### Genesis Christian College  
**Cyber Bullying Policy**

**Policy Contact:** Head of Pastoral Care & School Counsellor  
**Number:** WS- 09-004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Genesis Christian College is implementing this policy to ensure that students and staff feel safe from bullying in all its forms including cyber bullying.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>This policy applies to all students and staff at Genesis Christian College.</td>
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<td>Definitions</td>
<td><strong>Cyber bullying</strong> is bullying using technology; when a person is hurt, threatened, intimidated and/or humiliated by another person who:</td>
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<td>- texts abusive, derogatory or threatening SMS messages on a mobile phone;</td>
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<td>- sends abusive, derogatory or threatening emails to the person and/or a wider audience;</td>
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<td>- creates a derogatory or threatening website, often using photographs possibly taken by mobile phone;</td>
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<td>- spreading of harmful rumours via email, SMS text or online chat;</td>
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<td>- dissemination of harmful rumours, pornography, or other such harmful or illegal material via emails, SMS text or online chat;</td>
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<td>- theft and/or misuse of passwords and logon IDs;</td>
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<td>- use of alias screen names to disguise abusive behaviour, and to deliberately distort communication;</td>
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<td>- defamatory websites or weblogs/blogs;</td>
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<td>- hacking with intent to alter recorded information or cause disruption to services;</td>
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<td>- posting of “hit lists” on websites, bulletin boards etc;</td>
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<td>- uses chat rooms to abuse or exclude the person or other uses of technology to bully.</td>
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**How is cyber bullying the same as face-to-face bullying?**

Cyber bullying is the same as face-to-face bullying because such actions:
- are deliberate and designed to hurt, threaten, intimidate or humiliate;
- involve an imbalance of power;
- are often repeated;
- leave the victim feeling defenceless and vulnerable.

**How is cyber bullying different to face-to-face bullying?**

Cyber bullying is different to face-to-face bullying because such actions:
- are verbal and psychological bullying;
Cyber-bullying, or e-bullying, is a reasonably recent type of 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.

"Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal Web sites, and defamatory online personal polling Web sites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others." -Bill Belsey

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.

Reference & related documents
WS-09-001 Child Protection Policy
WS-09-003 Anti-Bullying Policy
WS-06-001 Computer Use Policy
Kandersteg Declaration (2007)

Resource Reference – www.cyberbullying.ca

Policy and procedure:
1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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 school.

4. As for other forms of bullying, there is no one approach that will always work for cyber-bullying. Schools 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:

4.1. 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 NetAlert site at http://www.netalert.gov.au/ for advice about filters and other ways to restrict access to dangerous materials).

4.2. 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.

4.3. 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:

4.3.1. to be careful who they give their telephone number to or their online handle;
4.3.2. never give out or share personal information numbers (PINS);
4.3.3. don’t believe everything you read online – just because someone tells you they are fifteen, it doesn’t mean they are telling the truth;
4.3.4. 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;
4.3.5. never open a message from someone they don’t know;
4.3.6. be polite in all online or text message dealings; and
4.3.7. never arrange to meet someone they have met online unless they take their parents or (for older children) a trusted friend with them.
4.3.8. if it doesn’t look or feel right, it probably isn’t -Trust your instincts and teach your kids to trust theirs. While surfing the Internet, if you find something that you don’t like, makes you feel uncomfortable or scares you, turn off the computer and tell an adult.

4.3.9. you don’t have to be “Always On” turn off, disconnect, unplug, try actual reality instead of virtual reality! -Give yourself a break. Don’t stay online or connected too long. Spend time with your family and friends off line.

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

4.4.1. not to respond to cyber-bullying messages as this is only likely to encourage the bully. Bullies want them to respond;
4.4.2. to report the bullying to parents and to their teachers;
4.4.3. 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;
4.4.4. 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
4.4.5. 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.

5. The role of the school

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

5.2. The College will provide access to the following via the College Intranet:
5.2.1. Report Bullying school based drop box, and
5.2.2. Report Cyber red button alert linked to the AFP.

5.3. The Australian Government NetAlert site gives the following advice to young people about dangers online:
5.3.1. 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.
5.3.2. If something appears on your screen that disturbs you, tell your friends, a teacher or parent, or contact NetAlert on 1300 669 024
5.3.3. Remember, you will not get into any trouble by letting people know what you have stumbled across.

5.3.4. 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.

5.3.5. Keep all personal information to yourself (including photos, your name, the name of your school, 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.

5.3.6. 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.

5.3.7. Not everything you read on the internet is true. Be smart and make decisions for yourself on what you think is right and wrong.

5.3.8. 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.

5.3.9. 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.

5.3.10. 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.

5.4. A new resource published by the Queensland Police Services (QPS) on cyber safety and technology, Who’s Chatting to Your Kids, was released at the beginning of September 2009. The resource contains an easy-to-read information booklet and 45 minute DVD designed to support parents and guardians to establish with their children appropriate conditions of internet use within the home and elsewhere. The information booklet (and family internet safety agreement) is available to be downloaded from the police website at: http://www.police.qld.gov.au/programs/personalSafety/childProtection/default.htm.

5.5. More information about cyberbullying and other forms of bullying is available on the Queensland Schools Alliance against Violence (QSAAV) website at: http://education.qld.gov.au/studentservices/behaviour/qsaav/

6. Punitive Measures
6.1. Despite the best efforts of parents and schools, 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 ICT Computer Use Policy for more information about the legal requirements in regard to internet use.

6.2. Illegal use of College equipment and will be dealt with according to both the Anti Bullying Policy and the Student ICT Computer Use Policy and Agreement.

6.3. Be aware that bullying using telephones or computers is an illegal use of this equipment and can be prosecuted under the Telecommunication and the Broadcasting Acts.

6.4. Taking a photo without knowledge is illegal under the Privacy Act (State). Using a photograph without permission on a website is illegal under Federal Law.

Date approved 2005
Approval authority College Board
Date for next review Sep 2013
Documents superseded by this Policy or procedure: Bullying Policy (2005) page 9 &10

Revisions / Modifications
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Summary of changes</th>
<th>Updated by</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 2011</td>
<td>V2</td>
<td>General update, separated from Bullying Policy 2005, reference to Kandersteg Declaration</td>
<td>Head of School - Secondary</td>
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