School Staff Handbook for Cyber Leaders

Acknowledgments

Contents

"
The help from teachers assisted us in our role as Cyber Leaders as they allowed us the time to meet with the groups to organise activities, helpedto set up technological equipment, provided advice when we needed it and encouraged students to listen at our assembly presentations.
"

Supporting Effective Student Leadership

Welcome to the support guide for developing student cyber leaders in your school. This guide is designed to assist you as you establish your student leadership program. If your school has been working with student leaders for some time the **pre-planning** module may not be required. It contains information about **genuine leadership for young people and other ideas on encouraging and supporting students** as they work towards accomplishing their goals.

Below is the planning cycle you may wish to use to guide your students through their leadership journey. The **student leadership guide provides detailed information** on each of these steps in the planning cycle and is designed to be a practical tool to support their endeavours. Information has been provided below regarding the topics in the student leadership guide.

This leadership guide has been designed to be used in conjunction with the Cyber Leaders website (https://cyberleaders.telethonkids.org.au) and the Beacon cyber safety website (https://beacon.telethonkids.org.au/). Throughout the resource you will see links to sections of these websites.

Pre-Planning
Establishing Effective Student Leadership

Step One
Selecting your Team

Step Two
Preparing for Action

Step Three
Topics and Activities

Step Four
Support Strategies

There are a number of issues that may require discussion with a team of staff from your school before establishing a student leadership group. Laying the foundation for effective student leadership will enhance the success of the activities implemented by your students.

Build your knowledge

Technology is moving so quickly it is challenging for even the most avid user to keep updated with the latest device or popular website or app. You may have decided to introduce cyber leadership as a preventative measure or in response to issues at your school; whatever the reason it will be valuable to have some understanding of young peoples' use of technology prior to working with your student leaders. There are two key areas to be addressed here:

1. Knowledge of what the students in your school are using and doing with technology
To gain a clearer picture of areas requiring attention at your school, survey, or ask the student leaders to **survey the students** to help the leaders determine which issue(s) to focus on each term.

2. Knowledge of different technology terms and how these are used by students
The website https://www.esafety.gov.au/ provides detailed information on all of the topics listed in this handbook. This information may assist you as you work towards identifying issues and activities to address these issues with your student leaders.

> " We are the technological generation. We are the ones who need to teach and learn from others about preventing and reducing cyberbullying. "

Offer genuine student leadership opportunities

When establishing a student leadership program in your school, it is timely to also reflect on how student leadership groups operate in your school and how this role is similar or different. Your student leaders may want to know **what opportunities they have to genuinely impact** upon the culture of the school before they decide which activities they want to focus on. It is worthwhile thinking about this before establishing your leadership group.

Have a look at the ladder below and consider the level of **genuine** engagement you offer student leaders at your school. You may wish to consider the following questions:

- Do you have students who are leaders merely to represent the school? *Decoration*
- Do you listen to students but rarely take action on their ideas? *Tokenistic*
- Do you seek students out and ask them for their opinion before making changes? *Youth informed / consulted*
- Do you act on ideas raised by students, encouraging them to write what they feel are appropriate policies and procedures for your school to consider? *Youth driven equity*

Ladder of Youth Voice

Youth/Adult Equity >

Completely Youth-Driven >

Youth/Adult Equality >

Youth Consulted >

Youth Informed >

Tokenism >

Decoration >

Manipulation >

Adapted by Adam Fletcher (2011) from work by Roger Hart, et al. (1994)

Rewarding student leaders

Students in our previous research have suggested a variety of rewards that helped them to feel the work they were doing was supported and appreciated by their school, some of these included:

a. Badges
b. Awards at assembly
c. Receiving an official title
d. Being mentioned at assembly by staff members
e. Officially promoting the work of the leaders through set communication channels
f. Creating opportunities for the work of the leaders to be effectively showcased

Clear, consistent, support

The most effective student leaders in our previous research were those who had regular interaction and support meetings with **staff members** and where support was readily available. In these schools the staff member did not 'do' the activity but instead offered regular suggestions and encouragement. **Being available to offer ideas and suggestions was found to be more beneficial than attending every student leader meeting.**

Networking opportunities with other student leaders

Having the opportunity to **share ideas and strategies and be part of other student leader groups in the school** provided another support group for cyber leader action. Working with a neighbouring school or if this is not possible, establishing networks with other leaders through online communication channels will also provide fresh ideas and allow for the sharing of resources.

