

# Suspension from school – information sheet for students and parents

Read the Department of Education and Training's (department) Suspension from school guidelines for more information about the suspension process and the roles and responsibilities of education and training staff.

## What is suspension from school?

Suspension is the temporary exclusion of a student from attending a school and school activities for a period of time. Suspensions happen when the principal believes the student's presence at school is a risk of physical or psychological harm to others at the school.

This might happen if a student has been violent or aggressive to other people or has been threatening others with violence or bullying.

The particular behaviour, or where it happened, does not matter, only that it is reasonable for the principal to consider the student's presence at school could be a risk of harm to others at the school.

## Considerations before a student is suspended

Before a student can be suspended the principal will consider:

- the circumstances surrounding the student's behaviour
- the reasons why the student acted like they did
- what students and parents have to say in response to what happened
- whether alternatives to suspension would be a better option.

## Length of a suspension

A student cannot be suspended for longer than 20 school days.

## What happens when a suspension occurs?

The principal will let the student and parents know that they are considering suspending the student and the reason for the suspension and give them the opportunity to respond. The student and parents may decide they do not want to talk about what happened, but the principal will not make the decision without giving them a chance to have a say.

The school and parents will also discuss arrangements for:

- the student's safety and care on the way home and during the suspension
- schoolwork for the student to do during the suspension
- the re-entry meeting which will be held to welcome the student back after the suspension.

The principal will provide the following documents:

- the Notice of suspension to the student

- a letter to the parents with a copy of the Notice of suspension
- a copy of the legislation relating to suspension
- this Suspension from school – information sheet for students and parents.

## Returning to school

The school will arrange a re-entry meeting before the student returns to school to welcome them back.

The re-entry meeting will:

- happen after each time a student is suspended and before the student returns to school
- focus on welcoming the student back and plan for their successful re-entry into school
- discuss what support is available for the student.

## Deciding to suspend a student

Only principals have the power to decide when a student is suspended. If you want to know more about a suspension, you should talk to the principal first.

You can request a meeting with the principal to have a say in the decision, even if the suspension has already started. When you arrange to meet with the principal you should:

- be clear about the issues you want to discuss
- check the department's [Suspension in school guidelines](#) and [Complaint resolution policy](#) and the school's relevant processes.

If you are not satisfied after speaking to the principal, you can [make a complaint to the department](#). All complaints will be managed in accordance with the Complaints resolution policy.

## Support for students and parents

Parents can contact:

- [Parentline](#)
  - Phone: 1300 30 1300 from 8:30am to 10:30pm, 7 days a week.
  - [Parentline webchat counselling](#) from 8:30am to 9:30pm, 7 days a week.

Students can contact:

- [Kids helpline](#)
  - Phone: 1800 55 1800, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
  - [Kids helpline webchat](#), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- [headspace](#)
  - Phone: 1800 650 890 from 9am – 1am (AEDT), every day.
  - Webchat from 9am – 1am (AEDT), every day.
  - Email: [headspacedarwin@anglicare-nt.org.au](mailto:headspacedarwin@anglicare-nt.org.au), [headspacePalmerston@anglicare-nt.org.au](mailto:headspacePalmerston@anglicare-nt.org.au), [headspace.katherine@anglicare-nt.org.au](mailto:headspace.katherine@anglicare-nt.org.au) or [headspace.reception@caac.org.au](mailto:headspace.reception@caac.org.au)