

## Cyberbullying Policy

The College is committed to eliminating any form of electronic social aggression (Cyberbullying).

The College will adopt a consistent and acceptable use of electronic devices as part of teaching and learning activities whilst in the College environment. This will extend to the safety and protection of all at the College. Mobile phones should be switched off during all learning activities at College unless otherwise previously agreed with the tutor leading the session.

### So what is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is a threatening intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot defend themselves properly.

There are several forms of cyberbullying.

- Text message bullying which involves the sending of unwelcome texts that are threatening or may cause unnecessary discomfort.
- Phone call bullying via mobile phones either by making silent calls or leaving abusive messages. The person bullying may steal someone's phone and then use it to harass others, or disguise their numbers by using someone else's phone to avoid identification.
- Email bullying may be used to send bullying or threatening messages. This may be done using someone else's number or a pseudonym for anonymity.
- Picture/video clip bullying via phone cameras may be used to make an individual feel threatened or embarrassed. "Happy Slapping" involves filming and sharing physical attacks.
- Chat room bullying may involve sending menacing or upsetting responses to people when they are in a web based chat room.
- Bullying through instant messaging is an internet based form of bullying where individuals are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real time conversations online.
- Bullying via defamatory blogs on the website.

### What can be done to reduce the risk of cyberbullying?

Learners are expected to comply with the following when using College facilities. Misuse of College and or workplace facilities may result in disciplinary action.

- Ensure that any communication through the internet and email are professional and related to learning.
- Avoid contravening any internet or social media policy.

- Keep passwords confidential and change them when prompted or when known by another user.
- Use passwords that are not obvious or easily guessed.
- Log off at the end of each session to ensure that no one else can use their e-learning account.
- Promptly report if they suspect they have received a computer virus or spam (i.e. unsolicited email) or if they receive a message that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Keep personal information including names, addresses, photographs, credit cards and telephone number of themselves and/or others private.
- Avoid using the electronic identity of another person to send messages to others or for any other purposes.
- If contacted by the press or any other external organisation about posts on their social networking site that relates to The College of Animal Welfare, the personal tutor must be notified. They will then report it to the Vice Principal Academic.
- Do not take photos or videos of other members of the college community or work placement without their prior consent.
- Do not send/forward emails or other messages:
  - Sent in confidence
  - With a computer virus or attachment that is capable of damaging a recipients computer
  - Chain letter
  - Hoax emails
  - Send unlawful or unacceptable material or remarks, including offensive, abusive or discriminatory comments
- Learners must not send:
  - Threatening, bullying or harassing material
  - Sexually explicit or sexually suggestive material or correspondence
  - False or defamatory information about a person, work placement or the College
  - The College branding or logo without the written permission of the College Principal
  - Information which they have been asked not to.
  - Derogatory or offensive comments on the internet

## How will the College make sure that learners feel safe to learn?

- Active promotion of anti-bullying policies in all college activities
- Well trained staff that will challenge cyberbullying at college or in any activity related to learning
- Provision of learner guidance on the risks of communication technologies and the consequences of their misuse
- Internet blocking technologies continually reviewed and updated with potentially harmful sites blocked
- Robust systems in place to prevent images and information about learners and staff being accessed inappropriately
- Parents informed of the College's policy and procedures relating to cyberbullying and use of social networking sites
- Immediate suspension of an individual engaging in any cyberbullying until an internal investigation has been conducted

## Procedure in the event of cyberbullying

1. Any threat of violence, instance of cyberbullying or electronic harassment **must** be reported to a senior manager at the College
2. A prompt investigation will be initiated by the Vice Principal Academic or Principal
3. Disciplinary procedures will apply – misconduct/gross misconduct – Referral to the Professional Body
4. Where appropriate, website hosts should be asked to amend or remove material
5. Report to the police as necessary
6. Offer support and stress counselling if necessary
7. Parents /guardians will be informed (where appropriate)
8. Fitness to Practice concerns will require disclosure to the Professional Body.

Further information:

<http://www.antibullying.net>