

# School expulsions

Information for parents and carers

Easy Read version



## How to use this document



The Victorian Government Department of Education and Training wrote this document. When you see the word 'we', it means the Department of Education and Training.



We have written this information in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.



We have written some words in **bold**.

We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 33.



This Easy Read document is a summary of another document.



You can find the other document on our website at

[http://bit.ly/school\\_expulsion\\_information](http://bit.ly/school_expulsion_information)



You can ask for help to read this document. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

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# Expelling a child from school



This document is about what happens when a principal is thinking about expelling a child.

We call it an **expulsion**.



An expulsion is when the principal tells your child to:

- leave the school
- never come back.



For a principal to think about expelling your child, something really bad must have happened while your child was:

- at school
- going to or from school
- taking part in a school activity.

Your child might have:



- put another person's health, safety or wellbeing at risk



- kept doing something that put another person at risk after your child was told not to



- damaged or destroyed another person's property



- taken something that does not belong to them



- brought a weapon or illegal drugs to school



- used or sold a weapon or illegal drugs while they were at school



- done or said things over and over again to put another person down



- made it really hard for other children to learn.



Your child will be expelled if the principal decides it's the only way to make sure other students and staff are healthy and safe.

## What will the principal do?

If a principal is thinking about expelling your child, they will:



- find out as much as they can about what has happened



- tell you what has happened



- ask you to take part in a Behaviour Support and Intervention Meeting – we explain this in more detail on page 13



- think about all the information in this situation



- make sure your child has support at school



- think about ways to support your child so they can stay at their school



- decide if expelling your child is the only way to make sure other students and staff are healthy and safe.



## Support for your child



You know a lot about your child and what can cause changes in their behaviour.

If you share this information with the school, it could:



- help the school work out how to help your child



- stop any problems from getting worse.



There are things schools should do before expulsion becomes an option.

The school should:



- develop a **Behaviour Support Plan** for your child – a plan which tells your child’s teacher and school staff how to keep your child safe and look after their wellbeing



- include your child in a **Student Support Group** – a group that includes you, your child’s teacher and support people from your child’s school.

The group meets to plan ways to support your child at school.



- work with your child to solve problems they have



- offer your child the support they need.

## How can you support your child?

Your child might show signs that they need some extra support, such as:



- sleeping a lot or not sleeping well



- using drugs or drinking alcohol



- having big changes in their moods



- getting very angry



- crying a lot



- not taking much care with the way they look



- staying away from their friends, family or people that help them



- not doing things they normally like to do.

If you are worried about your child, please see page 36. There is a list of helpful contacts for parents and children.

# Behaviour Support and Intervention Meetings



The principal must hold a **Behaviour Support and Intervention Meeting** before they decide to expel a child from school.

The meeting will include:



- you and your child
- the principal
- other staff at the school who have supported your child
- a **Regional Approved Support Person** – someone who works for the Department and knows a lot about student wellbeing.

The meeting will give you a chance to:



- find out why your child might be expelled



- talk about your child's side of the story and be heard



- share any information that could help the principal make a decision



- talk about ways to:
  - keep your child at the school
  - support your child



- talk about other learning and training options your child might have if they are expelled.



The decision about your child's expulsion won't be made until after this meeting.



If you need an interpreter, the school can organise one for you.



If you can't go to the meeting, you can choose someone who you trust to go in your place.

In this case, you will need to fill out a Relevant Person Nomination form.

You can get the form from:



- our website



- the school.



If you do not have someone who you trust to go in your place the school will find someone.



This person will be at the meeting to:

- tell your child's side of the story
- support your child.



## Bringing a support person



You can bring a support person to the meeting if you need one.



This should be someone you trust.



The support person can't be someone you have to pay to be there.



If your child has a disability, you might choose a support person who knows and understands their needs.



You might choose a support person who knows and understands your:

- culture
- religion.

