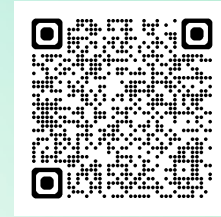




A Leader's Approach to Cyberbullying and Cyberviolence

For a more detailed presentation on this topic, visit



<https://tinyurl.com/bdzj8z2y>

CATHOLIC
PRINCIPALS'
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LEADERSHIP
IN ACTION

PRINCIPAL
ASSOCIATION
PROJECTS

REACTIVE

Follow district procedures & response guidelines for Cyberbullying/Cyberviolence when applicable.

REFLECTIVE GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How have I ensured that all students involved (those who were harmed, those who caused harm and witnesses) are supported equitably?
- Have I considered the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the students involved, especially those from under-represented or marginalized groups?
- Have I created a safe, non-judgmental space for the students to share their experiences, considering power dynamics that may exist based on identity (e.g., race, gender, social status or identity)?
- What are the known facts of the situation?
- How will I safely gather the evidence?
- Does the incident require police intervention?
- Does the incident require notification of or support from my superintendent?
- What is the potential for escalation?

DEFINITIONS

CYBERVIOLENCE: A broad term encompassing a variety of online behaviours that are intentionally harmful. This includes, but is not limited to, cyberbullying, cyberharassment, cyber sexual harassment, sextortion, luring, the sharing of intimate images and online hate speech. The definition now also acknowledges the rising concern over identity-based harassment and its pervasive impact across platforms.

CYBERBULLYING: Actions directed at an individual or group through technology, intended to cause emotional or psychological harm. This includes sending hateful or insulting messages, posting rumours or defamatory content online and disclosing personal details (e.g., sexual orientation, gender identity). The modern understanding of cyberbullying now highlights the long-term mental health effects it can have on victims, emphasizing the role of online environments in exacerbating such challenges.

ONLINE GROOMING: This occurs when an adult builds an emotional connection with a child or young person online, with the intention of gaining their trust for future sexual exploitation, abuse or trafficking. With the rise of new platforms, this behaviour now includes grooming across social media, messaging apps and online games.

SEXTORTION: The act of using intimate images or videos to manipulate someone into providing additional material or engaging in sexual acts, often under threat of public exposure.

REVENGE PORN: The distribution of intimate images or videos with the intent to seek revenge for a breakup, damage an individual's reputation or cause emotional distress to the victim. Although legislation is beginning to address this issue, it remains a major problem.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Are the student(s) in need of immediate support and/or protection?
- When interviewing students be certain that processes ensure the consideration of a bias-aware approach, mitigating factors, maintaining fairness and openness for all.
- Identify if the actions were inappropriate and/or criminal, (including sexualized content). Are the police required to be called? If so, secure evidence and notify necessary board personnel (see Best Practices).
- Who was involved in this incident? Age: identify age of all involved. What transpired (incident, time, date, location)?
- Was the incident captured, recorded, if so how?
- Was the recorded incident distributed? How? To whom?
- How widely was the image shared? Are more schools involved?
- Did the incident involve a protected ground under the OHRC?

SHORT TERM ACTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Who needs to be notified? (superintendent, parents/guardians, board personnel)
- What supports need to be provided? (PSW, child youth worker, Children's Aid Society, guidance counsellors and student success, Victim Services, chaplain, faith leaders, community agencies, public health, school based mental health team)
- Have identities under OHRC of all parties been considered?
- Complete all documentation and debrief for staff involved in the incident.
- Consider consequences (discipline, support and re-entry plan, if necessary).

LONG TERM ACTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Plan professional development for staff, students and school council and staff meeting (keeping in mind the privacy of sensitive data).
- Review content of staff handbook, student agendas and school website.
- Conduct community and parent outreach.

BEST PRACTICES

- Inform relevant board personnel and contact police if you believe a criminal offence has occurred.
- Identify the ages of all those involved.
- Turn off/secure/confiscate the personal electronic device from the student and have someone witness when you do so.
- Don't search the device unless you believe there is an immediate threat to the safety of a student/child.
- Don't send, save, share or print any images from the device.
- Document details of the incident.

***Potential legal repercussions for viewing, possessing and/or sharing child pornography can occur.*