

At SCHOOL

This section talks about what punishments you may receive for breaking school rules.

LEARN or EARN

You have to stay in school until you turn 15 and have completed Year 10. Then, until you turn 17 you must participate in full-time (25 hours per week) further education, approved training courses or employment, or a combination of those.

If you complete Year 10 before you turn 15, you have to continue in school or remain in other approved training, or a combination of education, training and part-time employment until you turn 15. After you turn 15 you will be able to go into full-time employment.

If you are under fifteen, you may only be allowed to leave school in special circumstances. This may include:

- Ⓒ Attending schooling through distance education
- Ⓒ Attending home schooling
- Ⓒ Becoming too sick to attend school

➤ Check out:

www.det.nt.gov.au/parents-community/beyond-school/learn-or-earn-for-15-17-years

Suspension from school

What is suspension?

Suspension is a type of punishment that forbids students from attending school for a short period of time. You may be suspended from school by your Principal if your behaviour is harmful to the health or moral welfare of other persons in the school. Harmful behaviour includes:

- Ⓒ Damaging or stealing school property
- Ⓒ Acting in a violent manner
- Ⓒ Being repeatedly insolent or disobedient
- Ⓒ Selling, using or bringing drugs to school
- Ⓒ Serious breach of discipline
- Ⓒ Bullying other students or teachers

Why have I been suspended?

Before suspending you, the Principal should in writing:

- Ⓒ Tell you they are thinking about suspending you from school
- Ⓒ Give you the reasons for this
- Ⓒ Give you full details of what they say you have done wrong
- Ⓒ Give you an opportunity to give your side of the story

If you have been suspended from school, the principal should clearly explain why. The principal should also allow you to explain your side of the story.

If you are suspended your school should still work with you to ensure that you have educational support and schoolwork to continue on with during the suspension. This is so you don't fall behind academically during the suspension.

If the principal is satisfied that you are sorry for what you have done, and that you have agreed to behave in the future, the principal may decide to let you come back to school before the suspension period has finished.

How long can I be suspended for?

Students should not be suspended for more than one month.

What can I do if I don't agree with a decision to suspend me from school?

You or your parent can ask the principal to meet to review the suspension.

If you still are not satisfied, you can complain to your Department of Education and Training (DET) Regional Office. If you are not happy with the response from DET You can complain to the NT Ombudsman.

Expulsion from school

What is expulsion?

Expulsion is a type of punishment that permanently forbids students from attending a particular school. Students usually face expulsion from school when their behaviour is so serious that the punishment of suspension is not enough. Only the Minister for Education has the power to expel a student from a Government school, and only if the Minister thinks it is necessary and in the interests of other people who attend the school.

Why have I been expelled?

If you have been expelled the Minister of Education should provide you or your parent a Notice of Expulsion. They should clearly explain why you have been expelled and allow you to explain your behaviour. If you don't agree with the Minister's decision, and would like further advice about what to do you should contact the Northern Territory's Department of Education or the NT Ombudsman for the Northern Territory.

The Minister has the power to revoke the expulsion if they believe that your circumstances or behaviour has changed and you should no longer be expelled from the school.

Do I still have to go to school if I am under 17 and have been expelled?

Yes (unless you are in a training program or working). If you have been expelled, and have not reached the school leaving age, you have to enrol at a distance education centre, enrol in a private school, or, if the Minister of Education gives you permission, enrol at another Government school.

Skipping school

If you are under the age of 17 and are caught skipping school, you may be asked by a police officer or a truancy officer, to explain yourself. Additionally, if the officer is not satisfied with your explanation for not being at school, they may escort you back to your school principal, or take you home.

Bullying

What is Bullying?

Bullying is something done on purpose against a person or group of people to upset or hurt them. Anyone may be a victim of bullying, even teachers.

There are several forms of bullying including:

- ⦿ Physical bullying - this is when a person's body is hurt due to another person hitting, pinching or kicking them. It can also mean stealing or damaging another person's property
- ⦿ Verbal bullying - this is when a person has been spoken to in a way that is hurtful and mean. For example, teasing, name calling and spreading rumours are forms of verbal bullying
- ⦿ Non-Verbal bullying - this includes things that upset, exclude or embarrass a person. For example, leaving someone out of a game or activity on purpose, making rude gestures and writing nasty letters are all forms of non-verbal bullying
- ⦿ Cyber bullying - writing/forwarding linking to private emails, text messages, instant messaging, recording someone without their permission, broadcasting images or posts on social network sites with the intention of hurting or upsetting another person

Is Bullying Wrong? How can I stop it?

Bullying is never acceptable. If you are being bullied you can and should take action to stop it. Make a list of things that have happened to make you feel upset or hurt and speak to an adult you trust about the problem. Usually your parents, teachers, school principal, school counsellor and/or school based constable will be able to help you. You can also contact the following telephone counselling services or get information from their websites:

- **Lifeline:** 131 114
- **1800 MYLINE:** 1800 695 463
- **Kids Help Line:** 1800 55 1800

Sometimes bullying becomes a police matter involving a criminal investigation and/or charges. You might also be able to get an order from the court which sends a message to the bully that their actions need to stop. If the bully doesn't stop then there will be legal consequences.

➤ **Check out:** www.bullyingnoway.com.au **OR** www.thinkuknow.org.au