



Australian Government



Years 8 and above

I've tried everything, but nothing is working

You've experienced bullying or harm and taken steps to address it, but nothing has changed. Do you feel like you have tried everything, but nothing is working? That can be exhausting and upsetting.

This guide outlines steps that can help you report bullying and other harmful behaviours, and start to feel safe again.

'Asking for help isn't the hardest part... trusting that something will actually change after you do is.'

– YOUNG PERSON, 16,
PROJECT ROCKIT YOUTH
COLLECTIVE

What you will need

- ◉ Email addresses of your school leadership and principal.
- ◉ A support person, such as a friend, parent or carer, a family member or another trusted adult.
- ◉ Contact details for further support services listed at the end of this resource.

Step 1: You are not the problem

The first step is to remind yourself that you are not the problem. Remember that you have already shown courage by trying to resolve a situation involving bullying or other harmful behaviours. It is important to keep trying when things do not work out the first time.



Step 2: Collect evidence of the harmful behaviours

Keep a record of what happens and when.

Your notes should include:

- ◉ date and time
- ◉ who was involved, including any witnesses
- ◉ descriptions of the harmful behaviour
- ◉ photos of any damaged property or physical injuries (if the harmful behaviour is physical)
- ◉ screenshots (do not save or share sexual images of a child), usernames, links and messages (if the harmful behaviour occurs in online spaces). It is important not to delete these.

Tip

Keep any evidence you collect in a secure place and only share it with your support people.

Step 3: Share with your support person

Talking to others when you have experienced bullying or other harmful behaviours can feel scary. Now is a good time to reach out to your support person. You can also contact one of the support organisations listed at the end of this resource.

Your discussion should include a description of the harmful behaviour you experienced and how you want to feel safer and be supported.

If the person you first contacted has not helped, try another trusted adult.

Step 4: Contact the school

The next step is to contact your school, which could be a teacher, principal or school leader (such as the head of department, a subject coordinator, your year-level coordinator or assistant principal).

Include a clear, factual description of the harmful behaviour, the steps you have already taken, and that you want to report the situation. Refer to dates and times if possible and any other evidence you have collected. Explain that you want to feel safe and supported. Also explain that you want a plan for what happens next, to prevent further harmful behaviour.

You should contact them via email or arrange to speak to them in person. Make sure you keep records of any contact.

Step 5: If the school response hasn't helped

If the school's initial response has taken more than two school days¹, ask for an update or clarification on the next steps. Initial action is around early safety, support planning and communication. Remember that the situation may take longer to work through fully.

Keep working with the school on a plan for next steps. If you are not happy with their response, you can contact your state or territory education department or non-government education authority to raise your concerns or make a complaint.

You can search for 'complaints' on the website of your education department or authority to find further contact information.



Tip

End the email or discussion with a call to action, such as: What are the next steps you will take to help stop the harmful behaviour and prevent it happening again?



Note

Schools are expected to make reasonable efforts to initiate a response within two school days¹ of becoming aware of bullying and other harmful behaviours. Further time may be needed to address the situation fully.



If you have been bullied or harmed because of who you are, such as your race, gender, disability or any other identity-based factor, go to the **Australian Human Rights Commission** at humanrights.gov.au to learn about your rights and find support.



Tip

Although it may feel daunting to contact an organisation outside your school, people are there to support you. They are skilled in handling these situations, and they can only help if you let them know what is happening.

¹ State, territory and non-government education sectors will reflect the expectations of the National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian schools in their policies and procedures by Term 1 2027. This includes making reasonable efforts to initiate a response to bullying and harmful behaviour within two school days, recognising that further time may be required to fully address the issue. By Term 1 2027, all schools will also publish or link to policies and procedures that align with the National Framework (or equivalent contemporary jurisdiction specific Frameworks) and their local polices and school context.

Step 6: If the harmful behaviour happened online



You can report harmful behaviour online to **eSafety** at esafety.gov.au/report. This includes cyberbullying or image-based abuse (sharing, or threatening to share, intimate images without the consent of the person shown).



