Aitken College

eSMART POLICY

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Rationale

Aitken College endeavours to create and maintain an environment where all members of the community feel accepted, safe and respected, by encouraging responsibility for actions and awareness of the need to care for and value the rights of others. All staff, students and parents are required to honour and support this commitment.

Safe, responsible and respectful use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is an essential part of the school community and should be addressed on an ongoing basis through relevant and age-appropriate curriculum, policies that set clear expectations and procedures that ensure timely and effective intervention and response.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Confirm the College’s commitment to ensuring the safe and responsible use of ICTs by all members of the College community: students, staff and parents.
- Show how the College will act to support the wellbeing of all members of the community and intervene appropriately when issues arise that require a response.
- Present an overarching statement that confirms the ethos and commitment of the College in relation to the six domains of the eSmart Schools program.

Definitions

Bullying is unwelcome and repeated behaviour which causes harm or distress.

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to bully an individual or a group with the intent to cause harm. The intended harm may be social, psychological and, in extreme cases, physical. Cyberbullying can cause fear, withdrawl, shame, guilt, loneliness or depression (from www.esafety.gov.au).

Cyberbullying behaviours include: abusive texts and emails; hurtful messages, images or videos; imitating others online; excluding others online; and nasty online gossip and chat.

Being eSmart means knowing how to guard against security and privacy risks online, download content in a legal and ethical way, research and reference information, as well as manage reputation and realtionships in cyberspace (The Alannah and Madeline Foundation).

Wellbeing is a state of positive emotional and social functioning that allows us to thrive, flourish and learn. It refers not only to a person's subjective experience of 'feeling good' about themselves and their relationships with others but also to their sense of meaning, purpose and growth.
Policy Development and Implementation

This policy has been developed by the Aitken College eSmart Committee with input from staff, students and parents. The eSmart Committee is a sub-committee of the College Wellbeing Committee. Consultation and input has also involved the Heads of Schools Committee, ICT Committee, and the Chaplaincy and Student Services team.

This eSmart Policy is not a stand-alone policy, but references and incorporates the following College policies:

- The Aitken College Charter
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunity Policy
- College Code of Conduct
- ICT Acceptable Use Agreement
- Social Media Policy
- Discipline Policy

Communication of Policy

This policy and others as listed above are published on the College’s website (for parent access) and on the My Aitken intranet site (for staff and students). Parents are updated on College policies through the fortnightly newsletter and information nights.

Intervention and Consequences

The Heads of Schools, together with the Deputy Principal and Principal have responsibility for monitoring and responding to issues of safety and wellbeing in the school community. Staff, students and parents are encouraged to report unsafe behaviour.

The College’s response to unsafe behaviour is outlined in the policies referenced above, incorporating acceptable use, bullying, equal opportunity and discipline. The College aims to respond in a timely and effective manner, with the intention of ensuring the wellbeing of all parties involved.

Review and Evaluation

Ongoing review and evaluation of this policy and its effectiveness is the responsibility of the College Wellbeing Committee who will undertake this every two years.

The Six eSmart Domains

Aitken College responds to and implements the six eSmart Domains as follows:

1. Effective school organisation

The eSmart Committee is a sub-committee of the Wellbeing Committee. It comprises staff (representing management, curriculum, welfare, Information Technology), College Board representative and has opportunities for student and parent input.

The College has clear guidelines and procedures for supervising students in the school yard during the day, including before and after school, and during all other in-school and out-of-school activities.

There are clear policies and guidelines for the use of ICTs, including supervision in school and network monitoring of appropriate use (utilising Netbox Blue).
Heads of Schools record details of any incidents of bullying, cyberbullying and other forms of harassment. Students can report such behaviour using the Bullybox email address or the NeedToTalk email address; such reports are responded to promptly and appropriately.

New members of the College community are inducted into the ethos, procedures and processes of the school: students by Heads of Schools, Homeroom Teachers and the Peer Support program; parents through enrolment interview and information nights; staff through formal and informal induction and mentoring procedures.

