



Australian Government



Foundation to Year 5

Someone is being mean. Simple steps to feel safe

It is not your fault if someone is being mean. Bullying can feel scary or upsetting. You can try simple steps to feel safe again.

1 What to do in the moment

Different things help in different situations.
Pick what feels right:



Walk away. You do not have to stay somewhere that feels unkind or unsafe.



Say something short and calm, such as 'That is not okay', 'Stop, that hurts' or 'I need some space'. You do not have to explain yourself.



Ask a trusted grown-up for help. This could be a parent, carer, teacher, grandparent, uncle or aunty, or someone else. If it happens at school, find a teacher or another grown-up at school who can help.



Do not reply if it is happening in an online chat or game. Talk to a trusted grown-up about what to do next.

Walking away or getting help is not giving up.
It is looking after yourself.



After it happens

You might still feel upset, and that is okay.
These can help:



Name how you are feeling, such as sad, angry or worried. This can make it easier.



Talk to someone you trust about what happened. This could be a parent, carer, teacher or another trusted grown-up. You do not have to carry this on your own.



If the same thing keeps happening, you should tell a trusted grown-up. One chat can be enough to start making things better.



3 When things can be repaired

Sometimes people can say or do unkind things, even if they usually get along. This can happen after a disagreement. If it feels safe, talk it through. This can help. This works best if the other person seems sorry.



You do not have to forgive them straight away.



It can take time to be friends again, and that is okay.



Small steps are fine.

Words you could use

Not sure what to say? You could try:

- ◉ 'When you did that, it hurt my feelings.'
- ◉ 'Can we talk about what happened?'
- ◉ 'Can we start again?'

Sometimes the other person may not say sorry or might not seem like they mean it. You may not want to continue the friendship, and that is okay. Everyone deserves to feel safe and supported. Ask for help early, before something feels serious. If the same thing keeps happening, it is more than a disagreement. Tell a trusted grown-up if you see any bullying or other harmful behaviours. You do not have to deal with this alone.



Remember

You deserve to feel safe and to be treated kindly. When something feels wrong, do something about it. That is always the right thing to do.

Connected resources

- ◉ What can bullying look and feel like?
- ◉ What are the signs of harmful behaviour?
- ◉ Who can help me? What happens next?

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.