

## Cyber-Bullying Policy

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Approved by: College of Management  
Council of Trustees

Date: November 2017  
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Date for next review: October 2019

*In this policy parents shall always refer to parents, guardians and/or careres; pupil shall stand for students and pupils.*

### Policy Statement

The possibilities of the Internet and mobile phones are endless. Young people benefit from having opportunity to access one another and communicate in a variety of different forms. However, not all aspects of ICT are positive, and it can enable additional routes for those intent on bullying.

Online behaviour is no different in principle from behavior in the school or face-to-face. The same rules of politeness and consideration apply, as do the same sanctions for breaches of those rules.

### Definition of Cyber-Bullying

Cyberbullying includes:

- text message bullying
- picture/video-clip bullying via cameras on mobile phones and similar devices
- phone call bullying via mobile phones or landlines
- e-mail bullying
- sexting-related bullying
- chat room bullying
- bullying through instant messaging
- bullying via websites
- “de-friending”, etc on social networking sites

Although similar in many respects to other forms of bullying, cyber-bullying also has some very specific features:

- it invades both home and personal space
- the size of the audience can be vast
- electronically circulated messages can be difficult to control
- the bully can feel relatively anonymous
- it can have a large number of “bystanders” or “accessories”
- much (if not all) of the bullying may take place out of school

### The Aims of the Policy

- Raise awareness among pupils and staff about cyber-bullying
- Provide a safe learning environment in which preventative measures are in place to deter cyber-bullying
- Ensure systems are in place to deal with cyber-bullying should it occur

## **Procedure**

### **Prevention**

In order that these aims can be fulfilled, a number of preventative measures will be taken.

### **Awareness-raising — Pupils**

A number of opportunities have been highlighted as part of the curriculum to help children “stay safe”.

- These include sessions within our PSHEE lessons in Upper School
- Classes 6 to 12 have “healthy relationships” workshops with outside support agencies such as Brook Works Cornwall
- Pupil’s use of school computers is subject to an Internet Safety Agreement signed by pupils and their parents
- At the beginning of the school year and as and when appropriate, all relevant classes will discuss safe use of the school computers
- They will be reminded about the school’s policies which are also available on our website
- If an issue relating to cyber-bullying has arisen, the subject may be discussed during sponsor lessons and/or PSHEE classes and/or ICT classes. Of course, if this is in relation to a particular individual, consideration will be given to how the issue is raised.
- Pupils will be made aware of the importance of telling an adult, and which adults they can approach in school.
- Involvement of the whole school community may be necessary at, for example, our termly All School Meetings and/or through the weekly Friday Flier and/or the school’s noticeboards and/or separate communications directly to all or some parents

### **Awareness-raising — Parents**

- This policy is available on the school’s website
- The school is able to provide up to date information about websites that offer additional support and advice
- The school aims to provide at least one evening session per year for parents with an external support service such as Brook Works Cornwall on the subject of healthy relationships incl. cyber-bullying and safe use of computers
- In addition, parents are invited to discuss any concerns or questions they may have with the Class Teacher or Sponsor either in private or at the regular parents’ evenings
- Parents are encouraged to take notice of their children’s online activities and to discuss the risks with them

### **Awareness-raising — School Staff**

Staff have a duty to ensure that the children in their care stay safe, and also that they themselves are alert to the dangers of cyber-bullying. This can be particularly difficult for members of staff who have children

and relatives in the school. All members of school staff can be affected, and staff should inform the Behaviour Coordinator, Safeguarding Lead or School Business Manager at the first opportunity should any incident occur.

Anti-bullying, and anti-cyber-bullying training form part of regular INSET days during which new developments of potential sources of bullying may be raised and possible ways of challenging these discussed. For example, new terminology used by the pupils may be shared at such sessions. Staff need to be aware of what the risks are and the potential for implications of misuse. On occasions an outside speaker is invited to update staff on latest developments.

### **Dealing with Cyber-Bullying Incidents**

There is usually some visual evidence after cyber-bullying has taken place. Pupils should be encouraged to record and store this and pass this on to a member of staff or their parents. Staff and parents should pass evidence on to a senior member of staff. In some cases, it will be necessary to contact mobile phone companies, Internet service providers or social networking sites to retrieve information.

