**November 2017**

**Be Safe these holidays**

To All Parent/Guardians

St Albans Secondary College has a zero tolerance for bullying in any form but Cyber-bullying is of particular concern at this time of the year because as we enter the school holiday period they may have extra free time to use your home computer or socially interact with other young people on their mobile.

Cyber-bulling, just like other forms of bullying, succeeds when people do not say anything or feel helpless to do anything about it.

Please read the information below with your child so that you are well equipped to take action should your child experience Cyber-bullying.

**Cyber-bullying**

Cyber-bullying is the use of social media, e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, mobile phones, or other forms of information technology to deliberately harass, threaten, or intimidate someone.

Cyber-bullying can include such acts as posting or texting mean comments, making threats, sending insults or racial or ethnic slurs, and masquerading. Victims can delete or block the perpetrator, limit computer connection time, not respond to threatening or defamatory messages, never opening e-mail messages from sources they do not recognize and report the bullying to the School.

It is illegal and can result in police charges. All electronic messages are recorded by phone companies and Internet providers so the police can retrieve these if they need them to take people to court.

**How to stop cyber-bullies**

If you are being cyber-bullied it is possible that you're feeling powerless and isolated.

There are options and you can do things to stop the problem.

* **Keep a record** (including time and date) - This may help you (or the police) to find out who is sending the messages.
* **Tell someone** - Talk to someone you trust, a parent, friend, school counsellor or teacher.
* **Contact your phone or internet service provider and report what is happening** - They can help you block messages or calls from certain senders.
* **If messages are threatening or serious get in touch with the police** – Cyber-bullying, if it's threatening, is illegal. You don't need to put up with that!
* **Don't reply to bullying messages** - It'll only get worse if you do. By replying the bully gets what he or she wants. Often if you don't reply the bully will leave you alone.
* **Change your contact details** - Get a new user name for the internet, a new e-mail account, a new mobile phone number and only give them out to your closest friends.
* **Keep your username and passwords secret** - Keep your personal information private so it doesn't fall into the hands of someone who'll misuse it.