Cyber Bullying

CONTEXT

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.

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.

AIM

- To reinforce within the school community what constitutes bullying (including cyber bullying) and that it is unacceptable.
- To alert everyone within the school community of the signs and evidence of cyber bullying and that everyone has 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.

POLICY

Implementation

Parents, teachers, students and the community to be made aware of types of cyber bullying, and its social and legal 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:

1. Primary Prevention: Strategies that will be employed:
   - 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.

- Education of 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.
- 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.
- A student bullying survey and yard survey will be administered and acted upon twice annually.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify with students at the start of each year the school policy on bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- All students will be provided with individual and confidential computer and network passwords. Processes are in place to ensure tracking of student activity on the school's computer equipment and network. Firewalls are installed to eliminate outside traffic into the school's network and intranet.
- The use of mobile phones by students at school will be limited with consequences to be implemented for any students who use mobile phones inappropriately.
- The curriculum to include anti-bulling messages and strategies e.g.: '*The Friendly Schools*' and '*No Blame Approach to Bullying*' programs.
- Student Representative Council, peer support delegates, staff and students to promote the philosophy of 'No Put Downs'.
- Electives and structured activities available to students at recess and lunch breaks.

2. Intervention:

- 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 behavior 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* Policy, including reporting and recording of the incident on our on-line behavior tracker.
- Students and staff identified by others as cyber bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Parents are to be informed if their child is alleged to have been bullied or experienced inappropriate behavior, 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 Behavior Incident booklet, attending SOS, loss of privileges etc.
- Public recognition and reward for positive behavior and resolution of problems as appropriate.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- 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.
- If student bullying persists parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's *Student Code of Conduct Policy*.
- 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 Policy*.

3. Post Violation:

It is important that appropriate strategies are put in place after bullying incidents have 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.
- Ongoing communication with parents.
- Counselling from appropriate agencies of support officers etc for both parties.
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours and appropriate behaviour strategies.

4. Evaluation:

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

BREACH OF POLICY

The school will take disciplinary action if bullying including cyber bullying is identified.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS & RELATED DONBURN POLICIES

NIL / details.

REFERENCES

Department of Education & Training, School Policy and Advisory Guide, *Bullying Policy*, Government of Australia. Available from: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/bullying.aspx [12 June 2015].

Department of Education & Training, School Policy and Advisory Guide, *Cyber Teach Tool Kit - Safe and Responsible use of Digital Technologies*, Government of Australia. Available from: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/cyberteach.aspx [12 June 2015]

DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Cyber Bullying	Any direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.
ICT	Information Computer Technology

APPROVAL

Contact Person:	Policy Owner:
Kevin Sertori	Donburn Primary School Council, Education Sub Committee

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Unknown	New document.
Aug 2014	Updated format.
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