Tip

eSafety helps to prevent and address harm caused online. They are experts at dealing with online harm, so do not be afraid to report exactly what has happened.

'Support isn't measured by how quickly a situation is closed. It's measured by how safe someone feels long after it's been "dealt with".'

– YOUNG PERSON, 16,
PROJECT ROCKIT YOUTH
COLLECTIVE

Step 7: How to keep going even when it feels like nothing is happening

Sometimes things may happen more slowly than you would like. The process may also feel complicated. It might also require more steps and discussions to resolve the situation. Keep working with the school and ask for updates on the process if it is not clear.

Continue to seek support from a friend, parent or carer, a family member or another trusted adult. Explain that you need support while navigating a difficult situation. If the first person you ask for support does not help, tell someone else. Keep trying.



Tip

Tell your support person that you want to check in with them regularly, even just for a quick chat. This might be daily or a couple of times each week. It doesn't have to last forever, just until the harmful behaviour has stopped and you feel safe. Remind your support person that they do not have to solve the problem; just listening can be helpful.



Keep records of the steps you've taken

Keep a record of what has happened and the steps you have already taken.

Your records should include:

- ◉ dates and times
- ◉ who you spoke to or contacted, and when
- ◉ what they said the response would be
- ◉ whether that response happened
- ◉ screenshots or copies of written communication.

Tip

These records matter if things get worse, so keep them in a secure place.

What if it does not go to plan?

Sometimes things don't go to plan or take longer than we think they should. Some of the steps in this resource may need to be repeated to get the outcome you need. That is why it is important to keep a record of the steps you have already taken. Do not give up – your voice and safety matter.

'Healing looks different through everyone's lens - by age, by socioeconomic background, by your standing in the hierarchy. For some, it's rebuilding trust in others. For others, it's rebuilding trust in themselves after being made to doubt their worth. But really, it's about whether the environment around you is actually changing - so it doesn't happen again.'

– YOUNG PERSON, 16,
PROJECT ROCKIT YOUTH
COLLECTIVE.

Connected resources

- ◉ Support systems
- ◉ Identity-based harm

Where to get more help

If you need further support, help is available:

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 or kidshelpline.com.au. Free, confidential counselling for bullying and other harmful behaviours, school issues, online harm and wellbeing, available 24/7.

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636 or beyondblue.org.au. Mental health support for stress, anxiety or overwhelm, available 24/7.

Lifeline: 13 11 14 or lifeline.org.au. Crisis support and counselling if things feel overwhelming, available 24/7.

Dolly's Dream Bullying Support Line: 13 36 55 (13 DOLLY) or dollysdream.org.au. Counselling and guidance for children and young people experiencing bullying and other harmful behaviour, available 24/7.

headspace/ehespace: 1800 650 890 or headspace.org.au. Mental health, wellbeing and early intervention support, available 9 am–1 am daily.

1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732 or 1800respect.org.au. Sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line for anyone who has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault, available 24/7.

13YARN: 13 92 76 or 13yarn.org.au. Culturally safe 24/7 support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

QLife (LGBTIQA+ young people): 1800 184 527 or qlife.org.au. Free, anonymous peer support and referral service, available 3 pm–9 pm daily.

eSafety Commissioner: esafety.gov.au. Report cyberbullying, get advice and request content removal support.

Australian Human Rights Commission: humanrights.gov.au. Support for cases involving discriminatory harm. Reports can be made via their website or by emailing infoservice@humanrights.gov.au.

State, territory and non-government education sectors will reflect the expectations of the National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian schools in their policies and procedures by Term 1 2027. This includes making reasonable efforts to initiate a response to bullying and harmful behaviour within two school days, recognising that further time may be required to fully address the issue. By Term 1 2027, all schools will also publish or link to policies and procedures that align with the National Framework (or equivalent contemporary jurisdiction specific Frameworks) and their local policies and school context.