Cyber Safety Policy

Purpose: To meet the changing nature of technology and to ensure that students, parents and staff are aware of the risks attached to overuse and unsafe use of the internet. To ensure that students are able to make educated choices regarding these risks.

Definition: Cyber safety refers to time allocated to use of the internet (and incorporates issues of gaming addiction). This includes the issues of safety around the internet - cyber bullying, identity theft etc.

Rationale: With the rapid development of technology students are exposed to a wide range of connected electronic devices such as laptops, tablets and smartphones. Through these they have instant access to the internet. These devices are recognised as beneficial educational tools. However, some students are spending large amounts of time using electronic devices and in some cases this leads to reduced time dedicated to sleep, study, class work, family communication and outdoor activity. It can impact students' relationships as trust issues develop if students lie to parents about the nature and quantity of their usage.

In addition there are a number of safety issues on the internet which pose threats to students' emotional lives and thus their academic lives. Some students are involved in cyber bullying either as perpetrators or as victims. Some students are unaware of safety issues surrounding their digital footprint and are thus at risk of a range of possible problems such as identity theft and sexual predators.

Aims:

1. To implement and maintain a whole school approach to address the problem of cyber safety.
2. To make students aware of the safety issues regarding the internet, gaming, social networking.
3. To inform students about the negative consequences that can result from the misuse of the internet.
4. To empower students to take ownership of and responsibility for their usage and habits.
5. To educate teachers about their role in ensuring that students are using the internet responsibly and safely.
6. To support parents in their efforts to ensure that their children are using the internet responsibly and safely.
7. To identify those at most risk and provide them with specific support from a range of support mechanisms from the Wellbeing Coordinator.

Outcomes:

- Staff, students and parents to adhere to the school/DEC computer use policy.
- Provide students with relevant skills and strategies to use computers effectively & with a high level of digital literacy.
- Equip students with relevant skills and strategies to manage computer overuse and/or addiction.
- Educate students about cyberbullying and other unacceptable behaviours.
- Educating students about risks concerning internet use & online privacy (release of personal details; photos; sexual predators etc)

- Provide students with effective strategies to protect their digital identity
- Promote responsible/appropriate digital etiquette
- Staff to be proactive in enforcing appropriate computer use in classroom.
- Staff to recognise that all incidents of bullying are unacceptable and to be proactive in addressing their issue
- Use surveys and other feedback tools to respond to issues in a timely manner

Staff:

- To ensure ongoing communication between staff, parents, students and relevant welfare agencies is open and productive.
- To produce and keep updated material to distribute to parents.
- To regularly engage in questionnaires to gauge the severity of the problems and to set targets for work in this area.
- To determine what strategies can assist teachers and to use Professional Development Days to disseminate this.
- To develop and regularly update an education program as part of the Values Education program.

Students:

- All students will be made aware of the school rules and expectations regarding computer usage and cyber safety.
- All students will develop an understanding that there are rights/ responsibilities which accompany the correct use of the internet and consequences which accompany the misuse of the internet.
- All students will participate in programs to raise awareness about responsible use of ICT.