



St. Mary's Catholic High School, Dubai – Muhaisnah

SMM CYBER SAFETY AND ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Written by:	School Counsellor	Reviewed:	January 2019
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Approved by:	Board of Governors		



SMM Cyber Safety and Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy

Rationale:

With the mission of SMM to provide holistic, quality, affordable, and inclusive education that develops innovative, globally aware and lifelong learners who are capable of making good moral judgements, guided by the values of respect, honesty, compassion, and excellence in a multicultural environment, there is, ZERO tolerance of bullying yet no denouncing of the bully. With the advent of social media and computerisation, permeating the leisure time of our students it is critical that the school will protect her children from the dangers of the cyber world. In connection with the Anti-bullying policy and as a part of the child protection policy, the SMM cyber safety and Anti-cyber bullying policy will be in place.

This policy intends to help students make healthy and appropriate use of social media and the internet for their progress on research and positive interaction. This will include students' use of blogs, wikis, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards, or comments on web-articles, such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook including their school hosted google accounts.

Objectives of the Policy

- To provide awareness and guidelines for what is acceptable or not and the effective use of gadgets in school and of social media, alongside the value of respect in a multicultural environment.
- Protect the students from sexual harassment or cyberbullying from social media sites.

Definition of Terms

Cyber Bullying/Online Bullying - refers to posting of photos, videos that humiliates an individual using social media sites or proliferation of any soft materials (e.g. electronic photos, screenshots) that devalues respect and compassion.

Gross Misconduct - refers to unlawful or improper behaviour.

Criminal Discriminatory - refers to discrimination against someone based on race, colour, sex, religion, national origin, handicap or disability.

Harassment - refers to offensive behaviour, unwanted & annoying it is commonly understood as behaviour intended to disturb or upset, including threats & demands and it is characteristically repetitive.

Threat - refers to statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action on someone in retribution for something done or not done.

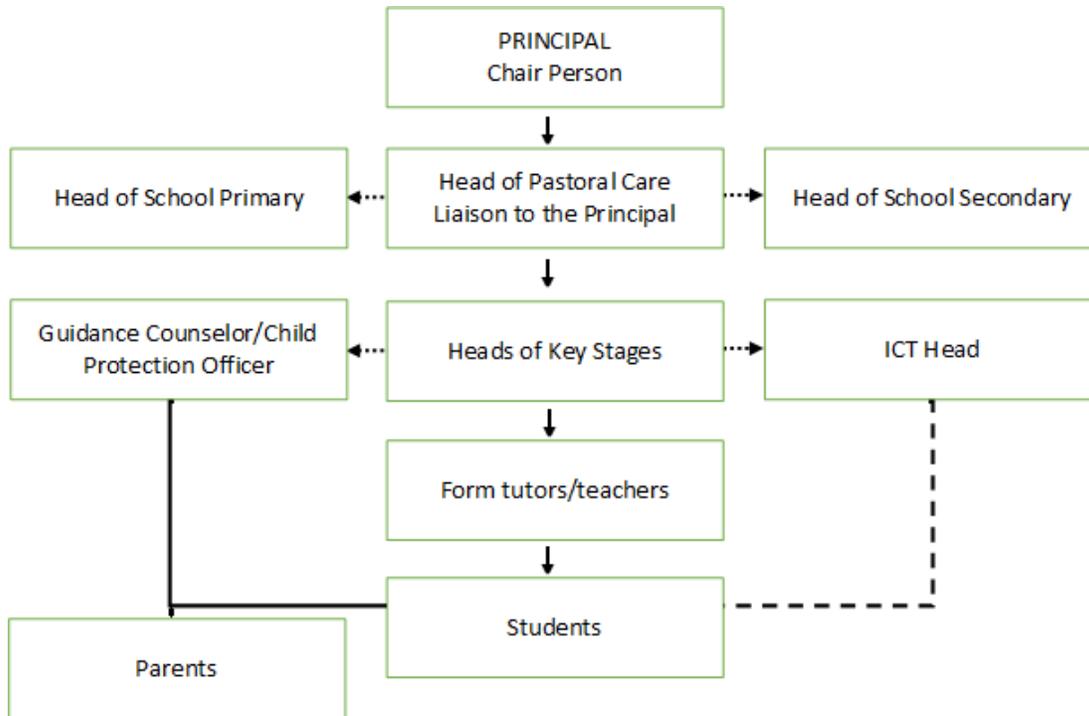
Derogatory - showing disrespectful attitude or behaviour against others.

Obscene - refers to materials that can be used as morally offensive such as videos, photos and informal words.



Defamatory - the act of saying false things in order to make people have a bad opinion of someone or something.

Organisational Structure of the Cyber Safety and Anti-Cyber Bullying Team



SMM as part of a community both upholding safety for the holistic development of its students and promoting a safe school environment will consider an act of bullying based on the simple definition:

Whilst Bullying is an intentionally hurtful behaviour that is repeated over time and has an imbalance of power.

Cyber Bullying is defined as the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature.

"children may be reluctant to admit to being the victims of cyberbullying"

Role of Cyber Safety and Anti-Cyber Bullying Team

Staff must remain vigilant about cyber bullying behaviours and approach this in the same way as any other category of Child Abuse; that is, do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with the matter. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; because they may be too young or have a level of Special Educational Needs which means that they may be unable to realise what others may be doing to them.

