

CYBER BULLYING POLICY

Definition:

Cyber bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others. Bullies deliberately set out to intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt others repeatedly. Bullying is a clear form of harassment. People who use the internet, email, intranets, phones or similar technologies to bully others are cyber bullies and are breaking the law.

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 will not be tolerated at any level, and consequences exist for students who choose to bully others.

Aims:

- To reinforce within the school community what cyber bullying is and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- Everyone within the school community to be alert to 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 will be aware of the school's position on cyber bullying. 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.
- Educate the school community about the seriousness of cyber bullying, its impact on those being bullied and how this behaviour is unacceptable
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying (including cyber-bullying), its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- Provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify with students at the start of each year the school policy on bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- All students to be provided with individual and confidential passwords for programs. 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.

References: Safe Schools are Effective Schools booklet

www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters

S428-2007 Cyber Bullying – Updating the Student Code of Conduct

www.bullyingnoway.com.au

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/elearningsupportservices/www/classroom/cyberbullying.htm>

- 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.
- Student Representative Council, peer support delegates, staff and students to promote the philosophy of 'No Put Downs'.
- A vigilant and accountable yard duty roster for teachers will be put in place.
- Only applications that have been approved by the classroom teacher or principal will be allowed to be used on 'bring your own' devices eg. IPAD, IPOD and similar.

B. Early Intervention:

- Encourage children and staff to report bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Classroom teachers and principal on a regular basis reminding students and staff to report incidents of bullying.
- Regular monitoring of traffic on school's computer networks to identify potential problems.
- Parents encouraged to contact school if they become aware of a problem.

C. 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.
- Parents to be contacted.
- Students and staff identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- Removal of cyber-bullies from access to the school's network, computers and 'bring your own' devices for a period of time.
- If student bullying persists parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct.

D. Post Violation:

- Consequences for students will be individually based and may involve:-
 - exclusion from class.
 - exclusion from yard.
 - withdrawal of privileges.
 - ongoing counselling from appropriate agency for both victim and bully.
- Criminal charges being laid by police.
- Support Structures.
- Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies.
- Rewards for positive behaviour.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed with whole staff, student, parent and community input as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

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

July 2015

References: Safe Schools are Effective Schools booklet

www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters

S428-2007 Cyber Bullying – Updating the Student Code of Conduct

www.bullyingnoway.com.au

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/elearningsupportservices/www/classroom/cyberbullying.htm>