ELTHAM HIGH SCHOOL

POLICY DOCUMENT
Safe Connections Policy

INTRODUCTION

There has been much written in the popular media about the risks associated with modern technology, in particular mobile phone and internet use. Current research rightly highlights the need for young people and adults to be vigilant in protecting themselves from such issues as: cyber bullying and harassment, exposure to anti-social or illegal material, viruses, spyware, identity fraud, exposure to pornography and being targeted by sex offenders or others who may wish to cause harm. Highlighting these risks raises a concern about how to best protect ourselves and our young people from the outside world, particularly now that the outside world is entering our school and homes through such technology.

It is understood that the use of new technologies is one way that young people can connect with their peers. Social networking sites like www.facebook.com can be fun to use as well as an effective way to link up with friends and people who have similar interests. By being aware of some of the characteristics and potential dangers of social networking sites and the online environment, schools and parents can be better equipped to deal with the coexisting online/offline world of today's young people.

It is acknowledged that addressing the safety issues relating to the use of new technologies is a community responsibility. Local schools in and around the Shire of Nillumbik have identified this and in so doing have developed this common policy under the banner of "Safe Connections".

Important Terms Used In This Document:

1. The abbreviation 'ICT' in this document refers to the term 'Information and Communication Technologies'.

2. 'Cyber safety' refers to the safe use of the Internet and ICT equipment/devices, including mobile phones.

3. 'School ICT' refers to the school's computer network, Internet access facilities, computers, and other school ICT equipment/devices.

4. The term 'ICT equipment/devices' used in this document, includes but is not limited to; computers (such as desktops, laptops, netbooks, PDAs), storage devices (such as USB and flash memory devices, CDs, DVDs, iPads, iPods, MP3 players etc.), cameras (such as video, digital, webcams), all types of mobile phones, gaming consoles, video and audio players/receivers (such as portable CD and DVD players), and any other, similar, technologies as they come into use.

5. 'Objectionable' in this document means material that deals with matters such as sex, cruelty, or violence in such a manner that it is likely to be injurious to the good of students or incompatible with a school environment.

6. 'DEECD' in this document refers to The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

PHILOSOPHY

The school has the dual responsibility to maximise the educational benefits of new technologies, while at the same time to minimise and manage the social risks. In so doing the school thus acknowledges the need to have in place rigorous and effective school cyber safety practices which are directed and guided by this "Safe Connections Policy".

Eltham High School's "Cyber Safety Use Agreements" will cover all staff, all students, and any other individuals authorised to make use of the school Internet facilities and ICT devices/equipment, such as teacher trainees, external tutors and providers, contractors, and other special visitors to the school.

Eltham High School will respond appropriately to any breaches of the use agreements that have occurred within the school environment, during any school based activities or during any activities organised by the school in support of both the curricular and co-curricular programs.

POLICY STATEMENT

Eltham High School will develop and maintain rigorous and effective cyber safety practices which aim to maximise the benefits of the Internet and other new technologies to student learning and to the effective operation of the school, while minimising and managing any risks.

These cyber safety practices aim to not only maintain a cyber safe school environment, but also address the need of students and other members of the school community to receive education about the safe and responsible use of present and developing information and communication technologies.

In order to achieve the above goals the school will address:

- the need for on-going funding for cyber safety practices through inclusion in the annual budget,
- the review of the school's annual and strategic plan,
- the provision of professional development and training of staff,
- the implications for the design and delivery of the curriculum,
- the need for relevant education about cyber safety for the school community,
- the need for disciplinary responses appropriate to breaches of cyber safety, and
- the availability of appropriate pastoral support.

As a consequence, it is a requirement that this policy be read in conjunction with the Cyber Safety Code of Practice and the relevant Cyber Safety Use Agreement.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

1. The school's cyber safety practices are based on information contained in the latest version of the "Acceptable use policy for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) systems".

2. No individual may use the school Internet facilities and school-owned/leased ICT devices/equipment in any circumstances unless the appropriate use agreement has been signed and returned to the school. Use agreements also apply to the use of privately-owned/leased ICT devices/equipment on the school site, or at/for any school-related activity, regardless of its location. This includes off-site access to the school network from school or privately-owned/leased equipment.

3. The "Cyber Safety Use Agreements" are also an educative tool and should be used as a resource for the professional development of staff.

4. Use of the Internet and the ICT devices/equipment by staff, students and other approved users at Eltham High School is to be limited to educational, professional development, and personal usage appropriate in the school environment, as defined in individual use agreements.

5. Signed use agreements will be filed in a secure place, and an appropriate system devised which facilitates confirmation that particular individuals are authorised to make use of the Internet and ICT devices/equipment.

6. The school has the right to monitor, access and review all use. This includes personal emails sent and received on the school's computer/s and/or network facilities at all times.

7. The school has the right to audit at anytime any material on equipment that is owned or leased by the school. The school may also request permission to audit privately owned/leased ICT devices/equipment (including those as part of the DEECD Notebook Program) used on the school site or at any school related activity.

8. Issues relating to confidentiality, such as sighting student or staff information, reasons for collecting data and the secure storage of personal details and information (including images) will be subject to the provisions of the Information Privacy Act 2000.

9. The safety of children is of paramount concern. Any apparent breach of cyber safety will be taken seriously. The response to individual incidents will follow the procedures developed as part of the school's cyber safety practices. If objectionable or illegal material or activities are suspected, the matter may need to be reported to the relevant law enforcement agency.

BASIS OF DISCRETION

The School Council has responsibility for the establishment, evaluation and review of school policies. The School Principal has the responsibility to ensure that school policies are implemented effectively.

Minor changes to the policy (changes that will not affect the spirit of the policy) may be made at the discretion of the Principal.

The Policy Review and Evaluation process will recommend any major changes to the policy to School Council.

RELATED POLICIES

Student Engagement and Well Being Policy

Selection of Teaching and Learning Resources

Anti-Bullying Policy

REVIEW

This policy will have a minor review after 12 months and then be reviewed every 3 years.

Date Endorsed:

17 September 2014

Executive Officer

Eltham High School Council

This policy was written by: Vincent Sicari

Consultation has taken place with the relevant group(s) in the following list:

Group	Consultation ✔
School Operations Committee	
Staff	
Students (randomly selected group)	
Parents (randomly selected group)	
Members of the Community	
Other (where relevant please specify)	
Planning and Policy Review Team of Council **(Mandatory)**	✔
School Council **(Mandatory)**	

PROCESS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

The Policy is developed or reviewed by the Policy Writer or Policy Writing Team using the agreed "Policy Template"

The policy is presented to the Planning and Policy Review Team

Relevant groups are consulted in relation to the policy by the Policy Writer / Policy Writing Team

Feedback is adresses by the Policy Writer /Policy Writing Team

The policy is re-presented to the Planning and Policy Review Team

The policy is presented to the School Council for endorsement

The policy is endorsed by the School Council

Further Clarification

Additional Feedback

Re-presented

Approved