

# Cyber-Bullying Policy

CBP2017-1.1

<b>Purpose:</b>	<p>The Arcadia College is implementing this policy to ensure that students and staff feel safe from bullying in all its forms. The policy sets out, in particular, the requirements for dealing with cyber bullying.</p> <p>The basic beliefs underlying the policy are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Every individual has value in a community.</li> <li>2. Every individual has the right to feel safe from bullying or harassment in all its forms.</li> <li>3. Every conflict can be resolved. Victims and bullies both need help to solve conflict.</li> <li>4. Every individual in a community is responsible for the safety of other individuals in that community.</li> <li>5. Every individual in a community is responsible for ensuring that other individuals in that community can reach their potential in a supportive and non-threatening environment.</li> </ol>	
<b>Scope:</b>	This policy applies to employees, volunteers, parents/carers/students of the college, both on and off the college site.	
<b>Status:</b>	Approved	<b>Supersedes:</b> N/A
<b>Authorised by:</b>	College Governing Body Chairperson / CEO	<b>Approval Date:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> December 2015
<b>References:</b>	Child Protection Policy Allergies Policy Anti-Harassment Policy	
<b>Reviewed:</b>	2 Years	<b>Next Review:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> December 2017
<b>Responsibility:</b>	CEO	<b>Point of Contact:</b> Deputy Principal/Head of Welfare
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	College Governing Board	

## Definitions

“Bullying is **repeated** oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person and occurs when someone, or a group of people, upset or create a risk to another person’s health and safety, or their property, reputation or social acceptance.”

Bullying involves a desire to hurt + hurtful action + a power imbalance + (typically) repetition + an unjust use of power + evident enjoyment by the aggressor and a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim.

There are three broad categories of bullying.

- **Direct physical bullying** e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
- **Direct verbal bullying** e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
- **Indirect bullying** - This form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student’s back. It is designed to harm someone’s social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:
  - lying and spreading rumours
  - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
  - provoking a food-allergic reaction
  - mimicking

- encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
- cyber-bullying, which involves the use of email, text messages or chat rooms to humiliate and distress.

**Cyber-bullying, or e-bullying**, is bullying which involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, (mobile) phone and text messages, instant messaging (SMS), chat rooms and video internet sites e.g. YouTube. It can be particularly harmful because it can happen anywhere and at any time. Thus, young people who are the victims of cyber-bullying have no place where they feel safe. If the bullying is of a serious and threatening nature then obviously, it becomes a legal issue and students and parents should seek advice by reporting the matter to the police.

If bullying amounts to harm as referred to in the college's Child Protection Policy then the matter must be dealt with under the Child Protection Policy.

### ***What bullying is not***

Bullying is different from ordinary teasing, rough-and-tumble or school yard fights. What makes it different is that the incidents are ongoing, and there is usually an imbalance of size, strength and power between the students involved. In formulating an effective approach to dealing with bullying it is helpful to note what bullying is **not**.

### **Bullying is not:**

- **Mutual conflict** where there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.
- **Social rejection or dislike** – It is not feasible to think that every student must like every other student. Refusing to play with a particular child or, for example, not inviting them to a birthday party is not bullying, provided social rejection is not directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- **Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation.** A single episode of nastiness, physical aggression, verbal abuse or an occasional push or shove is not bullying, neither is nastiness or physical aggression directed towards many different students. The difference is that bullying is, by definition, action that happens on **more than one occasion**. However, since college's have a duty of care to provide a student with a safe and supportive college environment, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should not be ignored or condoned.

### **Resources**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying Policy Template on the ISQ site. College's should also access the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) website at:

<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/>

For further information about how to develop a cyber safe school culture and cyber safe policies. The Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence (QSAAV), which is supported by all three schooling sectors, also has useful information about all forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying.

This can be accessed at:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/student-services/behaviour/qaav/>

## Cyber-Bullying

The Internet, mobile phones and other communication technologies have resulted in a new form of bullying, commonly called cyber-bullying. This involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group to hurt others. Cyber-bullying may include the sending of nasty emails or text messages by one person to another. It may also include defamatory personal Web sites where one person establishes a website which includes unkind comments and photographs about another person.

