Cyber Bullying Prevention Policy

Rationale

Lakeview Senior College (LSC) adopts a 'zero-tolerance policy' towards all forms of bullying. We work together to provide a positive culture where cyber communication is a safe and effective way to learn and communicate. Abuse of this technology is not accepted. We all have the right to expect respect from each other and the right to teach and learn using technology in a safe and secure environment.

This policy is part of and to be read in conjunction with the *Student Engagement Policy* and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.

Guiding principles

1. Cyber bullying behaviour at Lakeview Senior College will be addressed as part of our school's duty of care to provide a safe and supportive school environment for all students.
2. Students must be empowered to talk about what is happening to them if bullying is to stop.
3. We promote a school community in which everybody feels valued, respected and safe, and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted.
4. Our school values and behaviours are central to the cyber bullying prevention policy.

Definition

Cyberbullying is bullying that is carried out through the internet or mobile phones.

Types of cyberbullying

- Pranking: Repeated hang ups, anonymous, mocking or threatening phone calls.
- Image sharing: Forwarding or sharing unflattering or private images without permission.
- Sexually explicit images: People of any age, who forward or share images of a sexual nature of a person under 18 need to be aware that this is a criminal offence (child pornography) that may result in prosecution.
- Text and email: Sending insulting or threatening text messages or emails.
- Personal online information: Publishing online someone's private, personal or embarrassing information without permission, or spreading rumours online.
- Identity theft: Assuming someone's identity online and negatively representing them in a way that damages their reputation or relationships.
- Hate sites: Creating hate sites or implementing social exclusion campaigns on social networking sites.
- Other types of cyberbullying: It is also cyberbullying when a student, or students, uses technology to run a multi-step campaign to bully another student. For example, setting another student up to be assaulted, video-recording their humiliation, posting the video-recording online and then sending the website address to others.

Cyberbullying vs bullying

While cyberbullying is similar to bullying in some ways, there are also differences.

Differences

- Cyberbullying is invasive: Cyberbullying can be difficult to escape and is incredibly invasive. It is more likely to occur outside of school, including while at home, and can happen at any time.
- Cyberbullying can involve a large audience: Cyberbullying can involve harmful material being widely and rapidly shared to a large audience, for example, rumours and images can be posted on public forums or sent to many people at once. This material can also continue to be available and harmful long after the cyberbullying has ceased.
- Cyberbullies have a sense of anonymity: Cyberbullying can provide the bully with a sense of relative anonymity and distance from the target, so there is a lack of immediate feedback or consequences.

Similarities

- Power imbalance: The power imbalance between the 'bully' and 'target' characterizes both bullying and cyberbullying
- Repeated threat: The repetitive nature of the bullying behaviour and the intent to harm, humiliate, embarrass, ostracise, or isolate can occur in bullying and cyberbullying.
- Types of behaviour: Types of behaviour including spreading rumours and making threats or insults, can occur in bullying and cyberbullying.
- Reasons for behaving in a bullying way: People often engage in cyberbullying for the same reasons they engage in bullying.

Indicators of cyber bullying

Mental anguish is often harder for parents, friends and teachers to identify than the signs of face-to-face bullying. There is no definitive list of signs that indicate cyberbullying.

Despite this, there are some things to look out for:

- change in mood, demeanor and/or behaviour: for example being upset, angry, teary or rebellious when not previously
- change in friendship groups: it can be normal to change friends many times during a student's time at school. Teachers can often provide insight, as they see class dynamics in action every day and can often tell which this is as a result of bullying rather than changing interests
- spending more time with family instead of friends: adolescence is generally a time where friends become very important and parents less so. Thus, when a teenager withdraws from their friends it may indicate that serious conflict has occurred
- lowering of marks: often students who are being bullied show a distinct change in application to their studies and a lowering of marks
- not wanting to go to places: a dramatic change in enthusiasm about going to school or sport—this can manifest as non-specific ailments (headaches, stomach-aches, generally 'feeling sick')
- being extra secretive in online activities: being online under the doona, or in a 'secluded' part of the house
- distinct change in online behaviours: being 'jumpy' when text messages arrive, not leaving their phone alone, wanting to be online all the time, or never wanting to be online.

