

**Adopted:** March 12, 2015

**Revised:**

## **HARBOR CITY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL POLICY No. 5.8.1**

### **CYBER-BULLYING/PROHIBITED USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

#### **I. PURPOSE**

HCIS strives to provide a safe, secure and respectful learning environment for all students in school buildings, on school grounds, at school sponsored activities and when using school equipment and technology. Bullying has a harmful, social, physical, psychological and academic impact on bullies, victims and bystanders. HCIS consistently and vigorously addresses bullying in all of its forms, so that there is no disruption to the learning process or learning environment.

#### **II. POLICY STATEMENT**

HCIS's computer network and the Internet, whether accessed on campus or off campus, may not be used for the purpose of harassment of any kind. All forms of harassment over the Internet, commonly referred to as "cyberbullying", are unacceptable and viewed as a violation of this policy and HCIS's acceptable computer use policy and procedures.

#### **III. DEFINITIONS**

**A.** "Use of technology" includes, but is not limited to the following:

- 1.** Sending or posting e-mail messages;
- 2.** Sending text messages;
- 3.** Sending or posting pictures or images;
- 4.** Website postings;
- 5.** Blogs.

**B.** "Sexting" includes, but is not limited to, the act of sending, receiving, viewing, or reading any sexually explicit text messages, photo messages, video messages, or voice messages. Sexting is considered inappropriate for the school setting and is therefore prohibited in communications involving any HCIS technology. Sexting may also be disciplined if the action constitutes cyberbullying as defined below.

**C.** "Threats" are actions that a reasonable person would interpret as a serious expression of an intent to cause a present or future harm.

**D.** "Cyberbullying" includes the use of technology to:

1. Communicate a threat;
  2. Stalk; or
  3. Terrorize students or staff; or
  4. Other speech that creates a hostile environment based on race, gender, religion or sexual origin for students or staff; or
  5. Any other form of communication that causes:
    - a. A substantial disruption of or material interference with the work of the school;
    - b. A communication that substantially interferes with or impinges upon the rights of other students or staff; or
    - c. Violates HCIS's policies prohibiting bullying and harassment.
- E.** "Reasonable likelihood of disruption" cyberbullying as defined above may be disciplined if :
1. The speech creates a foreseeable risk of material disruption to the work of the school; or
  2. The speech creates a foreseeable risk of interference with the rights of others.

#### **IV. MONITORING OF STUDENT INTERNET USE, RECORDS, AND FILES**

- A.** HCIS students have a limited expectation of privacy on HCIS's Internet system. Students should expect routine maintenance and monitoring by technical support and by staff.
- B.** An individual search of computer and Internet use records can be conducted by HCIS administration if there is reasonable suspicion that the student has violated HCIS's policy, including policies against cyberbullying and sexting.

#### **V. RESPONSE TO REPORTS OF CYBERBULLYING**

The administration shall fully investigate all reports of cyberbullying. Students and community members who believe they have been the victims of misuses of technology described in this policy should not erase the offending material from the system. A copy of the material should be printed and brought to the attention of the school administrator.

#### **VI. DISCIPLINE**

Disciplinary action may include the loss of computer privileges, suspension, or expulsion for verified perpetrators of cyberbullying or sexting. In addition, when any kind of threat is

communicated or when a hate crime is committed, the administration will report such crimes to local law enforcement officials.

***Legal Reference:*** Minn. Stat. §121A.0695 (School Board Policy; Prohibiting Intimidation and Bullying)

***Cross Reference:*** Policy 5.4.2 Bullying Prevention and Response