

POLICY – Cyber Bullying

Definition:

A person is bullied when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upsets or hurts another person or damages 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 to the signs and evidence of cyber bullying and to have the need 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 three-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 will be offered on an annual basis.
- Teachers will be trained in all facets of cyber safety. Cyber safety awareness programs will be provided for parents and cyber safety 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 our school values of inclusiveness, resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving will form an integral part of our curriculum. In particular, upskilling children to challenge and/or report unacceptable behaviour will be central to our curriculum.
- A student bullying survey and yard survey will be administered and acted upon annually.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify with students at the start of each year the school policy on bullying, including cyber bullying, when unpacking the school values and expectations.
- 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 and electronic devices 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 that also tie into our school values and expectations, which are reinforced through programs such as our multi-age hours and electives at lunchtimes.
- The student leadership team, staff and students to promote the philosophy of 'No Put Downs'.

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 on the Student Management Tool.
- The school will reinforce with children the importance of appropriately reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving themselves or others, and it is imperative that staff respond appropriately and proportionally to each allegation consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct, including reporting and recording of the incident on the Student Management Tool.
- Students and staff identified by others as cyber bullies will be informed of allegations by appropriate staff.
- 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, completing a Behaviour Reflection Sheet, loss of privileges such as 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 students who bully via SMS or similar telephone functions.
- Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems as appropriate.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support where appropriate.
- 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.
- Identification of an agreed key contact staff member for each student involved.
- Follow-up meetings regarding each child's management strategy.
- On-going communication with parents.
- Counselling from appropriate agencies of support for both parties.
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours and appropriate behaviour strategies.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Ratified by School Council: October 2013

To be Reviewed: 2016