Introduction
This information packet outlines strategies for parents, students and teachers to identify report and deal with irresponsible cyber behaviours. It also aims to provide information on bullying, cyber bullying and cyber issues in order to create more informed community.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is repeated or ongoing verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.

Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders. Bullying can happen anywhere: at school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, between neighbours or in the workplace.

Bonnyrigg High School rejects all forms of bullying. All students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, victimisation and discrimination.

All members of the school community contribute to preventing bullying by modeling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.

Bullying, harassment, or any form of discrimination, can be unlawful because it interferes with the right of a person to feel safe and valued as a member of a community.
What is Cyber Bullying?

Cyber bullying is causing hurt via modern technologies such as the Internet and other forms of social media, and through the use of smart phones and other mobile devices. Cyber bullying is a growing problem in society. Modern technologies empower the individual, even the most unlikely of individuals, with an immense capacity to cause harm. It is also an attractive means of bullying for it can, under certain conditions, be carried out with relative anonymity.

Cyber bullying can be particularly damaging because of the capacity it has to humiliate, hurt and harm a person in front of a huge ‘audience’. A dangerous feature of cyber bullying is that it can be done quickly and easily. On an impulse, a person can create emotional havoc for another and do so before the voice of reason hints at the inappropriateness of the action. A further problem with cyber bullying is that the bully is often unaware of the extent of the harm they are causing because cyber bullying seldom occurs face-to-face. The feedback is muted by distance so that the bully is protected from an understanding of the awfulness of their behaviour.

Cyber bullying represents unlawful activity that may result in police laying charges. Cyber bullying has been linked to depression, self-harm and even suicide.
Effects of Bullying Behaviour:

Research indicates that students who are bullied are more likely than students who are not bullied to experience impaired social and emotional adjustment, poor academic achievement, anxiety, depression, poorer physical health, higher absenteeism, increased loneliness and low self-esteem.
Research also shows that students repeatedly bullying others were likely to have the same symptoms as the students experiencing the abuse. The students bullying were just as likely to have elevated levels of anxiety, to be disconnected from school and to have higher levels of depression as the students who were being bullied (Prof Donna Cross).

Examples of Cyber bullying:

- Sending hateful or threatening comments or pictures via mobile phone or the Internet and by social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook.
- Using modern technologies to engage in the social exclusion of someone and in hate group recruitment.
- Posting rude, explicit or embarrassing messages or pictures about someone on the Net. This constitutes sexual harassment and will be reported to the police.
- Stealing someone’s identity in order to harm them in some way.
- Putting pressure on a person to send revealing or compromising pictures of themselves.
- Covertly filming, recording or taking a picture of someone and posting the images on the Net to cause hurt.
- ‘Outing’ and disseminating confidential information about someone.
- ‘Flaming’ and multi-messaging to clog up a person’s electronic system and to cause them distress.
- Using aliases and pseudonyms in chat rooms and on social networking sites in order to harass and upset.
- Engaging in cyber-stalking and the invading of privacy.
- Referring to your school in a negative or disparaging way on the Net, including ‘liking’ or commenting on inappropriate materials.
Sexting

Another expression of cyber bullying is sexting. Sexting is taking sexually explicit photos and making them available for others to see via a carriage service such as mobile phone or computer.

Sending explicit images of anyone, including yourself, is a crime if you are under the age of 18 years. If the person in the picture is under 16 years, it can be a very serious crime resulting in charges of paedophilia.

Cyber anonymity

Students need to remember that something sent electronically can never be entirely removed even with a press of the ‘delete’ button. The image may emerge at any stage in their future life and lead to serious consequences. Using pseudonyms, passwords and avatars does not protect the identity of a cyber-bully. Technologies exist to identify those who misuse modern technologies to harm others. If students are current users of ask.fm they are required to ensure the privacy settings are enabled to STOP anonymous comments or posts.
How does Bonnyrigg High School discourage Cyber Bullying?

