

What can bullying look and feel like?

Bullying is not always easy to spot, and it is never okay.

It can hurt whether it happens in person or online. Hurtful behaviour is never okay.

It is always okay to tell a trusted grown-up. Do not wait until something feels 'serious enough' to ask for help.

Note

Sometimes, hurtful behaviour can relate to who you are. Someone might leave you out because of how you look. Someone might tease you about where you are from. This can happen in person or online.



An argument is not the same as bullying

Arguments and disagreements can be upsetting, but they are often easy to fix.

It can be a normal part of being with friends.



Bullying and other harmful behaviours

Bullying and other harmful behaviours hurt someone. This can be on purpose or by accident. It could happen once or more than once.

Even once is not okay.



Bullying can look like...



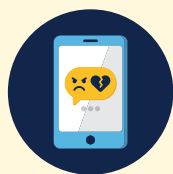
Someone pushing you, hitting you or threatening you.



Someone taking or damaging your things.



Someone teasing you or calling you unkind names.



Someone sending mean messages or sharing your picture without asking.



Someone spreading rumours about you.



Someone judging you or treating you unkindly because of who you are.



Someone leaving you out of games.

Bullying and other harmful behaviours can look different for everyone. These are just some examples.

Here is how bullying can make you feel.

- ◉ Sad or like you want to cry.
- ◉ Scared or worried.
- ◉ Alone, like no one is on your side.
- ◉ Angry or annoyed.
- ◉ Embarrassed or ashamed.
- ◉ Small, or like you don't matter.
- ◉ Like you have a sore tummy or trouble sleeping.
- ◉ Like you don't want to go to school or be online.

These are just some examples. Bullying and other harmful behaviours can feel different for everyone. It's important to think about how you're feeling and to reach out for support.



Next steps

Tell a trusted grown-up how you're feeling. This is important, especially if you feel unsafe or if the same thing keeps happening. You can talk to a teacher, parent or carer, or another trusted grown-up.

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.

Connected resources

- What are the signs of harmful behaviour?
- Who can help me? What happens next?



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.