2. School plans, policies and procedures

Aitken College has established clear guidelines for behaviour and behaviour management; the Aitken College Charter and Codes of Conduct (Primary and Secondary) are published for all students and displayed prominently.

The Equal Opportunity and Anti-Bullying policies define what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and describe procedures for dealing with complaints.

The ICT Acceptable Use Policy and Agreement defines the College’s expectations for use of all ICTs, including the computer network and all personal devices. It also includes cyber-behaviour in-school or out-of-school that may impact members of the College community.

A College Code of Conduct and a Social Media Policy outline acceptable and unacceptable behaviours for all members of the College community, including students, staff and parents.

3. Respectful and caring school community

The Aitken College Vision, Mission and Aims statement sets out the core values of the College. The Aitken College Charter lists the key values and expectations for students in their day to day life at school. The Respectful Behaviour statement describes what our community expects from staff, parents and students as they work together.

Students have a number of opportunities to work together in cross-age groupings. The Peer Support Program operates between Year 6 and Prep and between Year 11 and Year 7. Senior School homeroom groups are vertically arranged with students from Years 10, 11 and 12 in each Homeroom. The Performing Arts program includes events such as the College Musical in which students work in cross-age groups.

4. Effective teacher practices

A variety of relationship-based pedagogies are used at Aitken College: much learning takes place in groups within classrooms, groups plan and deliver presentations to each other (often using ICTs), student leaders meet to discuss and plan, the Environment Committee is active in their field, the Aitken Genius Bar students support their peers with ICT use and the Peer Support program operates for Year 7 & Year 11 and Prep & Year 6.

The staff professional development program has a major and ongoing focus on the use of ICTs in teaching and learning. Staff skills in ICT have been audited and individuals have participated in targeted training sessions to bring skills to the required level.

Staff have been trained in the safe and responsible use of ICTs; many staff have undertaken the ACMA Cybersmart Outreach full-day professional development program.

The Discipline Policy describes approaches for dealing with inappropriate or unsafe behaviour. Support for classroom teachers is available from the four Heads of Schools and the Student Services team.

The Anti-Bullying policy and Equal Opportunity policy provide guidelines and processes for dealing with inappropriate behaviours towards members of the school community.
5. An eSmart curriculum

The Life Skills curriculum at Aitken College is unique and involves all students from Prep to Year 12. Among its broad content are topics that cover digital citizenship, bullying, social and emotional skills and cybersafety. The annual Wellbeing Week includes presentations on cybersafety. The Primary Library program also includes aspects of the safe and responsible use of ICTs.

The use of information and communications technologies is well embedded in the curriculum; students from Years 6 to 11 have their own iPads which are used in all subject areas. Prep to Year 5 classes have class sets of iPads. College communication and resources utilise the electronic diary and the e Locker system.

Within Year 7 Lifeskills and the Years 3 to 5 Library program, students engage in the development of peer-to-peer teaching resources about cybersafety issues.

Year 6 students participate in the eSmart Digital Licence program.

6. Partnerships with parents and the local community

Parents at Aitken College are involved at a range of levels. In the Primary years, parent helpers are regularly in classrooms, assisting with reading and other activities; these parents must complete a comprehensive training program and sign an agreement. Others assist with the Kitchen Garden Program. Parents serve on the Parents and Friends Association, the Friends of The Arts Committee and the Year 11 Ball Committee.

Communication with parents occurs in several ways: the College Newsletter is published fortnightly and emailed to parents, teachers regularly email parents when necessary and parents have access to their child’s electronic diary. Parent-Teacher Interviews take place twice a year and are booked online. Regarding use of ICTs, parents are required to sign the Student ICT Acceptable Use Policy and Agreement. Parent seminars on cybersafety have taken place on several occasions (ThinkUKnow and ACMA).

Our local community library, the Craigieburn Library, was one of the first accredited eSmart Libraries. Soon after this being awarded, the Aitken eSmart team met with the Craigieburn Library eSmart Coordinator to hear about and discuss their eSmart journey.