



# Hidden Behind the Screen

**A comprehensive guide to cyberbullying  
for schools and kura**

*Part Four*

***Building a Culture of Digital Citizenship***

**Greater Christchurch Schools' Network**

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**GREATER CHRISTCHURCH  
SCHOOLS' NETWORK**

## Building a Culture of Digital Citizenship

### Take Home Messages

- Building and developing a culture of digital citizenship is important to reduce cyberbullying and promote safe technology and Internet use
- Schools and kura play active roles in developing ākongā digital citizenship, and this must be integrated where possible into the curriculum
- Schools and kura should engage in regular self-evaluation to determine where they are in terms of integrating the principles of digital citizenship in practice and use this to guide future steps
- Self-evaluation should then be accompanied by deliberate teaching and learning to achieve ākongā learning objectives
- Student-led initiatives may be a particularly valuable tool to give ākongā a sense of responsibility over cyberbullying
- Collaborative activities are beneficial for building social capital, and prosocial skills, and fostering a good classroom climate

Prevention is often the best method, and in the case of cyberbullying, schools and kura can dedicate time and work to creating and maintaining a school-/kura-wide culture of digital citizenship. Tackling cyberbullying in younger ākongā is beneficial to avoid risk-taking behaviours in adolescence<sup>1</sup>, however, the culture of digital citizenship can be promoted at any school level. Digital citizenship has received more attention following COVID-19 lockdowns and associated distance learning to promote learning and positive interactions online.

**Digital Citizenship** delineates the appropriate usage, communication, and collaboration using digital technologies in safe and responsible ways.

Definitions of digital citizenship centre on empowering people to have the knowledge, understanding, and the tools and skills to be safe, secure, tolerant, ethical, responsible, and respectful online.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kowalski, R. M., Giumetti, G. W., Schroeder, A. N., & Lattanner, M. R. (2014). Bullying in the digital age: a critical review and meta-analysis of cyberbullying research among youth. *Psychological bulletin*, 140(4), 1073.

<sup>2</sup> Jones, L. M., & Mitchell, K. J. (2016). Defining and measuring youth digital citizenship. *New media & society*, 18(9), 2063-2079.

Netsafe<sup>3</sup> have determined that a digital citizen is someone who:

- Is a confident and capable user of ICT
- Uses technologies to participate in educational, cultural, and economic activities
- Uses and develops critical thinking skills in cyberspace
- Is literate in the language, symbols, and texts of digital technologies
- Is aware of ICT challenges and can manage them effectively
- Uses ICT to relate to others in positive, meaningful ways
- Demonstrates honesty and integrity and ethical behaviour in their use of ICT
- Respects the concepts of privacy and freedom of speech in a digital world
- Contributes and actively promotes the values of digital citizenship

In this way, digital literacy is a requirement for ākongā to understand and participate in a digital society. By knowing how to use digital technologies appropriately and respectfully, and how to keep themselves and others safe while online, ākongā can be digital citizens.

Cyberbullying prevention and digital citizenship go hand-in-hand in preparing ākongā to be safe online.<sup>4</sup> This means providing deliberate education and messaging around safe technology and Internet usage and providing education and tools around cyberbullying.<sup>5</sup> This is also important to encourage ākongā, both victims and bystanders, to stand up against cyberbullying.<sup>6</sup>

Netsafe<sup>7</sup> recommends the following practical skills teachings:

1. How to search the Internet and research appropriate content
2. How to filter the material found and recognise trustworthy information
3. How to think critically and identify bias
4. How to analyse and solve problems using digital tools
5. How to reference source material and avoid plagiarism
6. The concepts behind intellectual property and copyright
7. How to create, collaborate with others and build and share knowledge

<sup>3</sup> Netsafe. (2015). *Digital Citizenship and Digital Literacy*. Retrieved from <https://netsafe.org.nz/digital-citizenship-and-digital-literacy/>

<sup>4</sup> Stonebanks, F. R., & Shariff, S. (2023). Cyberbullying, education, and digital citizenship in youth. In *Cyberbullying and Values Education* (pp. 125-141). Routledge.

