



Cyberbullying Policy

Statement of Intent:

We are committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our pupils and staff so they can learn and work in a secure atmosphere. In addition we understand the importance of ICT in supporting a creative and innovative curriculum for all learners. Bullying of any kind is totally unacceptable at our school. If Cyber bullying does occur, all pupils and staff should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Understanding Cyberbullying?

- Cyberbullying can be defined as *the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else*. It can be an extension of face to- face bullying, with technology providing the forum to harass their target. However, it differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying: the invasion of home and personal space; the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages; the size of the audience; perceived anonymity; and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target.
- Research into the extent of cyberbullying indicates that it is a feature of many young people's lives. It also affects members of school staff and other adults.
- Cyberbullying, like all bullying, should be taken very seriously. It is never acceptable, and a range of Education Acts and government guidance outline schools' duties and powers in relation to bullying. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) includes legal powers that relate more directly to cyberbullying; it outlines the power of head teachers to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off-site and provides a defence in relation to the confiscation of mobile phones and other items.
- Although cyberbullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that can apply in terms of harassment and threatening

and menacing communications. Schools should contact the police if they feel that the law has been broken.

- Cyberbullying takes different forms: threats and intimidation; harassment or "cyber-stalking" (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages); vilification / defamation; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation; unauthorised publication of private information or images.
- Some cyberbullying is clearly deliberate and aggressive, but it is important to recognise that some incidents of cyberbullying are known to be unintentional and the result of simply not thinking about the consequences. What may be sent as a joke, may not be received as one, and indeed the distance that technology allows in communication means the sender may not see the impact of the message on the receiver. There is also less opportunity for either party to resolve any misunderstanding or to feel empathy. It is important that pupils are made aware of the effects of their actions.
- In cyberbullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators - by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, for example, or by taking part in online polls or discussion groups. They may not recognize themselves as participating in bullying, but their involvement compounds the misery for the person targeted. It is recommended that anti-bullying policies refer to those 'bystanders' - better termed 'accessories' in this context - who actively support cyberbullying and set out sanctions for this behaviour. It is important that pupils are aware that their actions have severe and distressing consequences.

Objectives of Policy:

- All teaching and non-teaching staff, governors, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what cyberbullying is.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff and governors should know what the school policy and procedures are in relation to cyberbullying, and follow them when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy and procedures are on cyberbullying, and what they should do if cyberbullying arises.
- As a school we take cyberbullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when cyberbullying is reported.

Preventing cyberbullying:

Activities to prevent cyberbullying may include:

- Ensuring that learners, parents and staff are all aware of the procedures and sanctions for dealing with cyberbullying, including bullying that takes place out of school.
- Staff development activities;
- Information sent home to parents.
- Addressing cyberbullying within ICT curriculum
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme.
- Staying up to date - prevention and responding strategies require continuous review and refinement as new technologies and services become popular. This policy similarly, will be updated periodically as technologies develop.
- Pupils are encouraged to report all incidents of cyberbullying to any member of staff.

Procedures for staff and strategies for dealing with Cyberbullying

- Give reassurance that the person has done the right thing by telling someone. Record incident on a green referral sheet and make known to Headteacher and ICT lead.
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- Make sure the person knows not to retaliate or return the message.
- Ask the person to think about what information they have in the public domain.e.g This could be information about themselves which has been posted on a social networking site or an image sent by Bluetooth technology to different mobile phone users.
- Help the person to keep relevant evidence for any investigation (e.g. by not deleting messages they've received, and by taking screen capture shots and noting web addresses of online cyberbullying instances).
- Check the person understands simple ways to prevent it from happening again, e.g. by changing contact details, blocking contacts or leaving a chatroom.
- Take action to contain the incident when content has been circulated: If you know who the person responsible is, ask them to remove the content; Contact the host (e.g. the social networking site) to make a report to get the content taken down.

- In cases of illegal content, contact the police, who can determine what needs to be kept for evidential purposes.

Monitoring and Review:

This policy has been approved by the Governing Body and will be reviewed annually and updated in line with guidance from the DfE or the LA.

Policy agreed by:

Headteacher: _____

Senior Teachers: _____

Governing Body: _____

Next Review date: Spring 2014