

St. Michael's CE School: Cyberbullying Policy



Definition: What is cyberbullying?

"Cyberbullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself." [1]

Seven categories of cyberbullying have been identified:

- **Text message bullying** involves sending unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort.
- **Picture/video-clip** bullying via mobile phone/tablet cameras used to make the person being bullied feel threatened or embarrassed, with images usually sent to other people. 'Happy slapping' involves filming and sharing physical attacks.
- **Phone call bullying** via mobile phone uses silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes the bullied person's phone is stolen and used to harass others, who then think the phone owner is responsible. As with all mobile phone bullying, the perpetrators often disguise their numbers, sometimes using someone else's phone to avoid being identified.
- **Email bullying** uses email to send bullying or threatening messages, often using a pseudonym for anonymity or using someone else's name to pin the blame on them.
- **Chat room bullying** involves sending menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room.
- **Bullying through instant messaging (IM)** is an Internet-based form of bullying where children and young people are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online.
- **Bullying via websites**, including various social media sites, the use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites. There has also been a significant increase in social networking sites for young people, which can provide new opportunities for cyberbullying.

Principles of this Policy:

Lessons about responsible on-line presence will always be in line with the aims in our children's charter

We want our school to be a place where the children and the adults treat people like

Jesus would want them to ... A Christian School where children are cared for and taught to become responsible adults.

We need to remember that children and grown-ups make mistakes but can still learn from them. Even when we make mistakes, we can be forgiven and, if we can, we should take responsibility to put things right.

In this policy, cyberbullying includes a range of types of bullying, including but not exclusive to: racism, homophobic, transphobic, cultural and religion, health or disability based.

What can schools do about Cyberbullying?

While other forms of bullying remain prevalent, cyberbullying is already a significant issue for many young people in our society. We recognise that staff, parents and young people need to work together to prevent this and to tackle it whenever it occurs.

School Governors, Head teachers and school staff have a duty to ensure that:

1. Bullying via mobile phone or the Internet is included in their mandatory anti-bullying policies,
2. That these policies are regularly updated,
3. That teachers have sufficient knowledge to deal with cyberbullying in school [2].

At St. Michael's we fulfil our duties through:

Prevent Equip Respond and Share

Prevent incidents occurring by:

- Using the curriculum to teach pupils about:
 - The risks of new communications technologies
 - The consequences of their misuse
 - How to use communications technology safely
 - Personal rights
 - How to use the internet safely
- Monitoring all e-communications used on the school site or as part of school activities off-site
- Have clear policies about the use of mobile phones at school and at other times when young people are under the school's authority. Our school policy is that children should not have mobile phones or internet enabled devices at school. There are two exceptions to this:
 - Older children who walk to and from school unaccompanied may keep a phone in their school bag as long as it is switched off on arrival at school and kept in the child's bag until they leave school at the end of the day.
 - Children who live part time with each parent may have a phone in their bag on 'changeover' day as long as it is switched off on arrival at school and kept in the child's bag until they leave school at the end of the day.
- Using internet blocking technologies and keep them up to date
- Educate pupils and parents to make sure new communications technologies are used safely, taking account of local and national guidance and good practice
- Use security systems to prevent images and information about pupils and staff being accessed improperly from outside school
- Work with CEOPS, police and other partners on managing cyberbullying.

Equip children with strategies to deal with incidents:

If a cyberbullying incident directed at a child occurs using e-mail or mobile technology, either inside or outside school time, children are taught to:

- Make no response
- Turn off the monitor if possible
- Inform a trusted adult
- Secure and preserve any evidence (or ask an adult to do so)
- Use the 'Report Abuse' button

Respond to reported incidents by:

- Notifying parents of the child/ren involved
- Informing the sender's e-mail service provider
- Referring to relevant policies, e.g. e-safety/acceptable use, anti-bullying and PSHE and apply appropriate sanctions
- Considering informing the police depending on the severity or repetitious nature of the offence.
- Informing the LA e-safety officer
- Monitoring the situation and taking further action when necessary

If malicious or threatening comments are posted on Internet or Social Networking Sites about a member of staff, we will:

- Secure and preserve any evidence
- Inform and request that the comments be removed if the site is administered externally
- Send all the evidence to CEOPS
- Endeavour to trace the origin and inform the police as appropriate.
- Inform the LA e-safety officer

Share: Working with Parents

We have a home-school agreement that includes a clear statement about the use of social media and the expectation that information about, or photos of, children and/or staff are not to be posted without permission.

At the beginning of their time at St. Michael's parents are invited to give their permission for their child/ren's images to be used on the school website. The school web-site never names individual children.

As the cyber world moves so quickly, each year we invite parents to an evening event run by CEOPS so that they can learn to protect their own children from cyber threats.

At regular intervals we will seek to update parents on:

- What to do if problems arise
- E-communication standards and practices in school
- What's being taught in the curriculum

We will support parents and pupils if cyberbullying occurs by:

- Assessing the harm done
- Identifying those involved
- Taking steps to repair harm and to prevent recurrence

Code of Conduct

Through the use of the 'Switched-On-Computing' curriculum, we will develop a code of conduct with our pupils. As children grow and mature, this will become more comprehensive over the course of their primary school lives.

Written by: SLT

Reviewed by: Governors (Curriculum Sub)

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