

CYBER BULLYING

INTRODUCTION

The possibilities of the Internet and mobile phones are endless. Young people benefit from having opportunities 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 bullies to exploit.

DEFINITION OF CYBER BULLYING

“Cyber bullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the Internet, deliberately to upset someone else”.

[Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-bullying Work in Schools — Cyber bullying (DCSF, 2007)]

The school has chosen to adopt this working definition.

Cyber bullying includes:

- text message bullying
- picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone cameras
- phone call bullying via mobile phones
- email bullying
- chat room bullying
- bullying through instant messaging
- bullying via websites

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

Through this policy we aim to;

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
- to involve the whole staff and pupil body in combating bullying and making it unacceptable at Art Educational School.
- to encourage pupils who are being bullied or who observe bullying to inform staff

- Ensure systems are in place to deal with cyber bullying should it occur.

Procedure for Managing Cyber-Bullying

Prevention

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

Raising Awareness — Pupils

A number of opportunities have been highlighted as part of the curriculum to help children “stay safe”. A unit is included in Pastoral PSHE curriculum and also in the ICT curriculum. At the beginning of the school year, all classes will discuss safe use of the ICT equipment. They will be reminded about the Acceptable Use Policy, a copy of which is sent to all new parents.

If an issue relating to cyber bullying has arisen, the subject may be discussed during Tutor Time. 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.

Cyber bullying is covered as part of whole-school assemblies and anti-bullying activities in all classes.

Issues relating to cyber bullying are raised with School Council on a regular basis, and they give their view about what the problems are and what the solutions might be.

Raising Awareness – Parents

Information is distributed to parents annually outlining the school's approach to cyber bullying and information is included identifying additional support and advice. Parents are also invited to discuss any concerns or questions they may have with the ICT coordinator or other senior member of staff. Parents are encouraged to take notice of their children's online activities and to discuss the risks with them.

Points to consider

- Make yourself aware of the amount of time your child is using the internet, chat facilities and mobile phones.
- Consider carefully the location of the computer or laptop and whether your child would be better using it in a family area of the home.
- Search on Google for your child's name and any online usernames they use. This is a valuable exercise for you and then to be able to see exactly how much information other people can see about them with little difficulty.
- Consider installing Internet monitoring Software.
- Talk to your child about the dangers of the internet.
- Ask your child (or help them) set up appropriate privacy settings on Facebook. Befriend them on Facebook, BEBO other networking sites etc.

Raising Awareness – School Staff

Staff have a duty to ensure that the children in their care stay safe, and they are also 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 should an incident occur staff should inform a line manager at the first opportunity.

Staff INSET time is devoted to the issue of bullying on a regular basis, and cyber bullying is discussed as a specific agenda item. It enables new developments of potential sources of bullying to be raised and possible ways of challenging these to be discussed. New terminology used by the pupils is also shared at this session. Staff need to be aware of what the risks are and the potential for implications of misuse. On occasions an outside speaker will be 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 pass this on to a member of staff or their parents. In some cases, it will be necessary to contact mobile phone companies, Internet service providers or social networking sites.

The following advice should be given to those experiencing cyber bullying.

- Do not retaliate or reply.
- Block or remove offenders from buddy lists.
- Review the information you are giving out.
- Make sure you tell an adult.
- 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 and Anti-Bullying policies. In addition, the following sanctions may 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 email 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 pupils 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 incident, what actions have been taken to remedy it.

Use of the Internet in School

The school has its own Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) that clearly identifies how the ICT equipment and Internet should be used. Children and parents are reminded of this policy annually. Some of the main features are as follows:

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

- Permission must be given from parents for pupils to use the Internet and pupils must also agree to follow Internet usage rules.
- Staff need to be vigilant in lessons and check what websites pupil's are accessing.

The ICT Coordinator is responsible, along with the Senior Management Team, for reviewing how the school network is monitored.

Use of Mobile Phones/ in School by Children

The school appreciates that children bring mobile phones to school in order to contact parents or similar responsible adults in case of need. Any pupil who brings a mobile phone to school does so entirely at their own risk and it is strongly recommended that any such phone is handed in to either the school office or the Form Tutor at the beginning of the day, and collected when the pupil goes home. It should be expressly understood that under no circumstances should the mobile phone be used during the school day unless specifically instructed to do so by a member of staff. This particularly relates to the taking of photographs. The school retains the right to confiscate mobile phones when they are being used inappropriately.

Pupils who wish to contact their parents should normally do so from the school office, with appropriate permission.

Use of Mobile Phones in School by Adults

Although parents will bring mobile phones onto the premises, it must be understood that these should not be used for the purpose of taking photographs and they should be switched on to vibrate mode while on school premises.

All members of staff should avoid giving out their mobile number. Wherever possible, the school's mobile phone should be used for school trips and visits. If any situation arises where staff need to use their own mobile as a contact number, permission from the Head Teacher should be secured first.

E-mailing and Instant Messaging

No member of staff should 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. Staff are encouraged not to befriend current or past students on social networking sites as it make them vulnerable to students accessing personal information about them.

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

Bystanders

The issue of being a bystander or accessory is addressed with all children regularly. 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 who will then report it to his or her line manager, 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 may be shared annually with the governing body.

Special Needs

Children with special needs 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 SEN to communicate should the need arise.

Equal Opportunities

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

This Policy

A copy of this policy is stored in each year group Pastoral PSHE file and a copy is also held in the computer shared area. Its construction was discussed by staff, pupils and Council prior to being issued.

Has It Been Successful?

The following questions will be asked by the reviewing group to ascertain the success of the policy.

- How many incidents of cyber bullying have been recorded in the past 12 months?
- Is there evidence of actions resulting from pupils reporting incidents of cyber bullying?
- Have the actions been effective, i.e. has the behaviour desisted?
- When talking to pupils in the school, is there an awareness of what cyber bullying is and what to do if they encounter it?

Pupil, parent and staff surveys will also include questions about the effectiveness of this policy.

Linked Policies

Other policies which should be referred to include

- Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy

- Anti-bullying
- ICT and Internet
- Acceptable Use Policy

Policy written by Claire Lloyd

Authorised by Greg Beavis

Jane Harrison

Effective date of policy 1st September 2010

Review date 10th July 2010

Circulation to Principal, Governing Body and teaching staff. To pupils in class discussions and to parents and prospective parents on the website and on request.