Roles and responsibilities – students and parents/guardians

Students – what can you do?

If you experience cyber bullying, you should:
- **not** respond to any electronic bullying
- save the evidence if possible so you can show it someone who can help
- block access for the person trying to contact you
- change your email address
- never give anyone your password/login details
- never include your surname, home address, phone, school or email address on personal websites
- tell a trusted adult at school or at home.

Parents and guardians – what can you do?

Praise them for coming to you

This is a big step as many young people may be frightened to tell a parent about cyberbullying. Even if you don't really understand, let them know that you will help them.

Do not be angry with your child

Remember that they are the victim and it is someone else who is doing the wrong thing.   Do not threaten to take technology away from them because of what someone else has done.

Do not respond to the bullying

It is important not to respond to nasty emails, chats, SMS or comments. This is usually what the bully wants, so ignore them. It is natural in many cases to want to 'fight back', but responding with a threat may get your child into trouble as well.

Inform Lakeview Senior College

It is important that the school knows what is going on so we can provide support and monitor any issues that may spill onto the school grounds or classroom.

Save and store the content

Keep copies of emails, chat logs, text messages, comments or posts. Take a screen shot of the evidence—ask your child for help to do this if necessary. An easy, non-technical way to get hard copies is to bring the content up on the screen of a mobile phone and use a photocopier to take a copy of the screen.

Help your child to block and delete the bully from all contact lists

Most social networking sites allow the user to control who has access to communicate with them. Many people feel 'mean' blocking another person, even if that person has already been mean to them—you may want to sit and support your child as they do this.

Use the 'report abuse' button

Most social networking sites have a method to let the site administrators know that a particular user is behaving unacceptably. Depending on the rules of the site, users can be warned or banned.

Have some 'down time' without technology

It is important for both mental and physical health that your child's life is balanced—so they are not constantly 'online' or spending hours on a mobile phone. This should not be used as punishment, rather as some peaceful time where they are not being bothered.

Get new online accounts and/or a new phone number

There are programs that can be added to a mobile phone which will allow parents to set restrictions on the phone's use. Check with your mobile phone provider. Technology at the moment does not allow for individual numbers to be

blocked in the same way that online applications do. Phone numbers can be changed at no cost, if the request for a new number is as a result of ongoing abuse.

<u>If ongoing, report to police</u>
Most cyberbullying between students can be resolved at school level, but schools may not be able to report cyberbullying between individual students to the police so it can be up to the parent to make a police report.

A police report should not be in place of a school investigation, rather, in addition if required. A police report may be necessary where: despite the best efforts of the school, bullying does not stop; when it is not possible to know who is behind the abuse (e.g. fake accounts/blocked numbers); or when threats have been made to your child's personal safety. Each State has laws that prohibit online bullying and stalking. You don't have to put up with it.

Being eSmart at Lakeview Senior College

Lakeview Senior College recognises the need for students to be safe and responsible users of digital technologies. We believe that explicitly teaching students about safe and responsible online behaviours is essential and is best taught in partnership with parents/ guardians. We expect that all teachers, parents/guardians and students will work together to encourage this behaviour both at school and home.

An eSmart school is a school where the smart, safe and responsible use of information and communications technology is embedded in our college values and behaviours. In an eSmart school students, teachers and the wider school community are equipped to embrace the best these technologies can offer, while being informed decision makers. Students are regularly involved in developing and delivering information on the smart, safe and responsible use of technologies to a variety of audiences and are taught a suite of social and emotional skills.

