

Tips for responding to incidents that happen outside schools hours

eSafety Toolkit for Schools

Creating safer online environments



This resource provides guidance on responding to incidents that happen outside school hours. eSafety has developed high level principles that can guide appropriate actions and responsibilities across all states, territories and sectors.

Disciplinary powers and policies about responding to incidents outside school hours differ across states, territories and sectors. School staff need to be familiar with the legal and ethical responsibilities set out in their local policies and procedures. Youth Law Australia offers valuable information about laws relating to [schools](#) and the [internet, phones and technology](#).

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eSafety's principles that guide appropriate actions and responsibilities:

1.

If an issue is impacting the wellbeing of a student, staff should take steps to support the student and provide strategies to assist them.

2.

Regardless of when or where an incident has occurred, or the type of incident, staff should be guided by what is best for the student — considering their rights, views and wishes.

3.

Schools and staff have a duty of care as well as legal and ethical responsibilities to respond to reasonably foreseeable harm and to mitigate risks.

4.

Schools ensure that factors affecting a student's ability to learn and a teacher's ability to teach are addressed through their school's wellbeing, pastoral care and behaviour management procedures.

5.

Schools work in partnership with parents/carers and support services, if required, considering the rights, views and wishes of the students involved.

6.

If the circumstances surrounding an incident are not clear, schools are encouraged to seek advice from the relevant education department, sector or school board.

Students have a right to be safe and well. School communities have a responsibility to promote student safety and wellbeing, including when they engage online. However, the traditional responsibility and authority that a school has for students is complicated by the 24/7 nature of technology. This complexity is evident when responding to issues that happen outside school hours.

Research suggests that many students who are bullied online are also bullied in person, and that online incidents are an extension of what is happening face-to-face. If a student reports an online incident, it is important to investigate further to get a full understanding of the situation — a seemingly small incident may be part of a larger issue.*

*Department of Education and Training. (2015). A review of literature (2010-2014) on student bullying by Australia's Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group.