

Tips for parents/carers after an online safety incident

eSafety Toolkit for Schools

Creating safer online environments



This resource is for schools to provide to parents/carers to help maintain positive relationships following an online safety incident. Along with this information, schools are encouraged to provide parents/carers with clear links to their complaints handling procedures.

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My child is involved in an online safety incident — what can I do?

As a parent or carer, you know your child better than anyone and have the best opportunity to guide them to have positive online experiences. If your child has been involved in an online incident (as a target, instigator or bystander), it is important that you work together with the school to provide your child with the support they need. It can be distressing to learn that your child is being cyberbullied, has been exposed to inappropriate content or is using technology inappropriately but it is important to focus on their wellbeing. It's best to not engage with the incident online — instead, stay calm, positive and focused on finding solutions.

When an online safety incident occurs, school staff will work through an incident response procedure, which is underpinned by school policies, education department/sector guidelines (if applicable) or eSafety advice. Ask your school for a copy of the procedure and familiarise yourself with the response steps. If you have an issue with the school, make sure that you raise it through the appropriate complaint procedures.

1. Focus on wellbeing

Check in regularly with your child and the contact person at your school. Regardless of whether your child was the target, instigator or bystander in the incident, it is likely that they will require emotional support. If your child has used technology inappropriately, support them to take responsibility for their actions and give them ideas to resolve the issue.

If you feel your child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, call Triple Zero (000) and stay with them until they are safe. Seek professional help if your child is distressed or shows changes in behaviour or moods, remembering that organisations such as [Kids' Helpline](#) and [Beyond Blue](#) can help. Maintain contact with the school so you can work together to support your child.

2. Communicate with the school

Make a list of questions that you want to discuss with your child's school and use this to guide conversation. Check if your child has questions as well, or if they have any ideas on how to resolve the issue or repair the harm. Throughout the process it is important that communications with your child's school are calm and positive, focusing on addressing the issues and supporting your child. You might like to ask the school to watch out for concerning behaviours, or discuss the strategies that will be implemented if the issue remains unresolved. Keep in regular contact with the school, making set times to meet with your child's teacher, school counsellor and, if needed, the principal or school wellbeing team. This may help support the wellbeing of your child particularly if you have concerns with the steps taken in managing the issue, or if your child starts to feel uncomfortable about attending school. [Bullying. No Way!](#) also has helpful advice on how you can work together with schools to address and resolve bullying issues.

3. Access support

Your child's school and their GP or health professional can provide support. Draw on your own support network too, and make sure to seek help for yourself if you need it. The eSafety website includes a list of [counselling and support services](#) that can help anyone involved in an online safety incident. This list can be filtered by audience (including parents), the type of support required, issue and state/territory.

4. Upskill

eSafety has a range of information for [Parents and Carers](#) including skills and advice to help you talk to your child about online safety issues including cyberbullying, online pornography, sending nudes and online gaming.