

Mornington Special Developmental School

CYBER-BULLYING POLICY

Rationale:

A safe and respectful environment within a school community is necessary for students to learn and achieve to their best ability. Cyber-bullying by individuals in the school community directed toward another school student or school staff member is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe and respectful environment.

The Department of Education and Training prohibits acts of cyber-bullying by school students by the use of any school owned, operated, and supervised technologies. The Principal may report allegations of cyber-bullying to law enforcement authorities.

Definitions:

"Cyber-Bullying" is the use of electronic information and communication devices, and includes but is not be limited to, e-mail messages, instant messaging, text messaging, cellular telephone communications, internet blogs, internet chat rooms, internet postings, and defamatory websites, that:

- Deliberately threatens, harasses or intimidates an individual or group of individuals; or
- Places an individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual or damage to the individual's property; or
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

"School owned, operated, or supervised technologies" is any computer, networking system, electronic equipment, or any other equipment or device that is owned, leased, operated, or under the control or supervision of the school including iPad, iPad mini, iPod Touch, iPhone.

Implementation:

Education and Positive Behaviour Strategies to Prevent Cyber Bullying

Cyber Safety will form an essential element of our school's curriculum and where appropriate, students will be made aware of cyber-bullying, its impact on others, how to avoid and respond to cyber-bullying, and the legal implications and consequences of cyber-bullying.

Our school will also provide information for parents and families.

Reporting Procedure and Investigation

Any student or school staff member who believes he/she has or is being subjected to cyber-bullying, as well as any person who has reason to believe a student or school staff member has knowledge or reason to believe another student or school staff member is being subjected to or has been subjected to cyber-bullying shall immediately make a report to the Principal.

The Principal will investigate all reports of such conduct. If the investigation results indicate cyber-bullying was not committed, the Principal will inform the affected parties of the investigation results. In the event the investigation results indicate cyber-bullying was committed by a school student on school grounds and/or using school technologies, the student will be subjected to appropriate discipline.

In the event the investigation results indicate cyber-bullying was committed by a school student using non-school technologies away from school grounds, the Principal may report the investigation results to local law enforcement. In addition, school authorities have the right to impose a consequence on a student for conduct away from school grounds, including on a school bus or at a school-sponsored function. This authority shall be exercised only when it is reasonably necessary for the student's physical or emotional safety, security, and well-being or for reasons relating to the safety, security, and well-being of other students, staff, or school grounds.

Discipline and Consequences

Some acts of cyber-bullying may be isolated incidents requiring the school to respond appropriately to the individual committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious or part of a larger pattern of cyber-bullying that they require a response either at the classroom, whole school, or Department level or by law enforcement officials.

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for students who commit an act of cyber-bullying will include restorative practices interventions and curtailment of network access privileges for first time and minor offences and suspension or expulsion for more serious offences.

Reprisal or Retaliation Prohibited

The school prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of cyber-bullying. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Principal after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, in accordance with case law, and Departmental policies and procedures.

Consequences for False Accusation

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student found to have falsely accused another of an act of cyber-bullying range from positive behavioural interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a school employee found to have falsely accused another of an act of cyber-bullying shall be disciplined in accordance with Departmental policies and procedures.

Evaluation:

This policy was last ratified by School Council on 12-9-19

School Council President V. Beckett
Valerie Beckett

Principal D Newport
David Newport

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy is scheduled for review on 12/01/21