<sup>5</sup> Vlaanderen, A., Bevelander, K. E., & Kleemans, M. (2020). Empowering digital citizenship: An anti-cyberbullying intervention to increase children's intentions to intervene on behalf of the victim. *Computers in human behavior*, 112, 106459.

<sup>6</sup> Idem.

<sup>7</sup> Netsafe. (2015). *Digital Citizenship and Digital Literacy*. Retrieved from <https://netsafe.org.nz/digital-citizenship-and-digital-literacy/>

Ākonga-led initiatives are important tools and help keep teachers and other staff abreast of current trends in cyberbullying that they may otherwise be unaware of. Ākonga gather information about cyberbullying and come up with solutions that may be presented to staff and the school.<sup>8</sup> This information and feedback can be woven into the curriculum. Ākonga-led initiatives may include peer support programmes, such as “cybermentors”, who provide advice and support for their peers and have leadership and responsibility over cyberbullying prevention and management.<sup>9,10</sup>

Collaborative learning on- and offline should be harnessed as a means of building social relationships, prosocial skills, and social problem-solving abilities.<sup>11,12</sup> Collaborative online learning can also improve classroom climate and provide a sense of belonging which helps improve cyberbullying outcomes.<sup>13</sup>

Establishing a culture of digital citizenship requires that the principles of digital citizenship are embedded in the values and operations of the school and kura and the behaviours associated with being a digital citizen are normalised.

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<sup>8</sup> Paul, S., Smith, P. K., & Blumberg, H. H. (2012). Revisiting cyberbullying in schools using the quality circle approach. *School Psychology International*, 33(5), 492-504.

<sup>9</sup> Banerjee, R., Robinson, C., & Smalley, D. (2010). *Evaluation of the Beatbullying peer mentoring programme*. Report for Beatbullying: University of Sussex.

<sup>10</sup> Thompson, F., & Smith, P. K. (2011). *The use and effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies in schools*. DFE-RR098. London: DfE.

<sup>11</sup> DeSmet, A., Bastiaensens, S., Van Cleemput, K., Poels, K., Vandebosch, H., Deboutte, G., ... & De Bourdeaudhuij, I. (2018). The efficacy of the Friendly Attac serious digital game to promote prosocial bystander behavior in cyberbullying among young adolescents: A cluster-randomized controlled trial. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 78, 336-347.

<sup>12</sup> Van Ryzin, M. J., Roseth, C. J., & Biglan, A. (2020). Mediators of effects of cooperative learning on prosocial behavior in middle school. *International journal of applied positive psychology*, 5, 37-52.

<sup>13</sup> Aizenkot, D., & Kashy-Rosenbaum, G. (2021). The effectiveness of safe surfing intervention program in reducing WhatsApp cyberbullying and improving classroom climate and student sense of class belonging in elementary school. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 41(4), 550-576.

