

ST MATTHEW'S SCHOOL
NARROGIN



CYBER BULLYING
POLICY

VISION STATEMENT

St Matthew's School enables children to strive to reach their full potential, as God intends, by fostering concern for self, others, the environment and their relationship with God.

Developed 2014
Review 2015



St Matthew's School

Cyber Bullying Policy

RATIONALE

At St Matthew's School we believe that all students have the right to an education in an environment where they feel safe and happy. We also believe that parents have the right to know that their child is going to be able to learn and enjoy their school life without the threat of bullying. This policy is a proactive initiative to make our school free from any form of cyber bullying.

AIM

Our aim is to deal with incidents of cyber bullying in a firm, positive, caring and supportive manner. Intervention may occur in the following ways:

1. A student may voluntarily approach a teacher or staff member for assistance as they have become aware of or have engaged in cyber bullying or related behaviour.
2. A student may be identified as needing help as a result of involvement in an incident requiring disciplinary action.
3. School staff may approach the Leadership Team or staff member about concerns relating to students engaging in or being subject of cyber bullying.

DEFINING CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying is a form of bullying using texts or images posted on personal and public websites or sent by mobile phones, electronic devices or email. Depending on the nature of the material posted or transmitted people who engage in cyber bullying may commit criminal offences. Cyber stalking involves a person following or watching another person in his or her home, work or places of recreation. This involves harassing another person by email or other electronic device in a frequent and intrusive manner. Stalking is generally for the purpose of inducing fear or intimidation.

1. Cyber bullying can be carried out through an internet service such as:

- Email
 - Sending harassing, threatening and / or menacing messages to targets either directly, anonymously or using another person's address or alias.
- Chat room / bash boards
 - Can allow students to anonymously write anything (true or untrue) creating and adding cruel entries in a worldwide forum.
- Websites / Social Networking sites
 - Mocking, teasing and harassing: voting on line for the 'ugliest' or 'fattest' etc. and posting visuals that can be altered (this can include sexually explicit material).
- Instant messaging
 - Masquerading as another by using their mobile phone or computer to send harassing or threatening messages.
- Social networking websites such as Bebo, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace , YouTube or similar.
 - Masquerading as another by using their mobile phone or computer to send harassing or threatening messages.

2. Cyber-bullying can also include bullying through mobile phones by:

- Text and picture messaging
- Video clips
- Phone calls
- Flaming (repeatedly leaving negative messages)
- Harassment of students
- Excluding students
- Cyber stalking victims

3. It is important to be aware that cyber bullying can occur against;

- Students at the school or other schools
- Staff at the school or other schools
- The school itself

4. It is also important to be aware that cyber bullying can occur both during and after school hours.

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 the St Matthew's 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

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 e.g CHAT
- Each classroom teacher to clarify with students at the start of each year the school policy on cyber bullying and ensure that all Internet Usage Forms are explained and signed by students and parents.
- 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.
- Mobile phones brought to school by students will be highly discouraged at all times. If they are brought, they are to be placed in the class slips, which are kept in the Office until the end of the school day.
- Encourage students 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.

INTERVENTION

- Classroom teachers are primarily responsible for students in their classrooms and will seek support from the Assistant Principals or 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 Behaviour Management Policy. 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.

EXISTING LEGISLATION

School should be aware of the following offences prescribed by the Summary Offences Act in respect of Cyber bullying. Criminal offences include;

- 'Production, dissemination or possession of child pornography' or 'Publishing child pornography and indecent articles' (Section 91H of the *Crimes Act 1900*).
- Crimes under the Federal *Cybercrime Act 2001* including unauthorised access to, or modification of, restricted data.
- Specific sections of the Crimes Act relating to assault.

APPENDIX 1

ST MATTHEW'S SCHOOL RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT OF CYBERBULLYING

(Where police reporting is not required or police have decided to take no action)

SUGGESTED SEQUENCED CHECKLIST

1. Initial awareness of situation

How / by whom were you first made aware of the situation? _____

(This information has been documented by the person)

2. Initial interview(s)

The student(s) involved have been interviewed.

Name(s) of student(s) _____

Names of staff / parents present at interviews

(All interviews have been documented)

4. Supporting evidence

Were any other students interviewed? Yes / No

Name(s) of student(s) (if applicable) _____

Names of staff / parents present at interviews (if applicable) _____

(The interviews have been documented, if applicable)

Were any computer / phone searches carried out? Yes/No

If so, was any evidence of cyber bullying found? Yes/No

Give details, if applicable _____

Appropriate action has been taken regarding any cyber bullying that was found.

Was any other evidence collected? Yes/No

If so, give details _____

5. Action taken - Parents

Parents/guardians have been contacted. Yes/No Time/Date: _____

An appointment has been made. Yes/No Time/Date: _____

Parents/guardians have been interviewed. Yes/No Time/Date: _____

(The interviews have been documented)

6. Action taken - Police

Were police informed? Yes/No Time/Date: _____

Did police interview the student(s)? Yes/No Time/Date: _____ Who was present at the interview(s), if applicable? _____

Give any other relevant details _____

Were any charges laid? Yes/No

If so, give details. _____

7. Action taken – Catholic Education Office

Has the Regional Consultant been informed? Yes/No Time/Date: _____

Action taken by CEO: _____

8. Action taken – Media

Were the Media involved as a result of the incident? Yes/No Time/Date: _____

Has the CEO Communications Unit been contacted? Yes/No Time/Date: _____

9. Resolution

Student name: _____

Date: _____

No disciplinary action is required for this student.

or

The student is to:

receive counselling – when from whom: _____

be given a school based penalty (specify): _____

be placed on a contract (details): _____

be suspended (length & type of suspension): _____

be expelled (details): _____

(Note: more than one of the above may apply.)

Principal Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Witness Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Parent Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____