

SUPPORTING PARENTS AND CARERS OF CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN

Sometimes children can act in ways that parents find challenging. However, sometimes these behaviours can be more serious and include self-injuring behavior, (e.g. headbanging), aggression towards others (e.g. hitting or biting) or throwing furniture at others.

Behaviours of concern can be a challenge for schools because teachers have a duty of care to protect the safety of all students and they have the right to be safe themselves.

The best way to address these behaviours is for parents and schools to work together.

TALK WITH THE SCHOOL

If your child is demonstrating behaviours of concern at school, the school will contact you to discuss this. If you are worried about your child's behaviour you can take the first step and contact the school. You should ask to speak to your child's teacher, year level coordinator or a wellbeing staff member.

If your child has been assessed as having a medical condition, mental health issue or disability, it is important to pass this information on to the school.

Your child's school may ask for your consent to speak directly with the doctor or other health professional.

BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLANNING

A behaviour support plan can be developed specifically for your child and will include strategies that the school, you and your child can use to prevent and respond to behaviours of concern.

As a parent, you play an important role in developing your child's behaviour support plan. If your child does not already have a plan, you can bring this up with the school and ask to be consulted.

If your child has a disability, the plan should also outline the adjustments the school will make to enable your child to participate fully in school. Schools must make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities as required under the Disability Standards for Education.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR

In order to develop strategies that will make a real difference to your child, it is important to understand why these behaviours are arising.

As a parent, you may already be aware of what triggers your child's behaviours and know what works to meet their needs. Sharing this knowledge with the school is important.

Your child's school may talk to you about undertaking a functional behaviour assessment that can help to understand more about why a behaviour is occurring and helps develop strategies to reduce it.

WHAT TO EXPECT IF THERE IS A SERIOUS BEHAVIOURAL INCIDENT INVOLVING YOUR CHILD

If your child has been involved in a serious incident the school will:

- contact you as soon as possible after the incident.
- report the incident to the Department of Education and Training (DET), and in serious cases, to emergency services
- inform you if during the incident a school staff member restrained your child
- provide you with the parent fact sheet for restraint and seclusion

After the incident, the school will invite to discuss:

- developing and/or reviewing your child's behaviour support plan
- additional support needed.

Serious behavioural incidents may warrant suspension or expulsion from school. Following procedures outlined at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/behaviour/Pages/discipline.aspx>

I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE SCHOOL RESPONSE TO MY CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR

- In the first instance, you should always raise your concerns with the teacher involved, and following this, with the school principal.
- If you are unhappy with the school's response, or would like to seek external advice, contact your local DET regional office and speak to a Community Liaison Officer.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/pages/regional.aspx>

Lodge a formal complaint with DET.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complaintslanding.aspx>