Blocked sites

Many student cyber leaders were **frustrated with sites such as YouTube being blocked in their school**. It may be worthwhile allowing one student from the group to access these sites during meeting times so they can research clips they might like to use to support their presentations.

Provide opportunities for students

Student cyber leaders expressed a desire to **be included like other leaders in school events**, such as Orientation days, Assemblies and Open Days. Engaging students in these major school events allows students to feel their work is supported and valued.

Young people understand there are some challenges when using technology. They also recognise there is a need to educate their peers, especially younger students, about how to engage with technology safely. The good news is **they usually want to be involved in this process**.

Forming a group of students tasked with the role of leading your school community in the safe use of technology is a great way to educate others and encourage positive online travels.

Select student leaders well BEFORE you want leadership activities to begin

The most effective student leadership teams were those that either had the opportunity to be coached by or had a comprehensive **handover by student leaders from the previous year** and (ideally) were **selected well in advance of their official start date**. For example, if the activities are to begin in Term 1, appoint your leaders halfway through Term 3 of the previous year and provide opportunities for them to meet and exchange ideas before the term ends. This allows students time to think about their role and activities before having to develop and implement these. Previous research shows that in many cases, the holiday break allowed students to meet outside of school to plan and further develop their activities.

Form a group of between 4-8 students

Schools with the most successful programs selected 4 students to form their leadership team. While other schools had success with larger groups (up to 8), most found the distribution of responsibility over more leaders increased the workload of school staff.

Encourage socially credible students to become your leaders

Taking on a position of leadership in this area can be challenging for some students and many of their peers and friends consider themselves experts regarding technology use (in particular, the use of social media). The most effective schools selected or encouraged students to nominate **students with charisma and high social credibility** to become their cyber leaders. Some schools achieved this by:

1. Encouraging socially credible peers to nominate for leadership positions.
2. Allowing the student cohort to vote for those they felt would make good student leaders.

Preparing students for their role as leaders

Modules with activities and resource downloads have been provided for students in the online Student Leadership Handbook to assist them as they undertake their role. You can access this handbook at https://cyberleaders.telethonkids.org.au/

a.   Building leadership

This module encourages students to think about what leadership means to them and what they value as their values tend to dictate either consciously or unconsciously the types of actions they focus on (for example, actions to support family or friends).

This module also encourages students to think about their 'vision' and describe what sort of impact they want to make.

Downloadable activity sheets are provided in this module to assist students to identify their strengths and interests and develop their cyber leader mindset.

b.   Leadership in action
This module helps students to select actions for their school and put these into action including ideas on how to make a change and be a successful student leader.
Downloadable activity sheets are provided in this module to help students develop and evaluate a school action plan.

c.   Building knowledge
Information is provided in this module for students on four key areas: digital reputation, cybersafe practices, taking control, and supporting fellow students. This information may assist students as they plan their school-based activities.

Negotiate parameters up front

It may be useful to **negotiate action parameters that you feel are workable** when the group is first selected. Some staff found students were very keen initially to undertake activities, but, as students became busy, this enthusiasm waned and resulted in the staff member picking up the pieces. The most successful schools selected one activity per term and worked conscientiously toward the effective implementation and sustainability of this activity.

Establish group roles

Some groups of leaders are able to identify their cyber leader group roles without staff support, while others needed support from the staff member to allocate roles, tasks, and ensure the action ideas became a reality. The online Cyber Leadership Handbook https://cyberleaders.telethonkids.org.au/ also provides activities to help students discover their **strengths and interests and in turn their role**.

