



PENLEIGH AND ESSENDON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Definition of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying, harassment, victimization or vilification that makes use of the diverse range of information and communication technology.

Cyberbullying can be carried out through Information Communication Technology (ICT) equipment or devices, including but not limited to, computers, storage devices (such as USB and flash memory device, CDs, DVDs, floppy disks, iPods, MP3 players), cameras (such as video, digital, webcams), all types of mobile phones, video and audio players and receivers (such as portable CD and DVD players), gaming consoles and any other, similar technologies as they come into use.

Internet Services (such as emails, chat rooms, blogs, discussion groups or instant messaging) and phone services (such as voice calls, video, short messaging service (SMS) or the taking and/or sending of digital images) can be vehicles for cyberbullying.

Establish Safe Practice

Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School is committed to cyber-safety, the safe and responsible use of communication technology. The school promotes appropriate use of communication technology by means of the following strategies:

- Enforcement of Network Rules
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Staff and student guidelines for use of communication technology within the classroom
- Blocking, when appropriate, of harmful internet sites

Cyberbullying is dealt with according to Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School's Mutual Respect Policy and the Network Rules. Cyberbullying is considered inappropriate behaviour.

Examples of Cyberbullying

- Sending threatening, offensive or insulting messages or images to an individual or a group using an internet or phone service
- Taking, posting or sending inappropriate images with a digital camera or mobile phone
- Transmitting personal, embarrassing or confidential information about a person or their family using an internet or phone service
- Setting up, or contributing to, derogatory websites or blogs
- Impersonating or pretending to be someone else and sending messages that negatively affect that person

Advice for students and parents

Cyberbullying can have traumatic effects on students and it can occur during or outside of school time. Students who are targeted in this way often feel powerless and isolated.

Listed below are some strategies to help protect students from cyberbullying.

Strategies for Students

- Talk to a parent, friend, school counselor or teacher about the cyberbullying
- Keep and save as evidence any bullying emails, text messages or images
- Do not reply to bullying or threatening text messages or emails - do not engage in any communication with the sender(s) as this could make matters worse
- Do not give out your personal details online - if you are in a chatroom, watch what you say about where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc.
- Remember the tone and meaning of written messages can be misinterpreted. Check that your messages are clear and respectful
- Using blocking software to block instate messages from certain people or use mail filters to block emails from specific email addresses
- Remember that sending/forwarding abusive or threatening messages is inappropriate and could be deemed unlawful under State and/or Federal legislation depending on the circumstances.

Strategies for Parents

There are a number of things you can do to help ensure your children stay safe when using internet or phone services:

- Talk to your child about bullying and harassment
- Educate your child about Internet safety and the proper etiquette when using Internet or phone services
- Keep your eyes out for behavioural changes that may indicate your child is being bullied, harassed, victimized or vilified as you may be able to intervene
- Encourage your child to report any incidents of cyberbullying to you
- Stay involved - have the home computer in a public space and monitor your child's Internet habits
- Make sure your home computer is protected with security software such as virus protectors, content filters, monitoring programs and firewalls

Strategies for Staff

Teachers must deal with cyberbullying according to Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School's Mutual Respect Policy.

Teaching strategies for Internet safety

Students need to develop safe and effective resource discovery skills. These include skills that enable students to discover and retrieve reliable and relevant information, and at the same time discern and deal with inappropriate content.

A range of strategies can be used by teachers to minimize the risks associated with accessing the Internet using a computer or another enabled device and in doing so develop in students an understanding of safe and responsible action.

Teachers should use the following strategies when required.

Resource Discovery

Students need to develop safe and effective resource discovery skills. These include skills that enable students to discover and retrieve reliable and relevant information, as well as to discern and deal with inappropriate content.

At junior levels, these skills are supported by all or some of the following strategies:

- Identify reliable websites for students to explore
- Ensure that students use approved, educational search engines
- Explain and demonstrate techniques of searching using selected keywords
- Assist students to browse a website to distinguish relevant from irrelevant material
- Use approved safety procedures for dealing with inappropriate content such as using the back button, exiting the browser, clicking home or turning off the monitor
- Prepare students to make judgements about the credibility of Internet content based on knowledge of author, publisher and domain extension, for example com.au, edu.au, org.au, gov.au
- Discuss and explain the importance of safe search engines with students, and model how to use them
- Use reporting and support protocols for dealing with confronting or unsuitable content

At a secondary level:

- Review skills introduced in the junior schools
- Encourage exploration of a range of safe and vetted websites
- Demonstrate how to critically evaluate websites that are sexually exploitative or use racial vilification, or have extreme political views.

Personal information and privacy

While identity information can be used for legitimate purposes, it can also be used for dishonest purposes. Issues to do with identity protection revolve mainly around web authoring and website requests for such information.

At a primary level:

- Discuss the benefits and risks of personal web publishing
- Explain school policy in language that is age and capacity appropriate
- Encourage students to develop web pages that conform to school policy
- Provide models of safe student web pages
- Alert students to the dangers of posting inappropriate content such as sexist, violent or hateful materials
- Explain that electronic communication should not be used to harass or bully others

At secondary level:

- Review skills introduced in the junior schools
- Explain the dangers of posting identity information
- Stress that some websites ask for personal identity information for illegitimate reasons
- Advise students to generally avoid completing online forms that ask for identity details, and/or to seek advice from teachers or parents if it seems to be a reputable company or organization
- Encourage students to seek advice from a teacher, parent or carer if they are not sure about the credibility of the organization and the information sought

Communication and collaboration

Students should be made aware of the expectations of the school and their community regarding their own use of email.

- Familiarise students with the school's acceptable use policy
- Explain that it is not acceptable to send an email that makes others feel uncomfortable or that is defamatory
- Teach the conventions of 'netiquette' for using email.

Students need to know how to deal with emails with content that involves bullying or harassment, and the effect it can have on recipients.

- Advise students to notify a teacher, parent or carer if the sender is a known bully, or if the sender has sent unpleasant or annoying messages before
- Instruct students not to open the email if the sender's name is not familiar or not to click on links in such emails
- Look at the message and talk to the student about these issues, emphasizing that it is not the recipient's fault
- Deal with all instances of bullying in the context of the school's Mutual Respect Policy

Students need to be familiar with appropriate chat room behaviours and the protocols that govern them.

- Emphasise 'stranger danger'. Stress that the people in chat rooms may not be whom they seem, and that they may imitate the language of students ('online grooming') rather than be students
- Teach chat protocols in monitored or moderated chat rooms
- Promote 'netiquette' focused on being polite and considerate
- Emphasise the importance of not exchanging personal information or photographs
- Warn students not to meet someone from a chat room face to face unless in the company of an adult in a public place