When people at Lakeview Senior College use technology, both at school and home, we have responsibilities and rules to follow. We agree to:
- Be responsible whenever and wherever we use technology and support others by being respectful in how we talk to and work or socialise with them and never write or participate in online bullying (this includes forwarding messages and supporting others in harmful, inappropriate or hurtful online behaviour)
- Report to a teacher at Lakeview Senior College if I feel uncomfortable or unsafe online or see others participating in unsafe, inappropriate or hurtful online behaviour

When at school I agree to:
- Protect my privacy rights and those of other students by not giving out personal details including full names, telephone numbers, addresses and images
- Use appropriate and respectful language when talking to and working with others online and never participate in hate mail or acts of harassment
- Only take photos and record sound and video when it is part of a class or lesson with permission from all those involved
- Abide by copyright procedures when using content on websites (ask permission to use images, text, audio and video and cite references where necessary)
- Use the internet at school for educational purposes and use the equipment properly
- Think about how I use content I've researched on the internet and not simply copy and paste information from websites
- Not bring or download unauthorised programs, including games, to the school or run them on school computers
- Talk to my teacher or another adult if:
  - o I need help online
  - o I feel that the welfare of other students at the school is being threatened
  - o I come across sites which are not suitable for our school
  - o Someone writes something I don't like, or makes me and my friends feel uncomfortable or asks me to provide information that I know is private.

Management of cyber bullying incidents

Prevention

The school is proactive in preventing cyber bullying and harassment by actively working with the school community to promote a culture that has a zero tolerance of bullying and harassment. Students and staff are empowered to talk about their needs, and their rights to learn and to feel safe and comfortable are strongly supported through policy and actions.

The school implements a number of programs and activities that promote the development of social skills and community responsibilities.

Strategies	Actions
Parent, teachers, students and the community are made aware of the College's stance on cyber bullying, its characteristics and the College programs and response.	Cyber bullying prevention policy on College website. Documentation in the student diary.
Professional development for staff relating to cyber bullying, harassment and the strategies that counteract them are facilitated.	Staff meeting workshops and presentations, including: * Safe Schools Coalition. * Bullying prevention and incident response. * Cyber bullying lessons in Pathways curriculum.
Student workshops, productions and programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving are further developed.	Delivery through Pathways curriculum. Delivery through Wellbeing programs (see overview below).
Students are encouraged to develop a range of strategies for dealing with cyber bullying incidents.	Delivery through Pathways curriculum. Delivery through Wellbeing programs (see overview below).
The Cyber Bullying Prevention Policy and procedures are included in induction packages for new staff.	Staff induction packs contain documentation of the LSC Cyber Bullying Prevention Policy.
The LSC staff and student leaders model respectful behaviour.	Staff professional development programs in relation to wellbeing of students will continue. Student Leaders undertake specific training in modelling respectful behaviour.
Students are made aware of the support people available to assist with cyber bullying issues, and the steps involved in reporting and dealing with harassment issues.	Student version of Bullying Prevention Policy included in student diary. Delivery through Pathways curriculum. Delivery through Wellbeing programs (see overview below)
Acceptable ICT agreement between students, their parent/guardians and the College.	Acceptable ICT and Internet Use Policy that is provided to all students and agreement form signed.

Wellbeing programs to prevent cyber bullying

Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
The following College-wide wellbeing programs run across all year levels and are tailored for the particular year level.		

- Supportive friends training
- Cyber bullying/bullying prevention workshop
- Wear It Purple Day Program (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender)
- Gay, Straight, Lesbian Alliance
- R U Ok Day?
- Sexual health workshops