Regular meeting times

Cyber leader groups that **met fortnightly** were able to accomplish their goals more readily than those who met more or less often. Student leaders also worked best when they had a regular, predetermined place to meet (e.g., a classroom booked) and reminders sent to attend meetings. It appeared to make little difference if a staff member was present at the meeting or not, the most important factor was bringing the students to gather together regularly and giving them support to achieve their goals.

> " It taught us how to build a relationship with others and the skills for building activities and leadership. "

Trust students' judgement

Our research suggests that technology related issues that are reported to the school staff may represent a very small portion of the many issues being experienced by young people online. Some students in previous research expressed frustration when staff members tried to change the focus of their actions according to what the staff perceived were the most pertinent challenges faced by students at their school. **Students who had ownership and the autonomy to decide on the areas of focus with some support from teachers were the most effective at implementing activities**.

Select an issue for action each term (maximum of 4 issues/year)

The most successful student leaders had clear ideas about what they wanted to achieve in their school community. Many groups selected more than one issue per term and a number of actions, however those that settled on one issue to address per term and one supporting action per term were the most successful.

Below is a list of issues your group may consider addressing at your school. More information on some of these issues can be found at https://www.esafety.gov.au/young-people and other related/linked websites.

- Social networking and connecting online through social media Cyberbullying
- Online gaming
- Trolling and online hate
- Unsafe or unwanted contact
- Distributing content
- Protecting your identify online (e.g., passwords)
- Geotagging
- Support Numbers
- Helpful Websites
- Saving Evidence
- Sexting

Should students select social networking as their focus they may need assistance to focus on more specific issues related to social networking. Some specific issues related to social networking are explained below to assist.

Social Media
Social Media apps are a popular way to stay in touch with friends via messages and to share photos and videos from your life. People can follow their friends, as well as the profiles of people or brands they might be interested in. Encourage students to think of positive ways to use social media such as to celebrate a friend's birthday or spread news on positive events. Encourage your students to consider applying techniques to minimise negative social media use such as putting time limits on certain apps to reduce screen time.

Location Sharing
Many social networking sites come with in-built services that can track your location. Sharing your location in an online environment may risk your personal safety.

Online Learning Platforms
Schools may use an online learning platform such as Zoom. Think of tips for respectful conduct when using online platforms for schooling that may use video calls or screensharing.

Online Gaming
Online gaming is a common way young people interact with other 'players' online. It is important to be cautious of these players intentions when connecting.

Online Dating
Meeting people and forming relationships online is becoming increasingly common. But, this comes with risks as not everyone you meet online you will develop a connection with.

More information can be found by visiting either:
https://cyberleaders.telethonkids.org.au/reflect-and-review/
or
https://www.esafety.gov.au/young-people

Select an activity to support the issue you are addressing

How to deliver activities within your school:
One of the greatest barriers to success identified by students during our research, was not knowing how to begin planning their activities. Some of the most popular actions identified by these young people are listed below. Your group may consider a combination of these ideas throughout the year.

- Newsletter items
- Daily bulletin / portal ideas
- Media productions / mini movie / drama productions
- Assembly presentations
- Parent nights
- Presentation to staff
- Training younger students or peers
- Reporting strategies in your school

