

## **1. Rationale:**

A person is bullied when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance repeatedly. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons. People who use the internet, email, intranets, phones, social networks or similar technologies to bully others are cyber bullies.

Bullying, in or out of school, in any form is unacceptable. Bullying that is carried out through an internet service, such as email, chat room, discussion group or instant messaging or through mobile phone technologies such as short messaging service (SMS) is cyber bullying. Cyber bullying can be very destructive and will not be tolerated at any level and serious consequences, including suspension and expulsion, exist for students who choose to bully others.

## **2. Aims:**

- To reinforce within the school community what cyber bullying is and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- To set up a system where students and parents feel comfortable reporting any incidents of cyber bullying.
- To alert everyone within the school community to the signs and evidence of cyber bullying and that they have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as a bystander or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of cyber bullying are investigated appropriately, and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator and their families.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation always.
- To provide guidance and strategies to students who may be experiencing cyber bullying from sources outside of school.

## **3. Implementation:**

Parents, teachers, students and the community are to be made aware of types of cyber bullying, and its criminal and hurtful ramifications.

### **The school will adopt the following approach to cyber bullying:**

#### **3.1 Primary Prevention:**

- Professional development for staff relating to all forms of bullying including cyber bullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Teachers will be trained in cyber safety. Cyber safety awareness programs will be provided for parents and cyber safety will form part of each child's Digital Technology curriculum.
- Educate the school community about the seriousness of cyber bullying, its impact on those being bullied, how cyber-bullying occurs and consequences of cyber bullying.
- The community will be encouraged to be aware and provide input relating to cyber bullying, its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- The provision of programs that promote inclusiveness, resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving will form an integral part of our curriculum. Assertiveness training and bystander training that builds skills in children to report and/or challenge cyber bullying will be central to our curriculum.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify with students at the start of each year the school policy on cyber-bullying in accordance with the school's Acceptable Use agreement.
- Greenvale Primary School's Acceptable Use agreement must be signed and returned to the classroom teacher.
- All school-based technology to be protected with computer and network passwords. Processes to be put in place to ensure tracking of student activity on the school's computer equipment and network. Firewalls to be installed to eliminate outside traffic into the school's network and intranet.

- The curriculum to include cyber safety programs, messages and strategies obtained from the Office of the Children’s eSafety Commissioner.

**3.2 Intervention:**

- Once identified, each bully, victim and bystanders will be interviewed, and all incidents or allegations of cyber bullying will be fully investigated and documented. If necessary, police and other relevant agencies will be involved to further investigate outside perpetrators.
- The school will reinforce with students the importance of appropriately reporting incidents of cyber bullying involving themselves or others and ensure that staff respond appropriately and proportionally to each allegation consistent with the school’s Student Code of Conduct, including reporting and recording of the incident in Grade Expert.
- Parents of all parties involved will be contacted if their child is alleged to have behaved inappropriately or bullied someone else online.
- Consequences for cyber bullying may include loss of privileges to access and use school and personal devices for a period appropriate to the offence, suspended access to the school’s network, completing a ‘School Values Notice’, suspension, expulsion or police involvement.
- Bullies, victims and families will be offered counselling and support.

**3.3 Post Violation:**

- It is important that appropriate strategies are put in place after the incident has been resolved for all students involved. Appropriate strategies may include:
  - Ongoing monitoring of students involved including network traffic.
  - Identification of an agreed key staff member for each student involved.
  - Follow-up meetings regarding each child’s management strategy.
  - Ongoing communication with parents.
  - Counselling from appropriate support agencies for both parties.
  - Reinforcement of positive behaviours and appropriate behaviour strategies.

**4. Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s ongoing policy and process review cycle.

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**References and Related Documents:**

- [www.esmartschools.org.au](http://www.esmartschools.org.au)
- eSmart® Smart. Schools framework
- The Alannah and Madeline Foundation
- Greenvale Primary School’s Acceptable Use Contract
- Greenvale Primary School’s Cyber Citizenship Policy
- Greenvale Primary School Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy
- Office of the Children’s eSafety Commissioner - <https://esafety.gov.au/>

*This policy was ratified by School Council in October 2022*