The support person can:



- help you get ready for the meeting



- go to the meeting and support you



- make sure you and your child understand your rights



- make sure the school follows the right processes



- listen to any questions or concerns you have



- help you work out what result you and your child want



- help you work out what you will do if your child is expelled



- make sure you have all the paperwork you need



- support you if you want to **appeal** the decision that is made – this means asking for the principal's decision to be reviewed



- support your child if they must move to a new school.

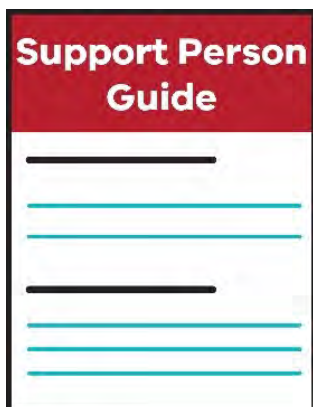
It is not your support person's job to:



- make a decision for you



- support us or the school.



You can find out more by reading the *Support Person Guide* on our website.

## Koorie children and families



There is support just for Koorie children and their families.

If you need more information you can contact:



- the school



- your **Regional Engagement Coordinator** – someone who works for the Department in your region.



You can talk to them if you have questions about an expulsion.

You can contact them using the *Support in your region* details on page 37.



- the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association.



[www.vaeai.org.au](http://www.vaeai.org.au)



(03) 9481 0800

## Children with disability



There is support just for children with disability and their families.

If you need more information you can contact:



- the school



- your Regional Engagement Coordinator



- the Disability Advocacy Resource Unit.



[www.daru.org.au](http://www.daru.org.au)



**(03) 9639 5807**

## Older children



If your child is 18 or older, they might choose to speak for themselves.



The law understands that some children younger than 18 can make their own decisions.

We call these children **mature minors**.



The principal will work out if a child:

- is a mature minor
- can make decisions during the expulsion process.



If your child says it's ok, you can still:

- support them
- go to meetings.



The school will encourage your child to get support from:

- you
- a carer
- a support person
- a person who will be on their side.



## Making a decision



The principal must tell you what they have decided within 2 working days of the Behaviour Support and Intervention Meeting.



The Secretary of our department must approve any decision to expel a child aged 8 or younger.



In this case, we must tell you what the Secretary has decided within 10 working days of the Behaviour Support and Intervention Meeting.



It is important for your child to keep learning while the school is making a decision.



Your child might be given a **suspension**.

This means they will stay at home for a period of time.

The school will make sure they have work to do so they keep learning during this time.



If your child is suspended for longer than 1 week, a teacher from the school should be in regular contact to support them.



You should contact the school if this doesn't happen.

## What decisions could be made?



The school might decide not to expel your child.



Your child will be given support to stay at the school.



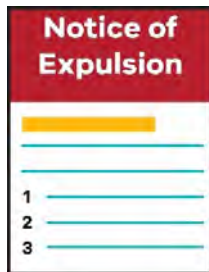
If this is the case, you might take part in meetings to develop a Behaviour Support Plan for your child.

OR



The school might decide to expel your child.

If this is the case, the principal will give you:



A form titled "Notice of Expulsion" with a red header. Below the header is a yellow bar, followed by three horizontal lines. At the bottom, there are three numbered lines: "1", "2", and "3".

- a *Notice of Expulsion* that explains the school's reasons for expelling your child



A form titled "Expulsion Appeals Form" with a red header. Below the header, there is a "Name:" label followed by two horizontal lines. Below that is a "Details:" label followed by three horizontal lines.

- an *Expulsion Appeals Form* that explains the rights you have if you don't agree.



The principal will help make your child's move to a new school as smooth as possible.



They will work with:

- members of our local Area team
- the Regional Engagement Coordinator.



They will write a plan for how they will support your child.



We call this the **supported transition plan**.



