

LAVINGTON EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL

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Dear Parents

Throughout this year students at this school have reported instances of suspected Cyberbullying. Some instances have resulted in police intervention at the instigation of the parents, while others have been dealt with by school personnel.

Cyberbullying is defined as online harassment of fellow students, harassment of students by parents of other students (this is a police matter related to child protection), teasing, using offensive names or put downs, belittling others' abilities or achievements, spreading rumours, ridiculing another's appearance (to other students including online), degrading another's race or culture, making sexually suggestive comments or gestures, making rude gestures or expressions (either face to face or online), hurtfully excluding others from groups (which includes deliberately blocking someone to hurt them by excluding them from an online group).

Instagram, Smartchat, Kik, Facebook, Line and Myspace are some of the social media sites which have been mentioned during interviews with students.

As I stated in this week's Newsletter:

If your child is enabled by you (they have a mobile phone or use yours, access to an iPod, access to an internet enabled computer) to use the internet without supervision and has for example; constructed a Facebook page, uses Kik or Lion (free text messaging apps), Instagram, Snapchat, twitter or any of the other social media websites then you may run the risk of legal action by another parent against you and your child (if they are over 10 years of age) if they are using it inappropriately.

IT IS AGAINST THE LAW FOR A CHILD UNDER 13 YEARS TO BE ACCESSING AND USING FACEBOOK. No primary aged child should be using social media unless they are supervised and you know what they are doing or saying (that is, they are sitting beside you and you can see what they are doing). The police take a very dim view of parents who say things like "My child wouldn't",.... "I know my child and they would never.....". when in fact, the child has, could and would. The police are able to trace and retrieve messages on any social network site even if they have been deleted. Please be careful and be aware of what your child is really up to on the internet.

Also, in this week's Newsletter I attached for your information a fact sheet from Beyond Blue about Cyberbullying and have attached to this letter our school Anti-Cyberbullying policy and the agreements that our students and staff will be signing in relation to social media.

I encourage you to have serious and meaningful conversations with your child about this issue. It is in you and your child's best interests to avoid being either a victim or an aggressor. When discussing

cyber issues you might like to consider speaking to your child about participating in Cyberbullying incidents even though they may not have started it or they may be trying to assist the child who has been targeted.

Our school process is as follows should a student at this school be reported as a Cyberbully. This process follows the NSW Department of Education and Communities Suspension and Expulsion Policy procedures.

Lavington East Public School Process for Dealing with Reports of Cyberbullying



If a child is issued with a Long Suspension the Principal will conduct a Risk Assessment related to the child's return to school and the child will not be re-admitted into the school until the issues identified in the risk assessment have been addressed.

The school will provide work for the student to complete while they are on suspension and the School Counsellor will be required to write a report making recommendations for the child's re-entry to school.

Parents will be required to supervise the child while they are on suspension. This means parents need to be at home (a report to DOCS may be made by any community member if it is discovered that a primary aged child is being left home alone) and may have to take days off work. The child is not to have a holiday but to reflect on their behaviour and come up with some strategies to avoid future incidences as well as completing their set work. The child may also be required to formally apologise to the victim and to work through any issues between them to enable them to co-exist in the school environment.

Please note: School Principals exchange information with both other public school Principals and Catholic and Independent school Principals. Therefore, a child who has received a Long Suspension

will have that information transferred to their next school. With a history of suspensions from school a future employer may choose not to employ your child so it is important to discuss this with them on a regular basis.

If you wish to discuss this further please contact the front office of the school on 6025 1157 to make a time to meet with me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kath Parker', written in a cursive style.

Mrs Kath Parker
Principal