# Cyber Safety

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

**Dear Parents,**

Sunbury College is committed to the provision of a positive, safe and caring learning environment that benefits all and promotes the achievement of success and excellence. We embrace these values recognizing them as reflective of our community. We would like our students to be responsible young men and women who care about others. However, communication through social media and mobile phones presents challenges and risks for adolescents. We expect the school's core values (*Respect, Fairness, Teamwork, Honesty, Trust and Integrity, Responsibility, Support and Compassion, Doing Your Best*) to be reflected in every aspect of our students' lives in and out of school, and this extends to their electronic communication with others. Students harassing, bullying or in any way mistreating other students (even if it occurs outside school hours) is not tolerated at Sunbury College.

Please take the time to discuss safe and responsible use of the internet and mobile phones with your children. I hope the points outlined below and the links that follow assist you to have a constructive conversation in your family about the safe use of electronic media.

**Stephen Smith**

**Principal**

## INTRODUCTION

Children using the internet can be cyberbullied or harassed through internet services like email, chat rooms, instant messaging, social networks or through websites. Bullying through mobile phones technologies such as SMS is also considered cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying includes teasing, spreading online rumours and sending unwanted or threatening messages or defamatory material. While it can have a damaging effect on children and young people, parents can encourage them to take control of the situation.

## 10 IMPORTANT TIPS FOR PARENTS:

1. **Encourage students to use internet-connected devices (such as computers, iPhones, etc) in common parts of the house – not in their bedroom.** Monitor your children's use of the internet – walk past the computer to see which sites they are visiting and ask them what they're doing.
2. **Teach children that information and images shared on the internet can never be deleted.** Once information is posted, your child loses control over where that information goes. Words and pictures intended for a small audience may unexpectedly be seen by a very large audience.
3. **Be aware that many young people say that they won't report cyber bullying.** Encourage your child to come to you if anybody writes or sends something that makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened.
4. **Ensure your child understands that communication via the Internet is public.**

You never know who may be reading or viewing the material they post online. Students need to consider if they are putting themselves, their reputation and their family or others at risk.

5. **Young people need to be cautious about whom they communicate with online.** A 'friend' they make on Facebook, a person chatting on MSN or another online game-player may not be who they say they are. Some adults steal or fabricate identities to build a relationship with young people online, with the intention of then causing harm to that child. Sadly, online grooming by predatory adults is an increasing problem in society – children must be aware of this risk.

6. **Taking away children's access to the internet will not solve issues of harassment and loss of privacy.** Online communication will be a feature of our children's lives – we must educate them to use the internet safely and responsibly.

7. **Mobile phones can be used to harass young people and send inappropriate or sexual content.** It is imperative that you discuss with your child that messages and images sent via mobile phone can quickly be distributed to a much wider audience than they ever intended.

8. **Harassment of others and inappropriate use via the internet and mobile phones can be a criminal offence.** Likewise, young people sending sexually explicit material via the internet and their mobile phones are committing a criminal offence under both State and Commonwealth laws. Young people need to be aware that their electronic communication is in the public domain, and is therefore subject to the laws that govern all of us even if they consent to that material being sent in the first place.
   - Crimes Act Section 21A Brodie's Law
   - Commonwealth Criminal Code 1995 Section 473 Definitions
   - Commonwealth Criminal Code 1995 Division 474 – Telecommunications offences

Typical Cyber Bullying / Cyber Crime / Social Media Criminal Offences can include (but not limited to):
   - Stalking - which now covers bullying & cyber bullying behaviours (aka Brodie's Law)
   - Using a carriage service (mobile phone, computer etc) to menace, harass or cause offence
   - Possess / distribute / manufacture Child Pornography (eg sexting / skyping of unauthorised and inappropriate material)
   - Unauthorised access to or modification of restricted data (without permission accessing accounts or data eg facebook / email accounts, school data etc that are protected by a password)
   - Intervention Orders (court orders) can be initiated to prevent serious bullying and it is a criminal offence to breach such court orders

9. **Discuss with your child the need to be kind and respectful to all people in all forms of communication.** The distance and anonymity of internet and SMS communication can sometimes result in young people saying things they wouldn't say face-to-face. Cyber-bullying is unkind and offensive, and is not tolerated at Sunbury College.