Some of these activities will require more support than others; you may want to offer students a list of activity ideas you are confident your school can support.
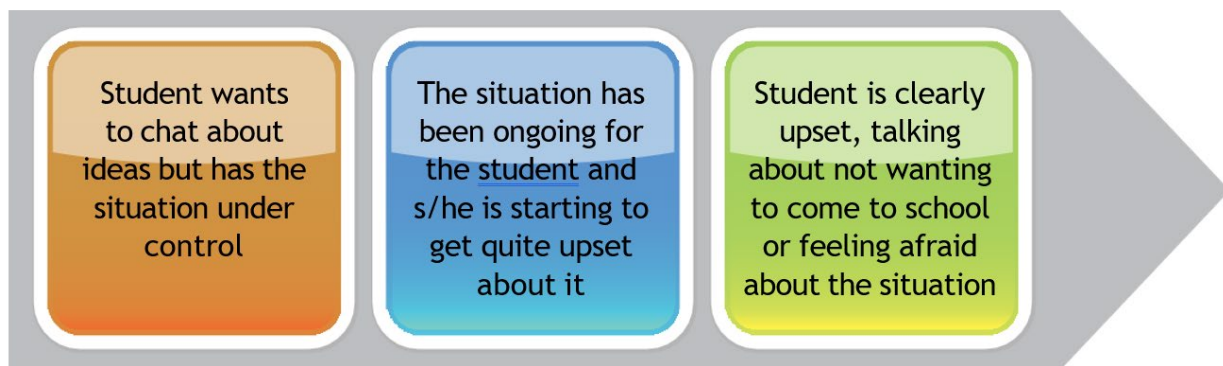
" Our Cyber Leaders had meetings with school executives to achieve approval for our major goal of creating awareness around cyberbullying and rewording the school policy to include cyber bullying. "

Discuss other students reporting online challenges to student cyber leaders and how you would like them to respond

When students lead strategies to support the safe use of technology, some leaders reported other students asked them for help with their online problems. Previous student leaders reported not knowing how to respond effectively or what to say when students approached them about their problems. It will be important to talk with student leaders about which problems they should or could assist other students with and when they should be handing the problem over to an adult to address. The diagram below may assist student leaders when thinking about which problems they should hand over to an adult.

| Student wants to chat about ideas but has the situation under control | The situation has been ongoing for the student and s/he is starting to get quite upset about it | Student is clearly upset, talking about not wanting to come to school or feeling afraid about the situation |

" Student Cyber Leaders often report the support of teachers in providing advice and being available when help is needed is an important factor for the success of their leadership role. "

13

Encourage students to share support services with other students

One of the greatest challenges schools face when addressing cyber related issues is the lack of willingness to report these problems or access any form of support. Across Australia there are a variety of reporting strategies available to support young people who are experiencing problems or wanting information. A list of some of these services is provided below.

Kids Helpline: Free phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.
Phone (24/7): 1800 55 1800.
Online chat (24/7): https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling.
Email (8am – 10pm daily): https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/email-counselling/.

Lifeline: A national charity providing support and advice for all Australians (all ages) in a personal crisis.
Phone (24/7): 13 11 14.
Online chat (7am- midnight AEST): https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/online-services/crisis-chat.
Text messaging service (6pm- midnight AEST): 0477 13 11 14.

Headspace: A government established National Youth Mental Health Foundation, providing mental and health wellbeing support, information and services to young Australians aged 15-25 years. Headspace provides specific resources for LGBTIQA+ youth.
Phone (9am-1am AEST): 1800 650 890. Online Chat (9am-1am AEST): https://headspace.org.au/eheadspace/.
Email a clinician (9am-1am AEST): https://headspace.org.au/eheadspace/connect-with-a-clinician/.
Peer Forum (Group chat): https://headspace.org.au/eheadspace/group-chat/.

Beyond Blue: Provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health wherever they live.
Phone (24/7): 1300 22 4636. Online chat (3pm-12am): https://online.beyondblue.org.au/#/chat/start.
Email (response within 24 hours): https://online.beyondblue.org.au/email/#/send.
Peer Forums (Online): https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/online-forums.

Suicide Call Back Service: Provides free phone, video and online counselling for anyone affected by suicide across Australia. For people over the age of 15.
Phone (24/7): 1300 659 467.
Online chat/counselling (24/7): https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/online-counselling.
Video chat/counselling (24/7): https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/video-counselling.

OLife: Provides anonymous and free LGBTI peer support and referral for people in Australia wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.
Phone (3pm-12am): 1800 184 527.
Online chat (3pm-12am):
https://m2.icarol.com/ConsumerRegistration.aspx?org=61795&pid=253&cc=en-US.

Your Local Doctor/GP:
Counsellors, psychologists and psychiatrists: For information on practitioners in your local area, call the **Beyond Blue** info line, on 1300 22 4636.