

## **CYBER BULLYING POLICY**

**Policy Number:** CBP

**Status:** Ratified

**Date Issued:** 2012

**Evaluation and Review:** November 2018  
MacKillop College Leadership Team.

**Policy Contact Officer:**

**Related Documentation:**

## **RATIONALE**

Central to the School's anti-bullying policy is the belief that 'all pupils have a right not to be bullied' and that 'bullying is always unacceptable'. The School also recognises that it must 'take note of bullying perpetrated outside School which spills over into the School.

## **DEFINITION OF CYBER-BULLYING**

Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself.

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones
- The use of mobile phone or iPad cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites
- Using e-mail to message others
- Hijacking/cloning e-mail accounts
- Making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in chat rooms, to include Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Ratelyteacher

## **Derived from the Anti Bullying Policy**

Cyber-bullying occurs through the use of information or communication technologies such as Instant Messaging, text messages, email and social networking sites. Cyber-bullying involves the use of any information and communication technology involving deliberate, isolated or repeatedly hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others or is undertaken recklessly, without concern for its impact on others. By virtue of its nature, technology facilitates repeated access to harmful content. It has many similarities with offline bullying but it differs in that the student(s) who is/are bullying can be anonymous, it can reach a wide audience and the sent or uploaded material can be difficult to remove.

Most students who cyber bully also bully off-line. It is now recognised that many forms of covert bullying appear to have significant potential for serious harm.

## **LEGAL ISSUES**

Cyber-bullying is generally criminal in character. The law applies to cyberspace.

- It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites.
- It is an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.
- It is an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

## **POLICY**

Whilst education and guidance remain at the heart of what we do, the school reserves the right to take action against those who take part in cyber-bullying.

- All bullying is damaging but cyber-bullying and harassment can be invasive of privacy at all times. These acts may also be criminal acts.

- The school supports victims and, when necessary, will work with the Police to detect those involved in criminal acts.
- The school will use, as appropriate, the full range of sanctions to correct, punish or remove pupils who bully fellow pupils or harass staff in this way, both in or out of school.
- The school will use its power of confiscation where necessary to prevent pupils from committing crimes or misusing equipment.
- All members of the School community are aware they have a duty to bring to the attention of the Principal any example of cyber-bullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.

### **GUIDANCE FOR PUPILS**

If you believe you or someone else is the victim of cyber-bullying, you must speak to a responsible adult as soon as possible. This person could be a parent/guardian, your teacher, your Leader of Pastoral Care or the Principal.

- Do not answer abusive messages but log and report them
- Do not delete anything until it has been shown to an adult (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber-bullying)
- Do not give out personal IT details
- Never reply to abusive e-mails
- Never reply to someone you do not know
- Stay in public areas in chat rooms

### **GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS**

It is vital that parents and the school work together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying.

- Parents can help by making sure their child understands the school's policy and, above all, how seriously the school takes incidents of cyber-bullying
- Parents should also explain to their sons or daughters legal issues relating to cyber-bullying
- If parents believe their child is the victim of cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving an offensive text on their or their child's mobile phone) and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything
- Parents should contact a Leader of Pastoral Care as soon as possible.