Cyber-bullying is different from other forms of bullying because:

- it is often difficult for adults, who are not as technologically savvy as their children, to detect;
- it is often outside the reach of schools as it happens on home computers or via mobile phones; and
- hurtful messages can be communicated to a very wide audience, around the world, with remarkable speed.

It is also a particularly cowardly form of bullying because the cyber-bully can effectively hide behind the anonymity of the Internet and is able to reach the victim at home. Thus, the home is no longer a refuge for students bullied at college.

As for other forms of bullying, there is no one approach that will always work for cyber-bullying. College's need to educate students and families about cyber-bullying and about a range of Internet safety approaches to provide the best overall protection against cyber-bullying. Schools might supply parents with the following advice:

- For younger children parents might consider the use of filters, labels and safe zones so they can restrict the sites their child can access or the materials they can receive (see the CyberSmart site at <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/> for advice about filters and other ways to restrict access to dangerous materials).
- For younger and junior secondary school students' parents should consider keeping the computer in a public area of the house, such as the family room, so they can see what sites are being accessed and the type of messages their child is receiving.
- For all young people, parents should be advised to talk to their children about the ways they can protect themselves when using information technologies. For example:
  - to be careful who they give their telephone number to or their online handle;
  - never give out or share personal information numbers (PINS);
  - don't believe everything you read online – just because someone tells you they are fifteen, it doesn't mean they are telling the truth;
  - never send a message to others when you are angry. Remind them that what they write becomes available in cyberspace and cannot be taken back;
  - never open a message from someone they don't know;
  - be polite in all online or text message dealings; and
  - **never** arrange to meet someone they have met online unless they take their parents or (for older children) a trusted friend with them.

If a child reports he/she is being bullied on-line parents should advise them:

- not to respond to cyber-bullying messages as this is only likely to encourage the bully. Bullies **want** them to respond;
- to report the bullying to parents, team leaders or advisors;
- not to erase or delete messages from cyber-bullies even if they really don't want anyone else to see what is written – these messages may reveal clues about who has written them;
- never be ashamed to tell someone if they receive a frightening message. **It's not their fault** that there are some very strange people in the world; and

- to report that they have received a bullying message to their ISP (Internet Service Provider). If the message is forwarded to the provider, it may be able to trace the sender.

## The role of the college

Because cyber-bullying often occurs outside of college it is difficult for college's to control. In most cases, however, cyber-bullying should be treated similarly to other forms of bullying. The most important thing college's can do is to educate students about cyber-bullying and the dangers online **and** talk about inappropriate online behaviour in the context of the college's values policy.

The Australian Government NetAlert site gives the following advice to young people about dangers online:

- Always be alert when on the internet. While there are some excellent sites to visit, there are also some bad ones like pornography, animal cruelty and hate sites.
- If something appears on your screen that disturbs you, tell your friends, a staff member, parent, or contact NetAlert on 1300 669 024 or by email to [netalert@acma.gov.au](mailto:netalert@acma.gov.au) for advice on what to do.
- Remember, you will not get into any trouble by letting people know what you have stumbled across.
- If you hear or see your friends getting into places that look unsuitable, remind them of the potential dangers and advise them on how to get out of the site.
- Keep all personal information to yourself (including photos, your name, the name of your college, the name of your family members and your phone number). Strangers might use your personal information in a way that you never intended them to.
- Chat rooms are great ways to talk to people but be aware that some people in them are not who they say they are. If someone or something disturbs you in a chat room, leave and find another one where there are people you like. Talk to your parents, carers or teachers about advice on how to deal with stranger danger.
- Not everything you read on the internet is true. Be smart and make decisions for yourself on what you think is right and wrong.
- Be careful downloading free games or files. People can trick you into clicking on a link that sends you to an unsafe zone or makes your computer download a virus.
- Only give your mobile phone number to your family and friends and if you start getting upsetting or annoying text messages, tell a teacher or parent.
- Always seek help from adults or friends. Parents might not know as much about the internet as you, but they know about life and together you can work out any problem that you might encounter when online.

## Values

Despite the best efforts of parents and colleges, young people are likely to overcome attempts to restrict or censor their use of the internet. Teaching students about ethical and legal use of technology is, therefore, essential. Please refer to the Computer Use Policy for more information about the legal requirements in regard to internet use.