



CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is commonly defined as the use of information and communication technologies to support repeated and deliberate hostile behaviour intended to harm others.

It is sometimes used as an extension to other forms of bullying, and can result in the target of bullying experiencing social, psychological and academic difficulties.

Is it a school problem?

The *Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy* makes plain “the school discipline policy may apply outside of school hours and off school premises where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students”. The *Suspension and Expulsion of School Students – Procedures* provides that behaviour that may warrant suspension includes “hostile behaviour directed towards students, members of staff or other persons including verbal abuse and abuse transmitted electronically such as by email or SMS text message at school and home”.

Don't blame the technology!

Technology has a positive role in the lives of children and young people. However, technology is also open to misuse and has some risks associated with its use. It is embedded in all aspects of life, including teaching and learning

Cyberbullying: What will Undercliffe Public School do?

- Maintain a school climate where bullying is less likely to take place and students feel comfortable reporting cyberbullying. Implement a sustained curriculum approach through regular classroom discussion and learning sequences to address:
 - appropriate use of technology (Digital Citizenship)
 - bullying (including cyberbullying issues)
- Communicate this policy with all areas of the school community, and provide access to educational sessions addressing:
 - use of technology
 - preventing, reporting and managing bullying and cyber bullying.
- Develop individual and /or group programs for those students in need of additional support with the development of communication, social and relationship skills, or digital citizenship.
- Where incidents of cyberbullying are impacting on the learning of any student, Cardiff Public School will respond to these incidents, even if they occur out of school hours or on private equipment. The appropriate response will depend on the circumstances of the cyberbullying. Students will be encouraged to keep hard copies of cyberbullying evidence.
- Contact the Police and the School Safety and Response Unit where incidents of cyberbullying include possible criminal behaviour.
- Keep accurate records of incidents and their management.
- Survey students regularly to monitor bullying and cyberbullying rates.
- Ensure all members of the school community including casual staff are familiar with the school's anti-bullying plan.
- Promote anti-bullying messages throughout the school community.

Undercliffe Public School will provide support to:

- any student who is experiencing bullying
- any student with bullying behaviours
- any bystanders.

School executives and Learning Support Teams will decide on which intervention, or combination of interventions, is appropriate to each individual circumstance of cyberbullying.

Possible interventions

Note: No method of addressing bullying has been reported as 100% effective.

- **Bystander Training** This intervention is a proactive strategy that trains bystander students to behave in a supportive way to students who are being bullied, to intervene where feasible or to report the incident to a teacher.
- **Buddy systems** help to promote friendship and support between older and younger peers through regular collaboration between their classes, which fosters a sense of whole-school community.
- **Mediation** The school will assist the students involved in incidents of bullying to resolve their differences and help them find a peaceful win-win solution or compromise. Mediation is a suitable intervention only when the imbalance of power between the students involved is not great and when each party has something to gain and to concede. It would always be voluntary and should never be used in cases of major disputes, serious bullying or assault.
- **Restorative practice** Stimulating genuine remorse; helping the student displaying bullying take steps to restore damaged relationships.
- **Strengthening the victim or assertiveness training** Help and coach students to confront a student displaying bullying behavior assertively; to stand firm and discourage the bullying behaviour through calm and controlled language to redress the balance of perceived power. This intervention would never be the only response to bullying incidents. The behaviour of the student displaying bullying must also be addressed and support should be provided to any bystanders.
- **Traditional disciplinary approach** Setting out clear behaviour standards and using disciplinary consequences to prevent and deter the student from repeating their behaviour; punishment could include detention, loss of privileges, chores to be undertaken and even suspension.
- **Parents** will be informed of any incidents of cyberbullying involving their children and they will be expected to participate in the consequent intervention and resolution.

What will teachers do?

- Know their students.
- Won't ignore or discount a student's situation by suggesting they ignore it or that it will stop on its own.
- Know the school's anti-bullying policies and reporting structures and establish an understanding of the existing evidence based approaches to dealing with cyber bullying.
- Develop an understanding of the role of bystanders in cyber space. Use the curriculum to support an investigation into cyber bullying
- Adopt a critical literacy perspective to question and challenge attitudes, values and beliefs that lie beneath the surface.

Interventions need to be matched to the particular incident of bullying. More than one intervention may need to be implemented. Not all hurtful behaviours are cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying may involve varying levels of severity, ranging from occasional messages to frequently repeated and highly disturbing threats to a person's life. Serious threats will be reported to the Police and the School Safety and Response Unit.

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