

CYBER BULLYING

POLICY

Definition:

A person is bullied when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons. People who use the internet, email, intranets, phones, social networks or similar technologies to bully others are cyber bullies.

Rationale:

Bullying in any form is unacceptable. Bullying that is carried out through an internet service, such as email, chat room, discussion group or instant messaging or through mobile phone technologies such as short messaging service (SMS) is cyber bullying. Cyber bullying can be very destructive and will not be tolerated at any level, and serious consequences exist for students who choose to bully others.

Aims:

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is (including cyber bullying), and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- To alert everyone within the school community of the signs and evidence of cyber bullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of cyber bullying are investigated appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

Implementation:

- Parents, teachers, students and the community to be made aware of types of cyber bullying, and its legal and hurtful ramifications. Teachers will be regularly reminded of their duty of care regarding protection of students from all forms of bullying.
- The school will adopt a four-phase approach to bullying.

A. Primary Prevention:

- Professional development for staff relating to all forms of bullying including cyber bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Teachers will be trained in cybersafety. Cybersafety awareness programs will be provided for parents and cybersafety will form part of each child's ICT curriculum.
- Educate the school community about the seriousness of cyber bullying, its impact on those being bullied, how cyber-bullying occurs and consequences of cyber-bullying.
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying (including cyber-bullying), its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- The provision of programs that promote inclusiveness, resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving will form an integral part of our curriculum. In particular, assertiveness training and bystander training that builds skills in children to challenge and/or report unacceptable behaviour will be central to our curriculum.
- All students to be provided with individual and confidential computer and network passwords. Processes to be put in place to ensure tracking of student activity on the school's computer equipment and network. Firewalls to be installed to eliminate outside traffic into the school's network and intranet.

- The use of mobile phones by students will be limited with consequences to be implemented for any students who use mobile phones inappropriately.
- The curriculum to include anti-bullying messages and strategies eg: ‘The Friendly Schools’ and ‘No Blame Approach to Bullying’ programs.

B. Intervention:

- Once identified each bully, victim and witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- The school will reinforce with children the importance of appropriately reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving themselves or others, and the imperative that staff respond appropriately and proportionally to each allegation consistent with the school’s Student Code of Conduct.
- Students and staff identified by others as cyber bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Parents are to be contacted if their child is alleged to have been bullied or experienced inappropriate behaviour, or if their child appears to have behaved inappropriately or bullied someone else.
- Appropriate and proportional consequences may include a verbal apology, writing a letter of regret, loss of privileges etc.
- Removal of cyber-bullies from access to the school’s network and computers for a period of time. Loss of privilege to bring a mobile phone to school for student’s who bully via SMS or similar telephone functions.
- If student bullying persists parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school’s Student Code of Conduct.
- Consequences of repetitive or serious incidents may include criminal charges, suspension, expulsion, loss of privileges, counselling, conciliation or any other consequences consistent with the school’s Student Code of Conduct.

C. Post Violation:

It is important that appropriate strategies are put in place after the incident has been resolved for all students involved. Appropriate strategies may include:-

- ongoing monitoring of students involved including network traffic.
- follow-up meetings regarding each child’s management strategy.
- ongoing communication with parents.
- counselling from appropriate agencies of support officers etc for both parties.
- reinforcement of positive behaviours and appropriate behaviour strategies.

Evaluation:

To be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in...

2014