

Cyber Bullying Policy

Definition

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as mobile phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

There are many types of cyberbullying. Although there may be some of which we are unaware, here are the more common:

1. **Text messages** that are threatening or cause discomfort
2. **Picture / video-clips** via mobile phone cameras - images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
3. **Mobile phone calls**: silent calls or abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible
4. **Emails**: threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name
5. **Chatroom bullying**: menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web based chatroom
6. **Instant messaging (IM)**: unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations.
7. **Bullying via websites**: use of defamatory blogs, personal websites and social networking sites

How is cyberbullying different?

Bullying is bullying wherever and however it takes place. Cyberbullying is a method of bullying that uses ICT to upset, threaten or humiliate someone and has the following key characteristics:

- Cyberbullying can take place at any time, in any location; technology allows the user to bully anonymously
- Cyberbullying can occur on vast and rapid scale
- Electronic content is very hard to control; it can never be guaranteed to be removed totally from circulation
- Bullies can take actions to attempt to be anonymous and can feel 'distanced' from the incident
- 'Bystanders' can easily become perpetrators
- The 'profile' of a cyberbully or a target varies – age / size is not an issue
- Cyberbullying incidents can be used as evidence
- Cyberbullying can occur unintentionally often due to a lack of awareness / empathy – 'It was only a joke'
- Cyberbullying leaves no physical scars so it is, perhaps, less evident to a parent or teacher, but it is highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be very severe
- Young people are particularly adept at adapting to new technology, an area that can seem a closed world to adults (e.g. the numerous acronyms used by young people - POS - Parents Over Shoulder, TUL – Tell You Later); this makes it difficult for adults to recognise potential threats.
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Key advice to pupils

The following points are taught to pupils on a regular basis, especially when teaching about internet use:

- Always respect others – think about what you say online and what images you send / post
- Remember that anything you publish online can be made public very quickly and you will never be sure who may have seen it; once something is posted you lose control
- Treat your password like a toothbrush: never share it with anyone and only give your personal information like mobile phone number or email address to trusted friends
- Learn how to block or report online bullies or anyone behaving badly!
- Don't retaliate or reply.
- Save the evidence – text messages, online conversation, pictures etc.
- If you're worried, always make sure you tell an adult you trust or contact someone like Childline, the service provider e.g. website, mobile phone company, school or police
- If you see cyberbullying take place then support the victim and report the bullying

There's plenty of online advice on how to react to cyber bullying. For example, www.kidscape.org.uk has some useful tips.

Children in Years 5 and 6 will explore elements of cyber-bullying & e-safety with their class teacher on a termly basis.

Key advice for parents / carers

the following points are communicated to parents / carers in newsletters and via the website:

- Be alert to your child being upset after using the internet / phones – they may be secretive, change relationships with friends
- Your child is just as likely to be a bully as to be a target
- Talk to your child and understand how they are using the internet and their phone
- Use safety tools and parental controls – if you're not sure how, contact your service provider. Please note tools are not always 100% effective
- Remind your child not to retaliate
- Keep any evidence of cyberbullying – emails, online conversations, texts etc
- Report the cyberbullying
- Contact the school so they can take action if it involves other pupils
- Contact the service provider e.g. website, phone company etc.
- If the cyberbullying is serious and a potential criminal offence has been committed then consider contacting the police.

Cyber Bullying Log

Incidents of bullying are logged and parents are informed.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Policy for Promote Positive Behaviour

Policy Version and Revision Information

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