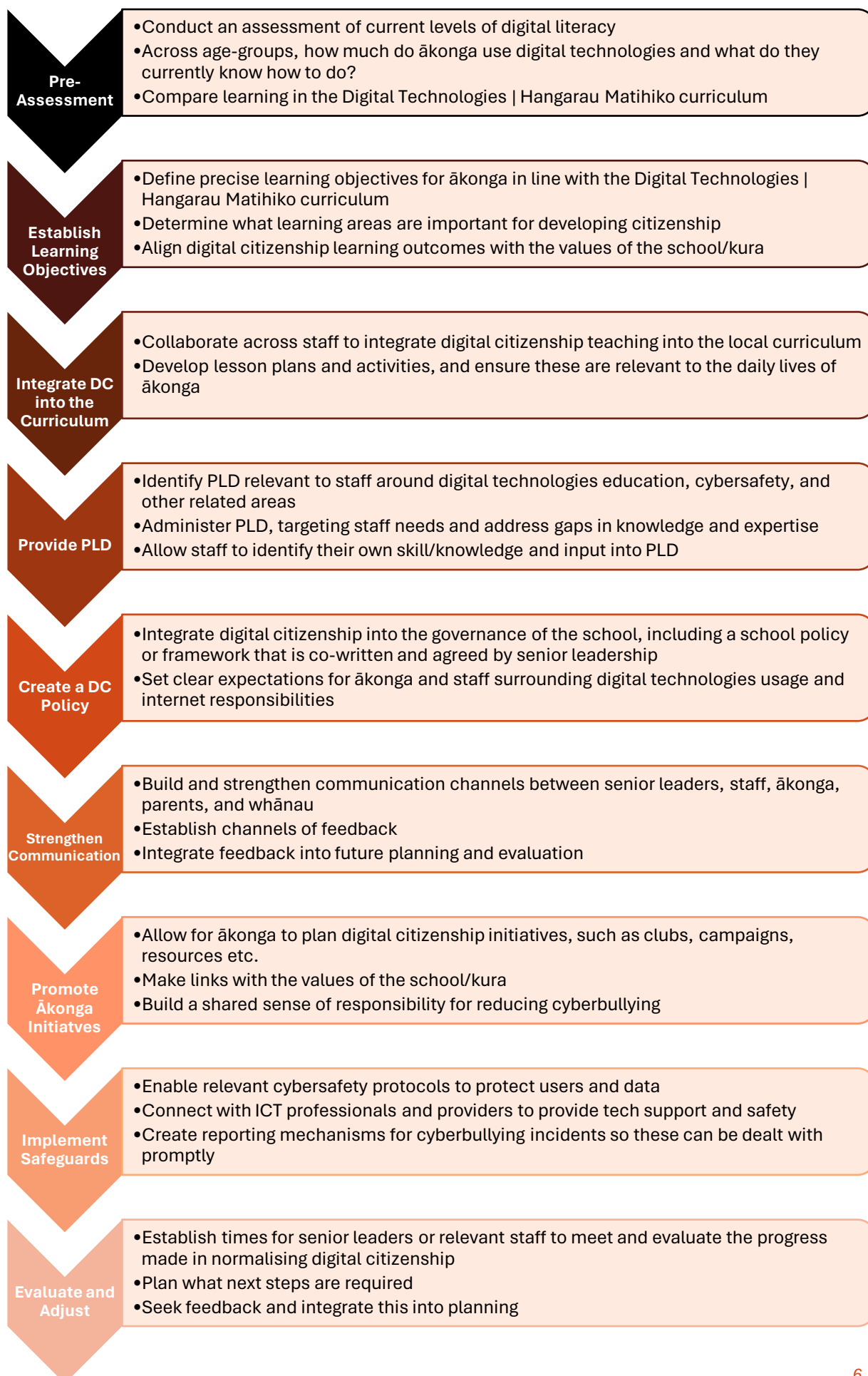
## A Roadmap Toward Building a Culture of Digital Citizenship

The following roadmap is provided as a means of helping guide schools and kura toward building a culture of digital citizenship. It cannot be assumed that schools and kura will all begin at the first step or be at the same step, rather, the roadmap can be used for self-assessment and to provide some guidance on what next steps might be.

The guide provides a general overview of developing a culture of digital citizenship. Steps might not occur sequentially or may occur simultaneously. What is more important is that schools and kura introspectively evaluate what digital citizenship means for them and implement ideas to reduce cyberbullying, without it necessarily being a strict framework.

Also provided is an assessment template for schools and kura to consider digital citizenship, what learning and frameworks they currently have, and where there are gaps. This could act as a starting point for schools and kura to consider digital citizenship.

[GCSN has a separate resource for school cybersafety.](#) This is recommended to assess cybersafety protocols to maintain the safety and protection of people and data.