10. **Ensure that electronic communication does not interfere with your child's studies and sleeping patterns.** Upon completing Year 12, many students freely admit that time spent on Facebook distracted them from their studies. Many also admit to staying up too late communicating with friends via SMS. Studies have recently found that many adolescents are struggling at school because they have not slept enough – some teenagers have their sleep severely interrupted by receiving and responding to SMS messages throughout the night. Discuss possible strategies with your child to avoid these interruptions and loss of sleep and study time; some students go so far as asking their parents to change their Facebook password, so they can only use Facebook when their parents log them in!

# PREVENTION

## TIPS FOR STUDENTS

1. Use a **strong password** (a combination of upper and lower case letters, symbols and numbers).
2. **Don't believe** everything you read – make sure you know it's coming from a reliable source.
3. Don't give out any **private information** over the internet or through mobile phones about you, your family, friends or other people that you know.
4. **Think before you send!** You have to think about what you are saying and how the recipient/s may feel.
5. **Don't hide** behind a computer screen, if you wouldn't say it to their face, don't say it at all!
6. **Don't post** inappropriate or illegal content anywhere on the internet. For example images (sexting), vilification, racist remarks, bullying, 'hate' mail.
7. Make sure your **social networking profile** is set to private (check your security settings regularly – at least once a month).
8. Only accept **friend requests** from people you actually know – even if it is a friend of a friend it's not a good idea to add them unless you actually know them.
9. Tell your friends to ask for your **permission** before uploading and/or tagging a photo of you on their social networking profiles.
10. Don't click on any **links that are embedded in emails** - type the URL into the browser and go from there.

# ACTION

- **Ignore it.** Don't respond to the bully. If they don't get a response they may get bored and go away.
- **Block** the person. This will stop you seeing messages or texts from a particular person.
- **Tell someone**. Tell your mum or dad, or another adult you trust. Or you can call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800, visit their website or contact the Cybersmart Online Helpline service (www.**cybersmart**.gov.au/.../**Help**.aspx).
- **Keep the evidence**. This can be useful in tracking the bully down. Save texts, emails, online conversations or voicemails as proof.
- **Report it to:**
    - Sunbury College—they have policies in place about bullying and cyber bullying. (ref. http://www.sunburysc.vic.edu.au/)
    - Your ISP and/or phone provider or the website administrator—there are actions they can take to help.
    - Police when it concerns an issue outside of school –
        - If there is an immediate threat to your safety in an emergency situation please call Triple Zero (000).
        - For further advice relating to online or mobile phone harassment, threats or cyber bullying behaviour contact your local police station.

# LINKS FOR ADVICE & ASSISTANCE:

**Help for young people**
Kids Helpline (ages 5 to 25 years)
www.kidshelp.com.au ⬀
1800 55 1800 (free call except from some mobile phones)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**Parentline Victoria**
www.parentline.vic.gov.au ⬀
13 22 89 (cost of a local call)
Open 8am to midnight 7 days a week

## Cybersafety Contact Centre
Tel: **1800 880 176**
Email: cybersafety@acma.gov.au
www.cybersmart.gov.au

## Australian Government's Easy Guide to Socialising Online
www.dbcde.gov.au/easyguide
Provides young people and their parents information on 26 social networking sites, search engines and online games, and gives step by step instructions on how to report cyber bullying, abuse and inappropriate content on these sites.

**Alannah & Madeline Foundation website**
www.amf.org.au.
Useful information on cybersafety, bullying and wellbeing.

www.thinkuknow.org.au
Cybersafety website with information for parents, carers, teachers and young people 11-17 years old.

http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au
General bullying website for young people, parents, carers providing help, advice & support re bullying.