What is a LETTER TO THE EDITOR?

Letters to the Editor are found in newspapers. They are written by members of the public, as opposed to newspaper staff, and give somebody’s opinion about a current issue, or it may be a response to an article or previously written letter to the editor.

Structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Salutation</strong></th>
<th>Dear Editor, Dear Sir/Madam</th>
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| **Opening Statement** | Give details to the article/issue/letter you are responding to.  
  e.g. In response to Wayne Smith’s article “Bullying makes the man”, I wish to offer the following response….. |
| **Opinion/Hypothesis** | What is your opinion on the matter |
| **Argument** | These arguments back up your opinion and should be supported by evidence |
| **Argument** | Can be a mix of fact and opinion |
| **Conclusion** | Re-state your opinion as well as summarise your arguments. The conclusion also gives you the opportunity to call for action. |
| **Personal Details** | Include your full name, address and phone number. (Often only a name and suburb is published) |

Language Features:

- Persuasive writing
- Subjective but not too emotional (emotive language such as “it is disgraceful that.. I am absolutely appalled by….” is okay)
- Language should be formal
- Direct appeal to the editor or readers
- Rhetorical questions are sometimes a useful device e.g. “How can people sleep at night knowing that...?”
When Students bully the teachers

An important issue is being overlooked in the school bullying debate. Teachers are probably the most bullied, disempowered group in Australian education.

I refer to classroom teachers, and not the “teacher advise industry”. This huge blob of politicians, bureaucrats, school managers, education unionists and parents have much to say about teaching, although they hardly ever set foot in a classroom. Australians would be shocked to observe the rude, bullying treatment meted out to teachers by a fair number of students. A return to good old-time values, such as civility, respect for authority and proper sanctions against misbehaviour, would go a long way towards solving the problem of bullying.

I am not advocating a return to past authoritarian practices. The aims of modern schooling, such as creative and independent problem-solving, can be achieved without excluding civility. Unfortunately, this has not been the case.

CHRIS CLASSEN, Traralgon

Bullying is Not a Game

To the Editor:
Kent Gardens Elementary School administration has recently placed a temporary hold on the playing of “tag” on the playground at the school. Reports at the last PTA meeting have it that there are children in the school that have turned the simple game as we knew it into a bullying and intimidation tactic, targeting some of their weaker and smaller classmates under the guise of “just playing”. Tagging another child, knocking them to the ground and then sitting on their back is not “just playing” in any realm of the imagination.

I wholeheartedly agree with the school administration’s decision to call upon the Safety and Discipline committee at the school to investigate this situation and make an educated and informed decision on the continuation of this game at the school. Ten very capable members of the teaching staff at Kent Gardens serve on this committee. Maybe in the interim the message will get to the parents that bullying will not be tolerated at any level or under some supposed guise of “we were just playing”.

Geraldine Swarm
McLean

School bullying is a serious issue

With regard to the opinion column “Unhappy with the handling of school bullying incidents” by Betty Wade, Knoxville, May 31.

Ms Wade deserves much praise for having the courage to speak out against bullying in the schools and the terribly inappropriate response by school and law enforcement officials. In pointing out the dismissive attitudes of those who are in a position to protect our children, this concerned grandmother exposes herself to comments by people who think bullying is OK. But it’s not. Being disrespectful to others is not OK-at any age. And as described, the actions of the adults were even more damaging than those of the children.

The extreme consequences of bullying crashed in our family when our 14-year-old nephew committed suicide. His story is a complicated one, but it is clear that bullying- and especially “cyber bullying” – played a part in his state of mind. There are terrible ways our schools can handle bullying situations (described in Ms Wade’s letter) or there are concrete, productive methods. To learn more; educators, parents, bullies and their victims should visit: ryanpatrickhalligan.com.

Phillip Kellogg, Brooklyn, NY