## Evaluation of School Digital Citizenship Integration

### 1. Digital Literacy Levels

Rating Scale:

- 1 Limited skill
- 2 Developing
- 3 Basic proficiency
- 4 Advanced proficiency
- 5 Expert
- ? Unknown/pre-assessment

#### 1.1. Student Digital Literacy

Area	Rating	Notes	Next steps
How well are students able to use digital tools for learning and academic purposes?			
How well are students demonstrating critical thinking skills when consuming online content?			
How well do students understand and apply principles of online safety?			

## 1.2. Educator Digital Literacy

Rating Scale:

- 1 Limited skill
- 2 Developing
- 3 Basic proficiency
- 4 Advanced proficiency
- 5 Expert
- ? Unknown/pre-assessment

Area	Rating	Notes	Next steps
<b>How well do teachers/kaiako integrate technology into their everyday teaching?</b>			
<b>How well do educators incorporate digital citizenship principles into their teaching?</b>			
<b>How well do educators understand cybersafety and cyberbullying concerns and future challenges?</b>			



## 2. Integration of Digital Citizenship in the Curriculum

### 2.1. Curriculum Alignment

Rating Scale:

- 1 Little or no alignment
- 2 Partial alignment
- 3 Moderate alignment
- 4 Strong alignment
- 5 Full alignment
- ? Unknown/pre-assessment

Area	Rating	Notes	Next steps
How aligned is the current local curriculum with digital citizenship learning objectives?			
Are digital citizenship concepts integrated into various subject areas?			
How aligned are teachers/kaiako in their incorporation of digital citizenship into the curriculum?			

## 2.2. Lesson Effectiveness

Rating Scale:

- 1 Ineffective
- 2 Somewhat ineffective
- 3 Moderately effective
- 4 Highly effective
- 5 Exceptionally effective
- ? Unknown/pre-assessment

Area	Rating	Notes	Next steps
<b>How effective are digital citizenship lessons in promoting safe, responsible behaviour online?</b>			
<b>How effective is digital citizenship education in engaging ākongā to participate?</b>			
<b>How effective are digital citizenship lessons in highlighting real-world experiences of ākongā?</b>			

### 3. Policy and Communication

#### 3.1. Digital Citizenship Policy

Rating Scale:

- 1 No policy or plans
- 2 Basic policy or plans
- 3 Established policy or plans
- 4 Comprehensive policy and plans
- 5 Comprehensive and reviewed policy and plans
- ? Unknown/pre-assessment

Area	Rating	Notes	Next steps
Is there a digital citizenship policy in place?			
Is there a plan or protocol for communicating digital citizenship policies to ākonga, whānau and staff?			
Are feedback and issues addressed in school/kura policy and plans?			

### 3.2. Communication channels

Rating Scale:

- 1 Very little or no communication
- 2 Inconsistent communication
- 3 Occasional communication
- 4 Regular two-way communication
- 5 Exceptional two-way communication
- ? Unknown/pre-assessment

Area	Rating	Notes	Next steps
<b>Communication to staff about digital citizenship policies and teaching and learning</b>			
<b>Communication to ākonga about cybersafety, cyberbullying and digital citizenship</b>			
<b>Communication to whānau about cybersafety, cyberbullying and digital citizenship</b>			

#### 4. Student-Led Initiatives

Rating Scale:

- 1 Little or no involvement
- 2 Some involvement
- 3 Active involvement
- 4 Strong involvement
- 5 Exceptional student-led initiatives
- ? Unknown/pre-assessment

Area	Rating	Notes	Next steps
<b>To what extent are ākonga actively involved in promoting digital citizenship?</b>			
<b>To what extent do ākonga feed into the curriculum and explicit teaching of digital citizenship?</b>			
<b>To what extent do ākonga contribute to campaigns, awareness, and other elements of digital citizenship?</b>			

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