Staff must also be aware of those children who may be vulnerable pupils; those coming from troubled families, or those responding to emotional problems or mental health issues which may bring about a tendency to be unkind to others, or may make them more likely to fall victim to the behaviour of others.



Responding to bullying with proactive measures for students, parents and school staff help improve the safe conditions of a school community and help builds a happy and respectful learning environment. It also gives room for immediate addressing of both the concerned parties needs thereby forming both in positive and guided holistic development.

Functions

1. Institute information dissemination and formulate activities for the protection of the students.
2. Create a program in support for the students who may be suffering from cyber bullying based from the reports.
3. Supervise the implementation of the program to ensure the effectiveness and to provide necessary reports for such cases.
4. Secure the students' rights to be respected and heard.
5. Ensure that all school constituents are aware of the policy.
6. Disseminate information/guidelines on the role and responsibilities of the Cyber Safety and Anti-Cyber Bullying Team through but not limited to schools' bulletins and advisories for parents and staff.
7. Investigate and secure records for such cases.
8. Investigation will be conducted by the Cyber Safety and Anti-Cyber Bullying Team on the forgoing complaint.
9. Person involved shall secure the confidentiality of the case.

Prevention Cyber Bullying

SMM involves the whole community and takes proactive measures to disallow bullying to happen by:

1. Holding weeklong orientation and assemblies on bullying through concerted efforts of Heads of Key stages and Form teachers.
2. Designing and implementing intervention programs suited year level with focus on the value of respect and resiliency
3. Reinforcement and correction of behaviour through merit awards and warning slips (refer to behaviour policy)
4. Setting class rules and making of artistic expressions about bullying and stopping it.
5. Writing a personal pledge or promise against bullying
6. Individual and pastoral counselling through restorative discipline

Handling the Cases



1. Any reported cases of cyber bullying by the students, parents, or staff will have be filed or noted in the students' diaries to be reported to the Heads of Key Stage/the Guidance Counsellor/Child Protection Officer.
2. Evidences or incident reports of the cyber bullying will be examined carefully by the HOKs/Guidance Counsellor and will be consulted with the Head of ICT department depending on the nature of the infraction and careful investigation will follow.
3. With the case report established, the HOK will endorse the case to the Head of Pastoral Care.
4. The head of the pastoral care will laisse the case to the Principal and inform the involved Head of School.
5. The team will be deliberating the gravity of the case and will have to issue a slip(White slip/Yellow slip)
6. The HOK will coordinate with the parents of both children and will be setting a meeting together with the guidance counsellor and will issue the slip. In the meeting the core objective is to be able to align school and home approach as how the children may be helped improve behaviours/coping.
7. If the case leads to having the erring child suspended, the HOK & counsellor together with the parent will be discussing how restorative discipline will be implemented. On suspensions some day/s will be at home and others will be in the school with the counsellor setting up a CARE program for the student/s.

STUDENTS ROLES

1. Students are personally responsible for context published into social media tools. Be aware that anything published will be public for many years.
2. Don't escalate heated discussions. Be respectful, and quote facts to lower the temperature and correct misrepresentations.
3. If you feel even slightly uneasy about something to publish, then it should not be posted. If in doubt, always discuss it with parents or teachers prior to posting.
4. Always consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be derogatory e.g. politics, religion, personal matter etc.
5. Avoid publishing your contact details where they can be accessed and used widely by people you don't know and never publish anyone else's contact details.
6. Observe the activity on the site for a while before sharing your contributions/opinions of the content and any 'unwritten' rules that other contributors might follow.
7. Activity inside the classroom on social media websites during school hours should complement and/or support your role as students. Refer to BYOD Guidelines.



8. Seek the advice of the ICT Department to ensure safety awareness.
9. Don't bully, intimidate or harass others. Cyber bullying is a criminal offense in the UAE. Status which damages a person's reputation is considered harassment and is punishable by UAE Federal Cyber Crime Law.

PARENTAL ROLES

1. Know what your child doing online.
2. Consider monitoring your child's social media accounts.
3. Understand the challenges posed by technology (e.g. Mobile Phones, IPod, etc.)
4. Be aware of bullying in social media specifically group chat box.
5. Parents and students should report cyberbullying cases in school where it occurs, keep a record and report to the Guidance Centre/Head of Key Stages/Form Tutors.

MONITORING PROCEDURES

1. In particular uploading, forwarding or posting a link to any of the following types of material on a social media website, will amount to gross misconduct and may lead to dismissal/permanent exclusion from the school.
 - a. Pornographic materials such as but not limited to, writing, pictures, films and video clips of sexually explicit or arousing nature;
 - b. Defamatory statement about any person or organization;
 - c. Material which is offensive (e.g. words, pictures, links), obscene, criminal discriminatory, (e.g. threat, bullying) derogatory (e.g. haters, accusers) or may cause embarrassment to child and the community.
2. Rules and procedures for student shall apply based on the Behaviour Policy of SMM and the deliberation of the Cyber Safety and Anti-Cyber Bullying Team

SUPPORT

1. The school coordinates with parents of the students for the implementation of the policies through posting them on the school website.
2. Conducts group discussions among parents for the awareness and guidelines.
3. Close monitoring among teachers and staff.
4. Conducts seminars and group discussions among students for safety use of social media sites.
5. Establishes linkages with the government agencies and organization that handled anti-bullying in social media sites.