The following advice should be given to those experiencing cyber-bullying:

- Do not retaliate or reply
- Save the material in question by making an electronic copy or screenshot
- Block or remove offenders from friends lists
- Review the information you are giving out
- Make sure you tell an adult (or senior staff member)
- Try to keep calm and do not let the bully see a reaction

If the person responsible for the bullying is identified, sanctions will be applied under the school's Behaviour Policies. In addition, the following sanctions might be implemented, depending upon the nature and severity of the bullying:

- Confiscating equipment such as mobile phones
- Withdrawing access to the Internet for a set period of time
- Limiting use of the Internet for a set period of time
- Contacting the police, where the cyber-bullying is sufficiently severe
- Informing external agencies such as social networking or e-mail member sites

Support will be provided for the victim. This may include meeting the bully to discuss what has happened and agree a way forward.

It is important that all children and staff recognise that when an incident of cyber-bullying takes place it is dealt with swiftly. Parents should be told, in the early stages of any bullying, what actions have been taken to remedy it.

### **Use of the Internet in School**

This school has its own ICT AUP Policy that clearly identifies how the school computers and Internet should be used. The relevant pupils and their parents are reminded of and committed to this policy and others through the Internet Safety Agreement signed by pupils and their parents. Some of the main features are

as follows:

- Children should not be allowed unsupervised access to the Internet
- Children should be made aware of their own responsibility in reporting anything they identify that causes them concern
- Pupils agree to follow Internet usage rules

The School Business Manager is responsible for reviewing how the school network is monitored and may delegate this to other members of staff, for example with regard to a specific building or part of the school.

### **Use of Mobile Phones in School by Pupils, Parents and Staff**

The school has a Use of Mobile Phones policy which clearly sets out the rules for pupils, parents and staff. It states who can bring phones into school, where they are to be stored and where and when they can be used.

No mobile phone will be used to take photographs. Reference should be made to the school's Image Use Policy.

The school retains the right to temporarily confiscate mobile phones from pupils where they are brought into school without permission or when they are being used inappropriately.

The school's mobile phones must be used for school trips and upon return to school, all phone numbers must be erased.

### **E-mailing and Instant Messaging**

No member of staff may give a pupil their personal email address.

Children and staff should never reply to unpleasant or unwanted emails or open files from people they don't know.

When writing emails or instant messages, think carefully about the content. When angry or distressed, you might send something likely to cause further anguish. Leave the computer and discuss the issue with someone else.

### **Social Networking Sites**

Staff will not accept a pupil's invitation to be their "friend" on a social networking site.

It is recognised that the removal or "blocking" of access to a social networking site might be seen as a form of bullying by those who experience it and this will be discussed as part of our PSHEE curriculum and/or pastoral care system.

### **Bystanders**

Pupils are encouraged to respect other people on- and offline and to recognise how sharing a secret and passing on numbers and passwords can cause harm and distress to others.

Being a bystander can include:

- Forwarding messages
- Contributing to discussions
- Taking part in an online poll

### **Recording and Reporting**

The whole school community is made aware of ways of reporting incidents of bullying.

Bullying is reported to a member of school staff, and the appropriate action will be taken.

All incidents of cyber-bullying are logged as part of the school's anti-bullying policy and this information is reported to the Council of Trustees by the SMT.

### **Special Needs**

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are particularly vulnerable to all forms of bullying. Members of school staff are alert to changes in behaviour and ensure that there are opportunities and established methods for children with SEND to communicate should the need arise.

### **Equal Opportunities**

As with other forms of bullying, cyberbullying is prone to being driven by prejudice. Staff are alert to the possibilities of sexist, racist and homophobic cyberbullying. Although all victims of bullying can be reluctant to discuss their experiences, victims of homophobic bullying may be particularly so.

### **Further information, advice and guidance**

- South West Group for Learning: SWGfL is a charity that has a focus on 'online safety' and helping everyone get the most out of the internet and technology. It has created award winning resources and services that especially help and support schools.  
<https://www.swgflstore.com/>
- DfE Advice: "Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying"  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/444865/Advice\\_for\\_parents\\_on\\_cyberbullying.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444865/Advice_for_parents_on_cyberbullying.pdf)
- DfE Advice: Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying\\_Advice\\_for\\_Headteachers\\_and\\_School\\_Staff\\_121114.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf)

### **Compliance**

- Independent school standards, December 2014  
[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/pdfs/uksi\\_20143283\\_en.pdf](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/pdfs/uksi_20143283_en.pdf)

### **References**

- Serious Behaviour Incident and Bullying Record Form
- Guidance for Supporting Positive Behaviour in Early Years
- Behaviour Policy for Classes 1 – 3
- Behaviour Policy Classes 4 – 8
- Behaviour Policy Classes 9-12
- Serious Behaviour Incident Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

- Image Use Policy
- ICT AUP Policy
- Mobile Camera, Phone and ICT Devices Policy
- Internet Safety Agreement