

# Werribee Community and Education Centre Inc Policy

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Policy name	<b>Cyber Bullying Policy</b>
Responsible person	CEO, Training Services Manager and VCAL Coordinator
Staff involved	All staff
Review dates	2012
Related documents	Codes of conduct, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure, Privacy Policy, Access and Equity Policy, DEECD cyber bullying posters and bookmarks, Federal Sex Discrimination Act (1984), Vic Equal Opportunity Act (1995), Computer Use Policy, Federal Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act (1986), Federal Racial Discrimination Act (1975), Federal Disability Discrimination Act (1992), The Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004), Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992), The Commonwealth Criminal Code Act (1995), The Commonwealth Crimes Act (1914), The Victorian Crimes Act (1958).

## **Purpose**

The internet and digital technologies are now very much a part of life and learning. While digital technologies bring with them new opportunities for learning, they also bring some risks.

Cyber bullying is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. This includes harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory personal website or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces.

Any form of cyber bullying is unacceptable at Werribee Community and Education Centre Inc (WCEC). Such behaviour is unlawful and will not be tolerated. All staff, volunteers and students have the right to an atmosphere free of cyber bullying and have the responsibility to prevent it and expose it. Cyber bullying can affect health and well being.

## **What is Cyber Bullying?**

Cyber bullying is bullying that is carried out using digital technologies such as the Internet, email, chat rooms, discussion groups, instant messaging, digital images and/ or mobile phone technologies such as short messaging service (SMS). It is used to create a risk to another person's health or safety – either psychologically or physically – or their property, reputation or social acceptance. Cyber bullying may focus on or relate to any of the following:

- Disability/impairment;
- Mental illness;

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- Physical features;
- Political belief or activity;
- Pregnancy;
- Race;
- Religious belief or activity;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation or activity;
- Personal association with someone;
- Home/family life;
- Economic status; and / or,
- Personal interests.

These behaviours can include but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate verbal suggestions;
- Jokes or innuendo aimed at an individual to embarrass and humiliate;
- Inappropriate displays, e-mails, or comments;
- Sending/display of inappropriate images;
- Offensive or inappropriate phone calls or sms;
- Applying inappropriate pressure to another person to speak or act in a particular way;
- Targeting another person with inappropriate words or actions;
- Name calling;
- Lying and Spreading rumours;
- Encouraging others to socially exclude someone; and / or,
- Damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance.

## **Responsibilities**

Any student or employee who believes they have been a victim of cyber bullying is encouraged to inform the offender that their behaviour is unacceptable and against WCEC policy. Any student or employee who has knowledge of cyber bullying occurring should inform a Coordinator or Manager as soon as possible so that action can be taken.. Any victim of cyber bullying is entitled to the support of their Manager and /or Coordinator or the Committee of Management as appropriate. Any behaviour that makes a person feel offended, threatened, scared or uncomfortable is against WCEC policy and unlawful.

## **Procedure**

All reports of cyber bullying should be treated seriously and thoroughly investigated. On completion of the investigation, the Manager and Coordinator in consultation with the CEO as required, will determine the course of action to be taken. Breaking of this policy

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will have consequences ranging from a written warning, counselling, dismissal, exit from a program and / or legal proceedings.

It should be noted that incidents of offensive or suspicious online behaviour should be reported to the Australian Communications and Media Authority or the Australian Federal Police depending on the nature of the behaviour.

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