

# ***Cyberbullying Policy***

## **Rationale:**

All children have the right to feel safe and well, and know that they will be attended to with due care. The College will provide a positive culture where bullying in any form is not accepted. All students will have the right of respect from others, the right to learn or teach and the right to feel safe and secure in their school environment. Bullying in any form is unacceptable. Cyberbullying can be very destructive and will not be tolerated at any level, and serious consequences exist for students who choose to bully others.

## **Aims:**

- To reinforce within the College community what bullying is (including cyberbullying), and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- To alert everyone within the College community of the signs and evidence of cyberbullying and to have a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of cyberbullying are being followed up appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.
- To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

## **Implementation:**

The school will adopt a three-phase approach to bullying.

### **A. Primary Prevention – Community Education**

- Professional development for staff relating to all forms of bullying including cyberbullying, harassment and the strategies that counteract them.
- Educate the College community and the students about the seriousness of cyberbullying, its impact on those being bullied, how cyberbullying occurs and consequences of cyberbullying.

- Community awareness and input relating to bullying (including cyberbullying), its characteristics and the Colleges programs and response.
- Provide programs that promote inclusiveness, resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Feedback in the form of surveys will be sought from students and parents to monitor the Colleges culture in regards to bullying/cyberbullying.
- Each classroom teacher/homeroom teacher to clarify with students at the start of each year the College policy on bullying, including cyberbullying.
- The use of mobile phones by students will not be permitted at this point with consequences to be implemented for any students who use mobile phones inappropriately.

**B. Intervention:**

- Encourage students to report bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the College if they become aware of a problem.
- Once identified each bully, victim and witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of bullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- The College will reinforce with Students the importance of appropriately reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving themselves or others, and the imperative that staff respond appropriately and proportionally to each allegation consistent with the College's Student Code of Conduct, including reporting and recording of the incident.
- Students and staff identified by others as cyber bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Parents are to be contacted if their child is alleged to have been bullied or experienced inappropriate behaviour, or if their child appears to have behaved inappropriately or bullied someone else.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- If student bullying persists, parents will be contacted and consequences, consistent with the College's Student Code of Conduct will be implemented.
- Consequences of repetitive or serious incidents may include criminal charges, suspension, expulsion, loss of privileges, counselling, conciliation or any other consequences consistent with the College's Student Code of Conduct.

### **C. Post Violation:**

Discipline consequences for bullies (depending on severity) may involve:

- After school detentions
- Removal from class
- Internal suspension
- External suspension
- Formal apology
- Expulsion

The severity of the incident along with the level of remorse and previous behavioural history of the bully will affect the severity of the discipline involved.

It is imperative that appropriate strategies are put in place after the incident has been resolved for all students involved. Strategies may include:

- Ongoing monitoring of students
- Follow up meetings with students involved
- Ongoing communication with parents
- Counselling – internal/external
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours and appropriate behaviour strategies

Parents, teachers, students and the community will be aware of the College's position on bullying / cyberbullying, through the school website.

#### **Definition:**

*Cyberbullying is bullying behaviour, using digital technology, including the internet, email or mobile phones. Cyberbullying is pervasive and incessant and differs from face-to-face bullying in that the bully can 'follow' their victim 24/7 and continue the bullying in the home. Bullying that is carried out through an internet service, such as email, social media, chat room, discussion group or instant messaging or through mobile phone technologies such as short messaging service (SMS) is cyberbullying.*

*A person is bullied when someone, or a group of people, deliberately hurt or upset another person, or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than once occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status or other reasons. People who use the internet, email, intranets, phones, social networks or similar technologies to bully others are cyber bullies.*

Ratified by the Board on: 23/09/2015

Chairperson: Mr. Ken Yucel

This policy will be communicated to staff, parents, students and the wider community through one or more of the following channels: newsletter, assemblies, staff/student handbook, College website, staff meetings, information sessions.

*This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's 2 year review cycle.*