



Mernda Primary School 0488

CYBER BULLYING POLICY

DEFINITION

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health and safety - psychologically or physically, or to their property, reputation or social acceptance **on more than one occasion**. 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, intranet, phones 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, online games, discussion group, 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 individuals who choose to cyber bully others.

AIMS

- To educate and reinforce the school community what cyber bullying is and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- To enable everyone in the school community to be alert to signs and evidence of cyber bullying and to be aware that they 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

Teachers, students, parents and the community will be made 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. There is no single solution to the problem of cyber bullying.

Listed below are 5 areas that our school community needs to address together to put in place and maintain a comprehensive and effective prevention plan.

- 1) Understanding and talking about cyber bullying
- 2) Review and update existing policies and practices regularly
- 3) Make reporting cyber bullying easy for students
- 4) Promote the positive use of technology
- 5) Evaluate the impact of prevention activities

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.cybersmart.gov.au/Young%20Kids/Hectors%20World.aspx>

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

The school will adopt a three-phase approach to cyber bullying.

1. Primary Prevention:

- Professional learning for staff relating to all forms of cyber bullying.
- Educate the school community about the seriousness of cyber bullying, its impact on those being bullied and how this behaviour is unacceptable
- Provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving such as You Can Do It & eSmart.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify with students at the start of each year the school policy on cyber-bullying.
- Processes to be put in place to ensure tracking of student activity on the school's computer equipment and network. Proxy settings and firewalls will be maintained and updated to eliminate outside activity 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, including cyber bullying messages and strategies according to the school's Code of Conduct.
- Encourage children and staff to report cyber bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- School staff and students are to be reminded regularly to report incidents of cyber bullying.
- Regular monitoring of student's activity on school's computer networks to identify potential problems.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they become aware of a problem.

2. Intervention:

- Classroom teachers are primarily responsible for students in their classrooms and will seek support from the ICT Coordinator and/or Assistant Principal if needed.
- Once identified each bully, victim and witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of cyber bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- Parents to be contacted.
- Both cyber bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- If student bullying persists parents/ carers will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct. This may include the removal of cyber bullies from access to the school's network and computers for a period of time. Loss of privilege of electronic devices at school, which could be used for cyber bullying.

3. Post Violation:

- Consequences for students will be individual according to the school's Code of Conduct.
- Provide support structures as necessary.
- Ongoing monitoring of identified cyber bullies.

EVALUATION

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

This policy was ratified by school council on 15 th February 2015
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