Rationale

Cyberbullying in any form is unacceptable. Cyberbullies deliberately set out to intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt others repeatedly. Cyberbullying is a clear form of harassment. It can be difficult to escape and is incredibly invasive, with harmful material continuing to be available and harmful long after cyberbullying has ceased. Cyberbullying will not be tolerated and consequences exist for students who choose to bully others.

Definition

Cyberbullying is when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person’s health and safety (psychologically or physically) or their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

Cyberbullying is bullying that uses digital technology, including mobile phones, e-mail, on-line chat rooms and social media. It can be verbal or written.

Cyberbullying includes pranking, sharing unflattering or private images without permission, sending insulting or threatening text messages or emails, spreading rumours online, publishing someone’s private, personal or embarrassing information without permission, identity theft or creating hate campaigns.

Aims

- To promote the appropriate use of ICT by all members of the school community that ensures the safety and well-being of all students, staff and parents.
- To reinforce within the school community that no form of cyberbullying is acceptable.
- To ensure that everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of cyberbullying.
- To inform the school community that everyone has a responsibility to report cyberbullying to a staff member whether as observer or victim.
- To develop the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours required of students, staff and parents to participate and function responsibly, safely and appropriately when using digital technology.
- To ensure that all reported incidents of cyberbullying are investigated and recorded appropriately and that support is given to both victims and perpetrators.

Implementation

- This policy should be read in conjunction with the school’s Student Engagement and Well-Being Policy.
- Parents, teachers, students and the community will be aware of the school’s position on cyberbullying.
- Teachers will be regularly reminded of their duty of care regarding protection of students from all forms of bullying.

November 2015
The school will adopt the following four-phase approach to cyberbullying:

A. **Primary Prevention**
   - Professional development will be provided for all staff relating to cyberbullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
   - The school community will be educated about the seriousness of cyberbullying, its impact on those being bullied and how this behaviour is unacceptable.
   - Each classroom teacher is to clarify with students at the start of each term, and as required throughout the year, the school policy on cyberbullying.
   - The school will actively participate in relevant programs to equip students with the skills and knowledge to be smart, safe and responsible users of technology.
   - The curriculum will include programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving, as well as anti-bullying messages and strategies.
   - All students will be provided with computer and network logins and passwords. Firewalls will be used to assist in eliminating outside traffic into the school’s network and intranet.
   - The use of mobile phones by students during school hours will be prohibited with consequences to be implemented for any students who use mobile phones inappropriately. All mobile phones are to be handed into the office when students arrive at school.

B. **Early Intervention**
   - Students and staff will be encouraged to report cyberbullying incidents involving themselves or others.
   - Classroom teachers and the Principal will remind students and staff on a regular basis to report incidents of cyberbullying.
   - The school will regularly monitor student traffic on the school’s computer networks to identify potential problems.
   - Parents will be encouraged to contact the school immediately if they become aware of a problem.
   - If the school becomes aware of any cyberbullying incidents, they will contact the parents of the students involved.

C. **Intervention**
   - All incidents or allegations of cyberbullying will be fully investigated and documented by a staff member and forwarded onto the school leadership team.
   - The parents of any students involved in a cyberbullying incident (whether the victim or the perpetrator) will be contacted.
   - Students and staff identified by others as cyberbullies will be informed of the allegations.
   - Where cyberbullying has been identified, counselling and support may be offered, as determined by the school.
   - Cyberbullies will have their access to the school’s network and computers removed for a period of time as deemed appropriate by the staff members involved.
   - If student cyberbullying persists, consequences consistent with the school’s Student Discipline Policy will be implemented.
D. Follow Up

- Consequences for students will be individually based and may involve:
  * exclusion from class;
  * exclusion from the yard;
  * school suspension;
  * withdrawal of privileges; and/or
  * ongoing counselling from an appropriate professional as decided by the Principal for both the victim and cyberbully.

- Ongoing monitoring of identified cyberbullies.

References

- www.esmartschools.org.au
- www.esafety.gov.au
- www.amf.org.au (Alannah and Madeline Foundation – eSmart Schools)

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every three (3) years or as deemed necessary.