

# BEECHWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL



No. 1560

Believe - Persist - Succeed

## Beechworth Primary School

### Cyber Bullying Policy

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#### **Purpose**

Bullying in any form is unacceptable. Bullying that is carried out through an internet service, such as email, chat room, discussion group, instant messaging, social media 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.

#### **Policy statement**

##### **Whole school engagement**

That everyone within the school community (students, teachers and parents) will be alert to signs and evidence of cyber bullying and have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.

##### **Definitions**

A person is bullied when one or more people expose them regularly and over time to negative or harmful actions. Bullies are people who deliberately and intentionally set out to intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt others repeatedly. People who use the internet, email, intranet, phones or similar technologies a school to bully others are cyber bullies and are breaking the law.

#### **Responsibilities**

Teachers, students, parents 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) Reviewing and updating existing policies and practices regularly
- 3) Making the reporting of cyber bullying easy for students
- 4) Promoting the positive use of technology
- 5) Evaluating the impact of prevention activities

# **Guidelines**

## **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.
- School community awareness about 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.
- The use of Department of Education Victoria internet to eliminate outside traffic and unsafe websites and communication methods.
- The use of mobile phones by students at school is prohibited.
- The curriculum to include clear anti-bullying messages and strategies.
- Posting the Office of Children's eSafety Commissioner website, links, procedures and advice to parents in the 1<sup>st</sup> newsletter every school year.

## **Early Intervention**

- Encourage children to report cyber bullying incidents that have happened at school or involve the school to their classroom teacher or ICT co-ordinator.
- Encourage staff to report cyber bullying incidents involving themselves or others to the principal.
- Classroom teachers and principal reminding students and staff on a regular basis to report incidents of cyber bullying.
- Monitoring of online traffic by ICT Technician to identify potential problems.
- Parents encouraged to contact the classroom teacher or principal if they become aware of a cyber bullying problem that occurred at school or involves the school.
- Use the Bully Stoppers procedure as a supporting document.  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/bullystoppers/stepbystepconcernstudent.pdf>

## **Intervention**

- 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 on compass.
- Parents of those involved will be contacted.
- Students and staff identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered support strategies.
- If student cyber bullying persists, parents will be contacted and consequences implemented consistent with the school's Student Code of Conduct and Building Positive Behaviours System.

## **Post Violation**

- Consequences for students will be individually based and may involve:-
  - Behaviour Alert Card
  - exclusion from class or yard.
  - school suspension.
  - ongoing student support group meetings for both victim and bully.
- Possible report to be made to police dependent on the severity.
- Ongoing monitoring and tracking of identified cyber bullies.
- Rewards for positive behaviour and interactions.

## **Supporting Parents**

In the event that the cyber bullying incident or incidents did not happen at school or are not school related; parents are encouraged to report it to the Office of Children's eSafety Commissioner.

<https://esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting/cyberbullying-complaints/i-want-to-report-cyberbullying>

The eSafety Commissioner provides parents with a list of documents/evidence required for a report to be made:

<https://esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting/cyberbullying-complaints/collecting-information>

The website is able to provide helpful resources on how to report cyber bullying on specific social media sites:

<https://esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting/cyberbullying-complaints/social-media-services-safety-centres>

### **Relevant accountability documents**

- This policy is to be read in conjunction with the school's Student Engagement Guidelines, and Bullying Prevention Policy and DET guidelines found at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/prinprevent.aspx>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/bullying.aspx>

### **Related school policies**

- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- Mobile Phone and Digital Technologies Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- ICT Acceptable Usage Policy and Agreement

### **Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed after three years as a part of our policy review cycle.

**Endorsed by school council:**

**Date: 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2017**

**Next review date: 2020**