



'Balit Yirramboi'
Dohertys Creek P-9 College
TRUGANINA

Dear parents/carers,

I am writing to share some concerns and ask for your help and support. At DCC, we generally have a very supportive and caring student community. They can also be passionate and outspoken. Often this can be very positive but used in the wrong context can be negative.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has raised many questions for some of our students and emotions are running high. This is not the only issue that causes angst or an emotional response with our students; others include racial slurs, gender negativity, body shaming as examples. We work very hard to be an inclusive school and we remind students that it is imperative that we remember that we are all human and that is what connects us regardless of our faith, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability and that it is the law to not discriminate against or vilify others.

We ask that you explicitly sit down and speak to your children about the beliefs that you may hold or speak about at home which may not be appropriate to speak about or act upon at school. For example, due to your religion, culture or lived experience, you may not support the views, beliefs or lifestyles of particular people and that may be something you speak about at home, but you would not wander around the supermarket sharing those views; please speak to your children about where it is appropriate to share those views. Please talk to them about what inclusivity means. We may not hold the same views or believe in the same things, but we are always kind to each other in our school grounds and in our interactions with each other.

When someone expresses an opinion, a thought or says things which may upset us or we disagree with, how do we handle or manage this situation? Is it with violence? Is it with horrid and hurtful language? Managing their emotions and reactions to situations are lessons we are working on here at school, but it will only be successful, if we receive support and regular back up from you at home. It is integral for the students to see us working together. It is important for them to understand that they are a part of a larger community and the older we get the more responsibility we have to ensure that we play a positive part within that community. Please explain that if they hear or witness something upsetting then let a staff member know and we will manage the situation for them. They may not always know the outcome, but trusting in us to follow up is important. It is a life lesson, as they will not always know what happens at work, in their relationships and with situations that occur around them. If they react in an emotional, aggressive or violent way, it becomes a far bigger issue to manage and often the effects or consequences are far greater than they would have been if they had sought help from an adult. We cannot be witness to every interaction that occurs at school, but we do endeavour to follow up on issues that are brought to us to investigate and resolve.

Social media is making these situations far worse. We have been privy to several group chats, and it upsets me to say their prime purpose seems to be as a forum for some students to make fun of others, start rumours, talk about others behind their backs, incite others to pick on students or be aggressive towards them; superimpose photos on inappropriate images, film others and upload the images and use disgusting and derogatory language about students and teachers. We cannot police this and

unfortunately often what is shared in these chats finds its way into the school grounds, causing further issues and this takes away from learning.

We are asking that the questions/ideas below be a topic of conversation between you and your children at home;

- What do they use social media for? Are they using it appropriately? Are they on apps which are appropriate for their age group? What are they seeing/hearing/witnessing? Are they positive interactions or are they negative ones?
- Do they want to be the type of person who makes others feel bad for their own entertainment or to make themselves feel good? Do they want to encourage others to do it by witnessing it or being a bystander and allowing it to happen? What does it say about a person if they are actively and continually targeting people? Is this a person that they want to be friends with?
- Do they know what to do and how to behave appropriately if they hear or see something that upsets them? Who would they go and tell? Let your child know that if they tell us about issues discreetly, we will keep their identity a secret.
- Do they understand how when they say particular things without thinking, that it may hurt the feelings of others or not be opinions that should be shared in our school environment?
- Do they understand the concept of cause and effect; if I do this then this/this this could happen?

We are happy to support families if they require support in this area. Please contact us directly and we will address your questions and concerns.

We will of course continue to build and foster an inclusive environment here at DCC but we require your support to do this effectively.

Yours sincerely,



Tami-Jo Richter
Principal