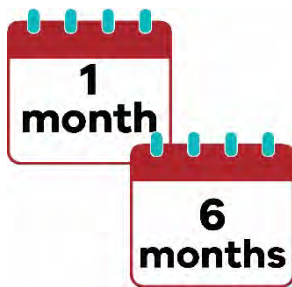
When they write this plan, they will think about your child's:

- likes
- interests
- skills.



They will also:

- talk to the new school
- give the new school information about your child
- make sure your child gets the right support.



The Regional Engagement Coordinator will check in with the new school after:

- 1 month
- 6 months.



They will talk to the local Area team if your child needs more support.

## What if you don't agree with the school's decision?



You have the right to appeal the decision to expel your child from school.



If you appeal the school's decision, it will be reviewed.



We will think about and decide if your child will:

- stay at their school
- go to another school.

Expulsion Appeals Form	
<b>Name:</b>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
<b>Details:</b>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>

If you want to appeal, you must fill out the *Expulsion Appeals Form* and give it to the principal.



You must do this within 10 days of getting your child's *Notice of Expulsion*.

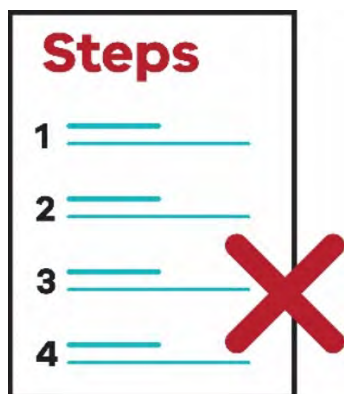
You can appeal the decision if:



- the school knew your child had behaviour problems but didn't do enough to support your child



- the reasons the school gave for expelling your child were not fair



- the principal didn't follow all the steps they were supposed to follow when they thought about expelling your child



- there was something going on in your child's life at the time of the behaviour that made a difference.



Your *Expulsion Appeals Form* will go to the Area Executive Director – a senior person who works for the Department in your region.



You might need to take part in another meeting.

You can bring a support person if this happens.



## Word list



### **Appeal**

Asking for the principal's decision to be reviewed.



### **Behaviour Support and Intervention Meeting**

The principal must hold a Behaviour Support and Intervention Meeting before they decide to expel a child from school.

The meeting will include:

- you and your child
- the principal
- other staff at the school who have supported your child
- a **Regional Approved Support Person** – someone who works for the Department and knows a lot about student wellbeing.





## Behaviour Support Plan

A plan which tells your child's teacher and school staff how to keep your child safe and look after their wellbeing.



## Expulsion

When the principal tells your child to:

- leave the school
- never come back.



## Mature minors

Children younger than 18 who can make their own decisions.



## Regional Approved Support Person

Someone who works for us and knows a lot about student wellbeing.



## **Regional Engagement Coordinator**

Someone who works for the Department in your region.

You can talk to them if you have questions about an expulsion.

## **Student Support Group**



A group that includes you, your child's teacher and support people from your child's school.

The group meets to plan ways to support your child at school.



## **Supported transition plan**

A plan for how your child will be supported as they move to a new school.



## **Suspension**

Your child might be asked not to attend school for a period of time.

## More information



If you need more information about your child's mental health and wellbeing, you can go online.



Kids Matter

[www.kidsmatter.edu.au](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au)



Youth Beyond Blue

[www.youthbeyondblue.com.au](http://www.youthbeyondblue.com.au)



Headspace

[www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)



Raising Children Network

[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

## Support in your region



North Western Victoria

**(03) 9488 9488**



North Eastern Victoria

**1300 333 231**



South Western Victoria

**1300 333 232**



South Eastern Victoria

**(03) 8765 5600**



You can visit our website to find out which region you are in.

**[www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/structure/Pages/regions.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/structure/Pages/regions.aspx)**

## Further support

You can contact:



- your family's doctor



- Parentline – 8am to midnight, every day of the year **13 22 89**



- your local council. Ask for a list of youth services.



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