Intervention

	Year Level Coordinator (YLC) Action
First stage If cyber bullying is a first incident and minor	• Reiterate the College values and behaviours and positively reinforce these. • Have a discussion with the bully & victim. Use Restorative Practices to address the issue. • Remind the bully that they have signed an 'Acceptable Internet Use' agreement and ask them to explain why they chose to break this agreement. • Record incident for reference and monitor the situation. • The student is advised that if their behaviour is repeated they will be referred to the Wellbeing Team for appropriate counselling, but they are also given the option of immediate counselling if they request this. • If the file indicates prior incidents of bullying, all students involved should be interviewed. • Determine if a consequence is appropriate, such as removing access to technology. • The student is instructed that all inappropriate cyber communication must cease. They must remove and destroy all inappropriate materials. • Inform both the bully and victim's parents of the incident and the involvement of their child. • Decide if any further follow up is needed with parents or wellbeing team. Convene a Student Support Group (SSG) if needed. • Provide feedback on action taken to the teacher/s, and to other staff. • Check Department guidelines for removing inappropriate online material – http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/teachrespond.aspx
Second stage If cyber bullying behaviour is repeated, or it is initially more serious	• Reiterate the College values and behaviours and positively reinforce these. • Interview all students involved in the incident. Record all details of the incident. • Remind the bully (and parents) that they have signed an 'Acceptable Internet Use' agreement and ask them to explain why they chose to break this agreement. • Inform both the bully and the victim's parents of the incident and the involvement of their child. Arrange a parent interview for the bully and for the victim if necessary. • Students will have further restrictions placed upon their use of technology e.g. no unsupervised use of computers, mobile kept with YLC during the school day. • Determine if suspension or more serious action is most appropriate. Convene a SSG. • Offer ongoing support via the wellbeing team. • Record the incident in the student file and advise the Year Level Leading Teacher of incident. • Provide feedback on action taken to the teacher/s, and to other staff as required. • Follow up with the bully & and victim within two weeks to assess if further action is needed. • Check Department guidelines for removing inappropriate online material – http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/teachrespond.aspx
Third stage If the cyber bullying is severe or ongoing	• Reiterate the College values and behaviours and positively reinforce these. • Remind the bully (and parents) that they have signed an 'Acceptable Internet Use' agreement and ask them to explain why they chose to break this agreement. • Interviews and monitoring of the various parties should be handled by the same person, so that an overview and continuity are maintained. • Isolate students as required. • Interview all students involved in the incident. Record all details of the incident. • Contact an Assistant Principal to determine which of the following are appropriate: (i) Suspension* (i) Police contact and Department of Education and Early Childhood Emergency Management (iii) Withdrawal of technological privileges (iv) Other necessary actions • Contact the parent/guardian of the bully and inform them of the incident. Organise a SSG meeting and arrange for the bully to be sent home, if appropriate. • Contact the parent/guardian of the victim and inform them of the incident. Arrange an

	interview.
	• Organise appropriate internal and/or external support, including online cyber bullying modules.
	• Record incident in students' files and advise the Year Level Leading Teacher of incident.
	• Provide feedback on action taken to the teacher/s, and to other staff as required.
	• Follow up with the bully & and victim within two weeks to assess if further action is needed.
	• Check Department guidelines for removing inappropriate online material – http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/teachrespond.aspx

* Suspensions will only be a consequence implemented by the school if the cyber bullying incident occurs whilst attending school; or travelling to or from school; or while engaged in any school activity away from the school; or travelling to or from any school activity or if any cyber bullying incites verbal or physical bullying which occurs at school, travelling to and from school or at any school activity.

Consequences may include

- student mediation
- parent conference
- withdrawal from class
- withdrawal of privileges
- required to attend behavioural sessions or counselling
- online bullying modules
- detention
- internal suspension
- external suspension
- referral to law enforcement
- referral to Children, Youth and Families
- repeated offenses may result in a recommendation for expulsion
- other measures deemed appropriate

False claim

If it is found that any student has deliberately falsely accused another student of bullying, then the accusing student will be dealt with as would an offending student.

Critical incidents

Critical incidents will be referred to Department of Education and Early Childhood Student Critical Incident Unit.

Parent complaints

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx

Support services

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/default.aspx

Cyber Smart

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

Kids Help Line

http://www.kidshelp.com.au/

1800 55 1800

Communications plan

The Cyber Bullying Prevention Policy will be communicated in three main methods:

- Online copy via the College website http://www.lakeviewcollege.vic.edu.au/
- Student version included in the student diary
- Via College wellbeing programs and Pathways curriculum

Policy review

The Cyber Bullying Prevention Policy will be reviewed annually in line with the Annual Implementation Plan and make adjustments when needed, if required prior to the 12 month period review.