All forms of bullying and harassment are against the Bonnyrigg High School Core School Values:

Connections, Honesty, Empathy, Excellence and Respect

Bonnyrigg High School’s Core Values Policy is derived from the entire school community: students, staff (teaching and non-teaching), parents, and community members. These core values align with the nine values for Australian schooling and are intrinsic to all that Bonnyrigg High School does, including dealing with and preventing bullying.

Bonnyrigg High School believes that embracing these core values and integrating them into all aspects of schooling will create a positive school ethos and help to prevent bullying and harassment.

Bonnyrigg High School is committed to providing an educational environment in which students feel valued and secure.
## Bonnyrigg High School Cyber Responsibility Policy

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Bonnyrigg High School believes:
- Being a responsible Cyber citizen aligns with the school’s core values. The whole school community is entitled to a safe Cyber environment.
- Technology presents new and unique challenges for students, which requires an appropriate whole school response.
- Inappropriate or irresponsible Cyber behaviours will not be tolerated or accepted.

### POLICY

It is the obligation of each member of the school community to be a responsible Cyber citizen.
- BHS will foster a culture of positive Cyber behaviour.
- BHS will provide appropriate educational opportunities for all members of the school community as to what constitutes appropriate Cyber behaviour.
- BHS will take a proactive stance towards irresponsible Cyber behaviour.
- BHS will ensure that any complaints are taken seriously and appropriate actions are taken in accordance to the Anti-Bullying Plan and Department of Education and Communities policies and procedures.

### OUTCOMES

BHS will create a safe and inclusive online environment.
- The school community will have an awareness of the permanence of the digital thumbprint.
- The community of BHS will be responsible Cyber citizens.
- There are effective support mechanisms in place for community members affected by, or enacting, irresponsible Cyber behaviour.
The Department of Education and Communities  Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy

The Department of Education and Communities makes plain that “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”.

Irresponsible cyber behaviours will be dealt with by the school accordingly.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and Cyber Conduct

Bonnyrigg High School operates a BYOD system within the school. It is expected that all students who participate in this system conduct themselves in appropriate, respectful and socially conscious way at all times.

The BYOD policy and charter is accessible for reading via the school website.

What should students do if they feel they are being bullied?

1. Recognise you have the right to feel safe and to operate in an environment free of bullying.
2. Inform the bullies that you want this to stop in a polite yet firm manner.
3. Tell a responsible adult and a teacher about the bullying.
4. Evaluate the situation. If it does not improve, seek further help.

If a student witnesses bullying, it is the responsibility of the student to report it to a teacher immediately. If students discover materials on the internet that constitute cyber bullying, or disparages and undermines the school, students or staff in any way they must report it to a teacher immediately.

“There is no use in knowing something if you’re not going to do something about it”
-Jessica, Year 9
What can parents do?

Parents should be reassured that the bully-free environment they want for their children is also wanted by the school.

- Parents should contact the School if they become aware that their child is being bullied on (02) 9823 1184.
- Advise their child that if they suffer from cyber bullying, to save the information and report it to the proper authorities.
- Remind children not to share personal details, passwords, security or access codes with anyone, not even their closest friends.
- Encourage open communication about issues of cyber conduct and bullying.

Further Reading:
Resources about cyber bullying can be found at:
- www.bonnyrigg-h.schools.nsw.edu.au/
- www.ncab.org.au (National Centre Against Bullying)
- www.bullyingnoway.com.au
- www.cybersmart.gov.au
- www.kidshelp.com.au

References:
- Cyber Responsibility Policy, Bonnyrigg High School
- Cyber bullying Information for Staff in Schools, Department of Education and Communities
- Anti-Bullying Policy, Dr Tim Hawkes.
- Supporting Students, Anti-Bullying, Department of Education and Communities
- Cyber bullying and the Protection of Students, Department of Education and Training
- DEC policy Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy