for a loss.
 - Team Match Result – Between tied teams
- Sonneborn-Berger Scores – Sums of opponents beaten plus half the scores of drawn opponents
- Bucholz cut 1 (State Finals only)

- Ties for Board Prizes
- Individual Match Result – Between tied players
- Sonneborn-Berger Scores – Sums of opponents beaten plus half the scores of drawn opponents
- Number of wins

OPEN SWISS TOURNAMENTS

- Ties Between Teams
 - Median Bucholz – Sum of opponent's scores discounting highest and lowest
 - Bucholz – Sum of opponent's scores
 - Progressive – Sum of Progress scores
- Ties Between Individuals
 - Median Bucholz – Sum of opponent's scores discounting highest and lowest
 - Bucholz – Sum of opponent's scores
 - Progressive – Sum of Progress scores

Pairing Program:

Please note that Swiss Perfect 98 will be the primary pairing program used for the 2026 Inter-school Chess Championships throughout Queensland. For tournaments which involve a team versus team format, Orion may also be utilised.

Food and Drink:

- Students should bring their own food and drink.
- Where possible a canteen will be arranged for extra snacks/drinks.
- Food and drink must be consumed in the designated areas that will be mentioned by the Chief Arbiter at the beginning of the day.
- Rubbish must be put into bins prior to leaving for the day. Excessive rubbish being left behind may result in disciplinary action taken against the school.

Contacts:

- Interschool Director: Andrew FitzPatrick – afitzpatrick@gardinerchess.com.au
- Events Coordinator: Michael Bouchaud – events@gardinerchess.com.au
- General Phone Enquiries: Gardiner Chess (07) 5522 7221
- Interschool Coordinator (CAQ Oversight): Matt Gilpin - gilpinchess@gmail.com