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AMERICAN SCHOOL
OF CREATIVE SCIENCE

Cyberbullying Policy

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Purpose

We believe that everyone in the school community has the right to learn and to teach in a supportive and caring environment without fear of being bullied. We are committed to helping all members of the school community to benefit from information and communication technology, while understanding its risks, and to equip children with the knowledge and skills to be able to use it safely and responsibly.

Objectives

This policy aims to ensure that:

1. Students, staff and parents know about cyberbullying and its consequences
2. We have the knowledge, policies and procedures to prevent and, if necessary, to deal with cyberbullying in school or within the school community
3. We monitor the effectiveness of our procedures.

Strategies

Prevention of Cyberbullying

The principal will act, as an e-safety officer, to oversee the practices and procedures outlined in this policy and monitor their effectiveness.

The e-safety officer will ensure that the school maintains details of agencies and resources that may assist in preventing and addressing bullying.

Staff will be trained to identify signs of cyberbullying and will be informed about the technologies that children commonly use.

A Code of Advice (see Appendix A) will be developed, periodically reviewed and communicated to help students protect themselves from being caught up in cyberbullying and to advise them on reporting any incidents.

Students will be informed about cyber bullying through curricular and pastoral activities. Students and staff are expected to comply with the school's internet acceptable use policy. Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying.

Practices and Procedures

The responsibilities of the school and students as set out in the anti-bullying policy apply also to this policy. Positive use of ICT will be promoted and the Acceptable Computer Use Policy will be kept under review as technologies develop.

CPD and INSET may be used to help staff develop their own practice and support students in safe and responsible use of ICT.

The school will encourage safe use of ICT, emphasizing, for example, the importance of password security and the need to log out of accounts.

The school will promote the message that asking for help is the right thing to do and all members of the school community will be informed how cyberbullying can be reported. Confidential records will be kept of all cyber bullying incidents.

Responding to cyberbullying

Cyberbullying will generally be dealt with through the schools anti-bullying policy. A cyber bullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response.

Impact: possibly extensive scale and scope
Location: the anytime and anywhere nature of cyber bullying
Anonymity: the person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is
Motivation: the perpetrator might not realize that their actions are bullying
Evidence: the subject of the bullying will have evidence of what happened

Support for the person being bullied

As with any form of bullying, support for the individual will depend on the circumstances.
- Emotional support and reassurance that it was right to report the incident.
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parents or a member of staff.
- Advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked from the individual's sites or services.
- Advice to consider changing email addresses and/or mobile phone numbers.
- Discuss contacting the police in cases of suspected illegal content.
- Actions, where possible and appropriate, to have offending material removed.

Investigation

The nature of any investigation will depend on the circumstances. It may include:

- A review of evidence and advice to preserve it, for example by saving or printing (e.g. phone messages, texts, emails, website pages).
- Efforts to identify the perpetrator, which may include looking at the media, systems and sites used.
- Speaking to witnesses who may have useful information.
- Requesting a student to reveal a message or other phone content or confiscating a phone (Staff do not have the authority to search the contents of a phone).

Working with the perpetrator

Work with the perpetrator and determine sanctions on an individual basis, in accordance with the anti-bullying policy, with the intention of:

- Helping the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop
- Holding the perpetrator to account, so they recognize the harm caused and do not repeat the behavior
- Helping bullies to recognize the consequences of their actions and facilitating change in their attitude and behavior
- Demonstrating that cyberbullying is unacceptable and that the school has effective ways of dealing with it.

Evaluating the effectiveness of anti-bullying procedures

Members of staff will report any incidents of cyberbullying to the Director of the Phase who will work to apply our policy in conjunction with the Anti-bullying policy and will also inform the Principal of any cyberbullying incidents detailing outcomes of the investigation including sanctions taken. The Principal will review any serious incidents and will ensure that an annual review of cyberbullying and anti-bullying procedures are carried out though; any deficiencies or weaknesses in cyberbullying and anti-bullying procedures will be remedied without delay.

The review will take into account comments and suggested areas for improvement from staff and students, including input from the PTA and Student council.

APPENDIX A

Cyber Safety Code

Three Steps to Safety

- Respect other people - online and off. Don't spread rumors about people or share their secrets, including phone numbers or passwords.

- If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm. Ignore them, but tell someone you trust.

- "Do as you would be done by!" Think how you would feel if you were bullied. You are responsible for your behavior - so don't distress other people or encourage others to do so.

If you are being bullied

- It is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.

- Don't ignore the bullying. Don't reply, but do tell someone you can trust, such as a teacher or parent, or call an advice line.

- Try to keep calm. If you seem frightened or angry it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.

Text/video messaging

- You can turn off incoming messages for a couple of days.

- If bullying persists you can change your number (ask your mobile phone provider).

- Do not reply to abusive or worrying messages. You can report them to you mobile phone provider.

Email

- Never reply to unpleasant or unwanted messages.

- Don't accept emails or open files from people you don't know.

- Don't delete bullying emails – print them or save them as evidence in a separate folder. Social networking sites, chatrooms and instant messaging

- Change privacy settings so you can choose who to be friends with and who can see your profile. Don't add anyone you don't know to your friend list.

- Don't use your real name in chatrooms.

- Never give out your photo or personal details, like your address, phone number or which school you go to.

- Don't post any pictures or videos you wouldn't be happy for your parents or teachers to see. Once they are online they can be copied and posted in other places where you can't get rid of them.

- Keep your passwords private and don't tell anyone, not even your best friend.

Always report bullying incidents. Not doing that allows the bully to continue. That's not good for the victims, for those who witness the incidents or for the bully, who may need help to change their antisocial behavior.

APPENDIX B

What is cyberbullying?

Cyber bullying includes sending or posting harmful or upsetting text, images or other messages, using the internet, mobile phones or other communication technology. It can take many forms, but can go even further than face to face bullying by invading home and personal space and can target one or more people.

It can take place across age groups and target students, staff and others.

It can include threats and intimidation, harassment, defamation, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation and unauthorized publication of private information or images. It can include messages intended as jokes, but which have a harmful or upsetting effect.

Cyber bullying may be carried out in many ways, including:

- threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips via mobile phone cameras
- silent or abusive phone calls or using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chat-room
- unpleasant messages sent during instant messaging
- unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook)