Cyber-Bullying Policy

Our aim is to protect the health and safety both of the student(s) and of the whole school community.

Brigidine College prohibits the inappropriate and threatening use of e-mail, internet and mobile phone facilities both in the school, at any school function and away from school where the behaviour seriously impacts on other students or staff at the school.

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying can include, but is not limited to, the items listed below:

- **Email** - Sending harassing, threatening and/or menacing messages to targets either directly, anonymously or using another person’s address or alias.
- **Instant Messaging (IM)** (Systems include MSN Messenger, Yahoo & Bebo) – Harassing and heated arguments (referred to as ‘flaming’) can occur and include obscene language in private chat rooms.
- **Chat Rooms/Bash boards** (Real time communication facilities) - Can allow students to anonymously write anything (true or untrue) creating and adding cruel entries in a world wide forum.
- **Short Text Messages (SMS)** – Masquerading as another by using their mobile phone or computer to send harassing or threatening messages.
- **Websites/Social Networking sites** – Mocking, teasing and harassing; voting online for the ‘ugliest’ or ‘fattest’ etc and posting visuals that can be altered (this can include sexually explicit material)

Cyberbullying can be a criminal offence under the following acts

- Summary Offences Act Criminal offences include; ‘Production, dissemination or possession of child pornography’ or ‘Publishing child pornography and indecent articles’ (Section 91H of the **Crimes Act 1900**)
- Federal **Cybercrime Act 2001** including unauthorized access to, or modification of, restricted data.
- Specific sections of the Crimes Act relating to assault.
- Defamation under the **NSW Defamation Amendment Act 2002** (Individual civil action legislation)

Procedures

With the aim of preventing instances of cyberbullying, all students are required to read and sign the College’s Cybersafety use agreement at the beginning of each year.

Cyberbullying that is alleged to have occurred inside or outside of the school, where it disrupts school life or significantly breaks down relationships between members of the school community, should be taken seriously and responded to as thoroughly as possible.

If you are being cyberbullied you should refer it to an adult as soon as possible. In the first instance your Home room Teacher or Year Coordinator

**Responses to Cyberbullying**

If an incidence of cyberbullying occurs, investigation and possible disciplinary action will be undertaken. A range of actions are available, depending on individual circumstances. These include:

- no disciplinary action may be required
- student(s) put on a contract
- student(s) required to undergo counselling
- penalty work and/detention
- suspension
- transfer
- expulsion

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**Contacts and Resources for Parents**

- School Counsellor
- NSW Police Liaison Officer – Phone: 8338 7463
- Kids Helpline
  - Phone: 1800 551 800
- Community Services Helpline – Phone 133627
- National Coalition Against Bullying – [www.ncab.org.au](http://www.ncab.org.au)
- [www.thinkuknow.org.au](http://www.thinkuknow.org.au)
- [www.netalert.gov.au](http://www.netalert.gov.au)
- [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)