

# Parents

Student Engagement and  
Inclusion Guidance

## Fact sheet for parents and carers – new suspension and expulsion procedures

Every member of a school community has the right to feel safe at school. As a parent or carer you should be confident that you are sending your child into a safe and supportive learning environment.

Suspension and expulsion are serious disciplinary measures and should be used as a last resort in managing a student's behaviour.

As of 1 March 2014 changes have been made to how suspension and expulsion processes work in government schools.

The grounds for suspension and expulsion have also been updated to better enable principals to prevent and respond to behavioural incidents that may compromise the health, wellbeing and safety of staff and students. The grounds for suspension and expulsion can be found at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/behaviour/Pages/discipline.aspx>

### The relevant person – ensuring students are supported

It is important that every student has a person to support and advocate for them throughout a suspension or expulsion process. The new guidance on suspensions and expulsions has introduced the concept of a **relevant person**, which is the adult who will play this important support role.

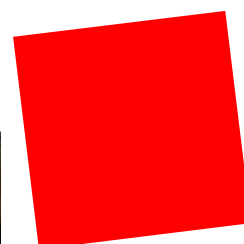
**In most cases a student's relevant person will be their parent or carer.** However, you as the parent or carer can also nominate another responsible adult to act as the relevant person if you cannot, for whatever reason, take on this role yourself.

The role of the relevant person **does not replace your role as parent or carer** with regard to responsibility for decision-making about your child's education, and for their enrolment and attendance at school. Rather, it has been introduced in recognition of the fact that students come from diverse family backgrounds and that a parent or carer may not always be able to act as a support person for their child.

All relevant persons are entitled to bring an independent support person so long as they are not acting for fee or reward. For Koorie students you can ask for a Koorie Engagement Support Officer or Koorie Education Coordinator to play this support role.

### The suitable persons list

In some cases, a parent or carer may be unable to act as the relevant person for their child during a suspension or expulsion process, and may also be unable to nominate another adult to fulfil this role.



In these situations the school principal will appoint a person from the 'suitable persons list' to act as the student's relevant person. The suitable persons list is a register of departmental employees with relevant welfare expertise, experience and training.

This is to ensure that every student has somebody to support and advocate for them .

### Meetings with the school principal – the behaviour review conference

A principal is required to hold a meeting, called a behaviour review conference, when an expulsion is being considered for a student. The student and their relevant person must be invited to this meeting to discuss the student's behaviour and possible consequences and strategies to address the behaviour.

The relevant person can also request a meeting with the principal at any point during an expulsion process if they have any concerns.

The relevant person – whether parent, carer or another adult – may bring an independent support person to any school meeting as long as they are not acting for fee or reward.

When suspending a student, principals are not required to hold a meeting with the student and relevant person either before or after the suspension, but the relevant person can request a meeting with the school principal at any point during the suspension process if they wish to discuss any concerns.

If you are unable to resolve your concerns with the school principal, you can contact the relevant department regional office to discuss further. To contact your closest regional office see: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/regions.aspx>

### Expulsion appeals

A student who has been expelled has the right to appeal their expulsion. The relevant person may exercise this right on their behalf, taking into consideration the student's views and best interests.

The school must provide every expelled student an appeal form along with the Notice of Expulsion.

### More information

For more information on suspension and expulsion processes, see:

- FAQs for parents: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/behaviour/Pages/faqs.aspx>
- Procedures following suspension brochure: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/parents/health/suspensionprocedures.pdf>
- Procedures following expulsion brochure: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/parents/health/expulsionprocedures.pdf>
- Disciplinary Measures section of the Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/discipline.aspx>