



St Agnes' Primary School Matraville

Cyber Safety Policy

2011

At St Agnes' we believe:

It is necessary to ensure that all our students have knowledge on how to be safe when using the internet and other technology.

That children need to understand what cyber bullying entails and how they can protect themselves from incidence of cyber bullying.

That negative cyber behaviour needs to be dealt with in a firm, positive, caring and supportive manner.

1. What is cyber bullying?

Cyber bullying can include, but is not limited to, the items listed below. This list outlines the types of cyber behaviour that is not consistent with the schools *Cyber Safety Use Agreement Form*

- Email- sending harassing, threatening and/or menacing messages to targets either directly, anonymously or using another person's address or alias.
 - Instant messaging- (systems include MSN Messenger, Yahoo and Bebo) Harassing and heated arguments (referred to as flaming) can occur and include obscene language in private chat rooms.
 - Chat rooms/bash boards- (Real time communication facilities) Can allow students to anonymously write anything (true or untrue) creating and adding cruel entries in a world wide forum.
 - Short Text Messages (SMS)- masquerading as another by using their mobile phone or computer to send harassing or threatening messages.
 - Websites/Social Networking sites- mocking, teasing and harassing; voting online for the "ugliest" or "fattest" etc ad posting visuals that can be altered (this can include sexually explicit material).
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- Cyberbullying that is alleged to have occurred inside or outside of the school, where it **disrupts school life or significantly breaks down relationships** between members of the school community, should be taken seriously and responded to as thoroughly as possible.
 - Investigation of complaints should be undertaken in a pre-planned manner ensuring **procedural fairness** has been considered.
 - Research indicates that it is important not to immediately assume that the student posting the cyber material is the originator of the bullying problem.

St Agnes' Aims to:

Protect the health and safety both of the student(s) and of the whole school community.

Therefore:

School rules prohibit the inappropriate and threatening use of email, internet and mobile phone facilities both in the school, at any school function and away from school where the behaviour seriously impacts on other students or staff at the school.

If any of these rules are broken, investigation and possible disciplinary action will be undertaken. A range of actions are available, depending on individual circumstances.

These include:

- No disciplinary action required
- Student(s) put on a contract
- Student (s) required to undergo counselling
- Detention

Intervention may occur in the following ways:

- A student may voluntarily approach a teacher for assistance as they have become aware of or have engaged in cyber bullying or related behaviour.
- A student may be identified as needing help as a result of involvement in an incident requiring disciplinary action.
- School staff need to inform the school executive about concerns relating to students engaging in or being subject of cyber bullying.
- Any special programs which the school provides, e.g. the School's Anti Bullying, Cyber safety Program, Peer Support should be referred to.

Cyber Safety Action Flow Chart

Gather information: Principal/Assistant Principal

Zero Tolerance

Intervention (as appropriate)

Low Level

Teacher Discretion

Dealt with 1:1 (Teacher/Child/Principal or AP)

High Level

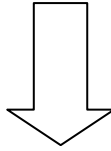
Parents Notified

Ongoing Observations by Teacher

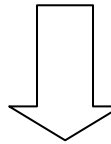
If Continuing Parents Notified

An initial interview of students by a Principal and teachers should do the following

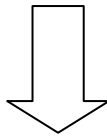
Clarify the purpose of the interview i.e. counselling or disciplinary.



Allow time for the planning and conducting of each interview with students involved.



If there is only a suspicion and there is no hard evidence, it may be preferable to counsel the student. Professional judgment and knowledge of the student needs to be used here.



If there is hard evidence of actual threatening of life, criminal activity or sexual assault the police must be called. In this case, the initial interview becomes disciplinary rather than counselling.

- After student interviews have taken place, students should be given time to talk to their parents about what has happened before the parents are interviewed.
- Even when the police are involved, it may be possible to request that they simply caution the students rather than lay charges. This depends, of course, on the seriousness of the offence, and also on the quality of the relationship between the school and the local police.

When to Involve Parents

- Most commonly parents or other students who have observed the cyber behaviour have been the ones to bring the incident of cyberbullying to the attention of the school in the first instance.
- Before contacting the parents of a student suspected of cyberbullying, it is important to get the **facts** clear.
- If there are reasonable grounds to suspect a student is involved in an incident involving Cyberbullying the parents will be informed.

APPENDIX A

RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT OF CYBERBULLYING

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

SUGGESTED SEQUENCED CHECKLIST

(Tick each item as it is completed.)

1. Initial awareness of situation

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

.....
.....

This has been documented.

2. Initial interview(s)

The student(s) involved have been interviewed.

Name(s) of student(s)

.....
.....
.....
.....

Names of staff / parents present at interviews

.....
.....

The interviews have been documented.

3. 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 cyberbullying found? Yes/No
Give details, if applicable

.....
Appropriate action has been taken regarding any cyberbullying that was found.
Was any other evidence collected? Yes/No
If so, give details.

.....
4. Action taken – Parents

_ See When to involve parents.
Parents/guardians have been contacted.
An appointment has been made.
Parents/guardians have been interviewed.
The interviews have been documented.

5. Action taken – Police

_ See When to involve police / interview with police.
Were police informed? Yes/No
Did police interview the student(s)? Yes/No
Who was present at the interview(s), if applicable?.....

.....
Give any other relevant details

.....
Were any charges laid? Yes/No

If so, give details.

.....
6. Action taken – CEO

_ See When to involve CEO Regional Consultant.
Has the Regional Consultant been informed? Yes/No

7. Action taken – Media

_ See Managing the Media.
Were the Media involved as a result of the incident? Yes/No

Has the CEO Communications Unit been contacted? Yes/No

8. Resolution (complete a separate checklist for each student)

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_ See CEO policy on Suspension and Expulsion of Students pp15-20 Pastoral Care Guidelines for Catholic Schools

Student name:

Date:

No disciplinary action is required for this student.

or

The student is to:

- ~ receive counselling
- ~ be given a school-based penalty - specify
- ~ be placed on a contract - give details
- ~ be suspended - state length of suspension
- ~ be transferred to another school - specify
- ~ be expelled

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

Archdiocese of Sydney Dealing with Cyberbullying Operational Draft Nov 2007

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES

1. Australian Communications and Media Authority Tool Kit
<http://toolkit.acma.gov.au/>
2. Suggested information PowerPoint – Cyberbullying. As kindly provided by Freeman Catholic College. Available at Curriculum Online/CEO Documents/Support Documents.
3. Bullying No Way – an anti-bullying website and resources developed created by Australia's educational communities. <http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/>
4. NetAlert - The Australian Government initiative for the support of cybersafety. <http://www.netalert.net.au/>
5. American research information – <http://www.cyberbullying.us/research.php>
6. Stop Bullying Before it Starts – American article directed at parent prevention. http://www.ncpc.org/resources/enhancementassets/ncpc_cms/cyberbullying-pdf
7. The Internet Safety Group of New Zealand – contains a useful school resources kit. <http://www.cybersafety.org.nz/kit/index.html>
8. NSW Department of Education Anti-Bullying programs in Schools – <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/antibullying/programs.html>
9. NSW Department of Education Anti-bullying Plan for Schools – This is a mandatory requirement in all DET schools. I https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_serv/discipline/anti_bully/print.shtml
- 10 Willard, N., *Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats; Effectively Managing Internet Use Risks in Schools* (2007). <http://csriu.org> and <http>