



## What Age Can I Leave Home?

Parents, as a general rule, have full parental responsibility for any of their children who are under 18 years. The law does however see that parental responsibility over you may reduce as you get closer to 18 and become mature enough to make your own decisions.

**There is no law that says what age you can leave home.**

You can leave home at any age providing you have a safe place to go to.

If you leave home and are considered to be in physical or moral danger then the Police or Department of Child Protection & Family Services may become involved.

These authorities are unlikely to become involved if you are over the age of 15, have a safe place to go and there is nothing illegal happening at the place you move to (prostitution, drug use, crime, under-age sex) and you can support yourself financially.

It would be unlikely that you would be forced to return to a home where there is family violence and abuse.

If you are in the care of the CEO of the Department of Child Protection & Family Services or if there are any Family Court Orders made about you and who you are to live with, the law may be different for you.

Parents may file a Missing Person's Report to Police if you leave and do not notify them of your whereabouts.

Leaving home is a big decision and should not be made without consulting some person in authority such as your teacher, school counsellor, youth worker or adult friend.

If you leave home, it is very important to take with you any identification you have (birth certificate, passport, bank card, Smart Rider) as well as any necessary clothing and toiletries. It may be the case that once you have left home, your parents refuse to give you these items and this can create difficulties.

Also consider before making the decision to leave how you intend to support yourself financially if your parents refuse to continue to provide for you.

## More Information

Kids Help Line: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/thinking-about-leaving-home> or call 1800 55 1800

**Please note:** Laws are subject to change. Last updated July 2020.

**Important:** The information provided in this infosheet is for information only.

It should not be relied on as legal advice.

Please seek legal advice about your particular circumstances.