Policy CYBER BULLYING

Definition:

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person's health and safety - either psychologically or physically - or their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. Bullies deliberately set out to intimidate, exclude, threaten and/or hurt others repeatedly. Bullying is a clear form of harassment. People who use the internet, email, intranets, phones or similar technologies to bully others are cyberbullies.

Rationale:

Bullying in any form is unacceptable. *Bullying that is carried out through an internet service, such as email, chat room, discussion group or instant-messaging or through mobile phone technologies such as short messaging service (SMS) is cyberbullying.* Cyberbullying will not be tolerated at any level and consequences exist for students who choose to bully others. This includes social media.

Aims:

- To reinforce within the school community what bullying is (including cyberbullying) and the fact that it is unacceptable.
- Everyone within the school community to be alert to 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 investigated 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:

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

A. Primary Prevention:

- Professional development for staff relating to all forms of bullying including cyberbullying, harassment and proven counter measures.
- Educate the school community about the seriousness of cyberbullying, its impact on those being bullied and how this behaviour is unacceptable
- Community awareness and input relating to bullying (including cyberbullying), its characteristics and the school's programs and response.
- Provide programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- Each classroom teacher to clarify with students at the start of each year the school policy on bullying, including cyberbullying.
- All students to be provided with individual and confidential computer and network logins and passwords. Processes to be put in place to ensure tracking of student activity on the school's computer equipment and network. Firewalls are installed to eliminate outside traffic into the school's network and intranet.
- The use of mobile phones by students will be limited with consequences to be implemented for any students who use mobile phones inappropriately.
- The curriculum to include anti-bulling messages and strategies.

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B. Early Intervention:

- Encourage children and staff to report all bullying incidents involving themselves or others.
- Classroom teachers and students will be reminded to report incidents of bullying, including cyberbullying on a regular basis.
- Regular monitoring of student traffic on school's computer networks to identify potential problems.
- Parents encouraged to contact the school if they become aware of a problem.
- Public recognition and reward for positive behaviour and resolution of problems.

C. Intervention:

- Once identified each bully, victim and witnesses will be spoken with, and all incidents or allegations of cyberbullying will be fully investigated and documented.
- Parents to be contacted.
- Students and staff identified by others as bullies will be informed of allegations.
- Both bullies and victims will be offered counselling and support.
- Removal of cyberbullies from access to the school's network and computers for a period of time.

D.   Post Violation:

- Consequences for students will be individually based and may involve:-
  - exclusion from class.
  - -school suspension.
  - -withdrawal of privileges including computer/Internet access.
  - -ongoing counselling from appropriate agency for both victim and bully.
- Reinforcement of positive behaviours.
- Support Structures.
- Ongoing monitoring of identified bullies.
- Rewards for positive behaviour.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed with whole staff, student, parent and community input as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council Monday 14th September, 2015.

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