



'Growing, Loving and Learning in the arms of Mary'

Cyber-Bullying Policy

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Date: September 2024
Review: September 2025

CYBER-BULLYING POLICY:
(To Be Read Alongside Anti-Bullying Policy)

This policy has been compiled in consideration of the latest Department for Education guidance regarding how to tackle and prevent bullying, using links to their recommended support sites of:

Childnet International <http://www.childnet.com>

Beatbullying <http://www.beatbullying.org>

The following excerpt is from the DFE website:

DFE Guidance: Cyber-bullying “The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for ‘virtual’ bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?

Cyber-bullying can be defined as the use of computing 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 bully with another route 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 As with the schools general definition of bullying, however, we believe it should involve the whole school community; in this way, awareness is raised and our stakeholders can ‘buy-in’ to our policies of tackling cyber-bullying.

Cyber-bullying is a sub-set or ‘method’ of bullying. It can be used to carry out all of the different ‘types’ of bullying (such as racist bullying, homophobic bullying, or bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities), but instead of the perpetrator carrying out the bullying in person, they use technology as a means of conducting the bullying. Cyber-bullying can include a wide range of unacceptable behaviours, including harassment, threats and insults. And like face to face bullying, is designed to cause distress and harm. Cyber-bullying takes place between children; between adults; but also across different age groups. Young people can target staff members or other adults through cyber-bullying.

CYBER-BULLYING IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY:

Cyber-bullying is not a new phenomenon, but as mobile phone and internet use become increasingly common, so does the use of technology to bully. The School already address bullying, discrimination and behavioural issues as part of school policy. This guidance is designed to assist staff and parents in the interpretation of how the technology is being used, and the potential abuse that can be caused. Only by open discussion with children parents and staff can the issue be shared and understood, what the consequences are and what the preventative measures can be.

Forms that cyber-bullying can take:

Cyber-bullying takes different forms, some of which are harder to detect or less obviously associated with bullying than others; some are already included in the general bullying policy that the school operates, and there are already systems in place to deal with these:

1. **Threats and intimidation:**
Serious threats can be sent to both staff and pupils by mobile phone, e-mail and via comments on social networking sites or message boards.
2. **Harassment or stalking:**
Repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages, or making phone calls; using public forums, such as message boards or chat rooms, to repeatedly harass or to post derogatory or defamatory statements in order to provoke a response from their target; tracking targets using spyware; sending viruses.
3. **Vilification/Defamation:**
Cyber-bullying can include posting upsetting or defamatory remarks about an individual online, or name calling using a mobile device.

4. ***Ostracising/Peer Rejection/Exclusion:***

Online exclusion can be harder to detect than children obviously being marginalized in a space, such as a classroom, where there are adults present. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat etc provide a platform for young people to establish an online presence. They can be an important extension of a young persons social space and activity. It is possible for a group of students to set up a closed group, which can protect them from unwanted contact. It also means that excluding someone – by refusing to return or acknowledge messages, deleting them from their friendship lists or using ‘ignore’ functions - can be extremely hurtful.

5. ***Identity theft, unauthorized access and impersonation:***

Accessing and copying someone’s information, for example e-mails or pictures, in order to harass or humiliate them; deleting someone’s information; impersonating someone, for example pretending to be the person whose account has been hacked in order to post abusive comments and bad language.

6. ***Publicly posting, sending or forwarding personal or private information or images:***

Once electronic messages or pictures are made public, containing them becomes very difficult. Video or pictures can be passed between mobile phones, uploaded to web sites or posted to public video hosting sites. Websites are potentially viewable by millions of people; even after pages or comments have been removed, ‘cached’ copies may still be available. Creating, possessing, copying or distributing images of children and young people under the age of 18 which are of an indecent or sexual nature is illegal under the Protection of Children Act 1978. These images are illegal even if they were taken in ‘fun’ or by ‘willing’ parties. These laws also apply to indecent ‘pseudo-photographs’ – images which have not been taken but have been created or adapted, for instance using digital imaging software.

7. ***Manipulation:***

This is an often under-considered form of bullying, but unfortunately cases of it do exist. Examples include outing pressure on someone to reveal personal information or to arrange a physical meeting. This can be done by using online friendship status, for example, suggesting that a genuine friend would give out personal information.

Popular mediums for cyber-bullying:

- Mobile phones;
- Instant messenger and voice over internet protocols;
- Chat rooms and message boards;
- E-mail Web-cams;
- Social network sites;
- Video hosting sites;
- Virtual learning sites;
- Gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds

HOW CAN ST MARY’S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL MONITOR AND PREVENT CYBER-BULLYING?

We will take a proactive stance on co-ordinating responsibility for cyber-bullying and work with parents and children to identify instances where it could occur, and take action where appropriate. There is no single solution to the problem; it needs to be regarded as a live and on-going issue.

We consider that there are 5 essential action areas that together form an effective and comprehensive approach to prevention:

1. Understanding and talking about cyberbullying and the wide issue of bullying, including the effects on others
2. Updating existing policies and practices
3. Making reporting cyber-bullying easier
4. Promoting the positive use of technology
5. Evaluating the impact of prevention activities

UNDERSTANDING & TALKING ABOUT CYBER-BULLYING:

It is an issue that is already on the school agenda, and is an important way of working towards the Every Child Matters outcomes, and safeguarding the health and wellbeing of the school community.

Promote awareness and understanding about cyber-bullying:

We will work within the curriculum to highlight the different forms that cyber-bullying can take, and make children aware of its impact. We will enforce this message by regular updates to parents, advising of what they should watch out for in their children's internet or mobile phone activities. This information will be reinforced by class teachers, informing children what they should do if they think they are the victim of cyber-bullying, and who they can turn to for support.

Publishing sanctions:

It is also important that children and parents are alerted to the school policy on dealing with cyber-bullying as it becomes evident, with the understanding that it will not be tolerated in school on any level. Pupils will be reminded of the importance of a safe environment and how to behave responsibly when using computing.

Logging all cyber-bullying incidents:

We will keep appropriate records of any incidents of cyber-bullying, alongside wider bullying, and monitor our prevention activities in connection with this. We will remind children of the importance of discussing any concerns they have with a member of staff, in confidence. Similarly, staff and parents should be aware of the non-verbal signs of cyber-bullying, such as anxiety, depression or fear, that would otherwise be unusual in a child. This may also involve subtle comments or changes in relationships with friends.

Promoting the positive use of technology:

Computing is increasingly recognised as an essential life skill, and embedding technology across the curriculum and in learning and teaching delivery provides opportunities and benefits for both learners and staff members.

We will work with children and staff to promote e-safety:

- Never give passwords to other people
- Change passwords regularly
- Do not upload images of children to websites under any circumstances
- Ensure pupil data held on computers is password protected
- Ensure firewalls and security centre updates are working effectively.

We will ensure that:

- Children only use the computing resources in school for the purposes intended i.e. solely for educational use.
- All interactive resources are from reputable educational suppliers and have been installed with full child-friendly firewalls/safeguards.
- Children cannot access chat rooms or social networking sites when using school computers; access to such sites is automatically prohibited by the server.
- Children are not given individual e-mail accounts; there is no facility in school for children to be sending each other messages by any medium.

Staff should reinforce the anti-cyberbullying code:

1. Always respect others
2. Think before you send
3. Treat your password like your toothbrush!
4. Block the bully!
5. Don't retaliate or reply
6. Save the evidence
7. Make sure you tell