



NORTHMEAD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Cyberbullying Policy

Overview

This Cyberbullying policy was created to safeguard the pupils at Northmead Junior School from any form of bullying through the use of technology. It sits alongside the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) already in place.

As a school, we recognise that technology plays an important and positive role in children's lives, both educationally and socially. We are committed to helping all members of our school community to understand both the benefits and the risks, and to equip children with the knowledge and skills to be able to use technology safely and responsibly.

The following Policy is based on Department for Education guidance, in collaboration with SWGfL (South West Grid for Learning).

Introduction

School Aims

Our Cyberbullying policy reflects our school aims which are:

- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum that ensures each child has a high quality, stimulating, varied and inclusive learning experience, which encourages creativity, enjoyment and excellence.
- To build committed, supportive and effective teams, operating within a united whole.
- To develop self-esteem and a positive attitude towards others.
- To raise each child's expectation of what they can achieve both now and in preparation for adult life

Policy Aims

The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- Pupils, staff and parents are educated to understand what cyberbullying is and what its consequences can be
- Knowledge, policies and procedures are in place to prevent incidents of cyberbullying in school or within the school community
- There are measures in place to deal effectively with cases of cyberbullying
- The Leadership team monitor the effectiveness of prevention measures

What is Cyberbullying?

The Department for Children, Schools and Families defines cyberbullying as:

'The use of Information and Communications Technology (IT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else'

There are many types of cyberbullying and the following are some of the most common:

- **Text Messages** – that are threatening or cause discomfort
- **Picture/Video Clips** – via mobile phone cameras – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened
- **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
- **Emails** – threatening or bullying language, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name
- **Chat room Bullying** – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in web-based chat rooms. This form of cyber bullying may also occur in live game chats or in video game servers. It could take the form of verbal bullying over a headset or written comments in messages in either direct messages or on message boards.
- **Instant Messaging (IM)** – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real time conversations online.
- **Bullying via Social Media** – use of defamatory comments, images or posts; especially over Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr, TikTok, Youtube and others.

The following responsibilities demonstrate how each member of the community will contribute.

Responsibilities of the Management Team

- Develop and promote an anti-bullying culture within the school community.
- Ensure support available to members of the school community to ensure they are able to recognise and respond to instances of cyberbullying effectively.
- Receive and regularly review cyberbullying incident logs and be aware of the procedure to be followed should a cyberbullying incident occur in school.
- Take ultimate responsibility for the wellbeing of the school community.

Responsibilities of the IT Leader

- Ensure regular review and update of existing policies to include cyberbullying where appropriate
- Provide opportunities for policies to be addressed and for children to be involved in the process of updating and improving them
- Keep AUP's/Cyberbullying/Mobile phones policies consistent and under review as technologies develop
- To help staff keep up to date with the technologies that children are using

- Publicise rules and sanctions effectively
- Ensure all staff/children/parents understand the importance of password security and the need to log out of accounts
- Publicise to all members of the school community the ways in which cyberbullying can be reported both internally and externally

Responsibilities of Teachers and Support Staff

- Read, understand and help promote the school's AUP/Cyberbullying/Mobile Phone policies and guidance.
- Make positive use of technology across the curriculum
- Use continuing professional development opportunities to develop their practice creatively and support pupils in safe responsible use
- Explore ways of using technology to support assertiveness, self-esteem and to develop friendships
- Ensure they can recognise non-verbal signs and indications of cyberbullying
- Monitor own class forums and discussion boards on the school's learning platform

Responsibilities of Pupils

- Read, understand and adhere to the school pupil AUP. (Pupils to all sign, countersigned by parents)
- To be involved in developing and communicating a code of advice on protecting themselves from getting caught up in cyberbullying and on reporting cases they experience. They will have a voice through the School Council
- They will be educated about cyberbullying through a variety of means: assemblies, anti-bullying week, outside agencies/speakers, projects (IT, PSHE, Drama, English)

It's important that young people receive clear, simple and consistent advice about how to deal with cyberbullying.

Key messages for young people who feel they are being cyberbullied include:

- **Don't Reply** - Responding to messages or comments can quickly escalate, with repeated exchanges leading to more aggressive bullying.
- **Block** - Often incidences of cyberbullying online can be dealt with quickly by using the 'block' or 'delete' facilities within websites and instant messaging programs.
- **Save** - By keeping copies of text messages, instant messaging conversations or comments posted on websites it's easier to explain to someone what's been happening, and also helps with any investigation.
- **Tell** - Young people need to know that cyberbullying, like any form of bullying, will not be tolerated as long as they tell someone. This could be a parent, teacher, family member or other adult they trust. However, often young people find it hard to talk about issues such as bullying face-to-face. They should be aware of other sources of support, such as ChildLine.

In addition to knowing how to deal with cyberbullying instances, it is important that young people are made aware of what cyberbullying is, how it happens and to encourage them to see how their actions can cause hurt or distress to others. Encourage them to:

- Respect each other - Chatting online is different to chatting face-to-face. The recipient will not always know if comments are meant to be humorous. It's important to take other peoples' feelings into account and to respect their privacy: ask a friend if they object before giving out their personal details or photographs or videos including them, for instance.
- Think before you send - Once young people have sent a photograph, video or message online they have lost control of it. It could be passed on or reposted to anyone anywhere without them knowing.
- Look after passwords - Young people often share passwords with each other for things like Skype or Facebook. This can lead to other people pretending to be them and posting offensive comments that may be difficult to disprove later.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

- Be aware, your child may as likely cyberbully as be a target of cyberbullying. What might be intended as a joke or friendly banter on the part of the sender may not be interpreted as that by the recipient. Be alert to your child seeming upset after using the internet or mobile phone. This might involve subtle comments or changes in relationships with friends.
- Talk with your children and understand the ways in which they are using the internet and their mobile phone.
- Be aware of the websites and applications your children use, and of any safety or privacy features these may contain.
- Remind children not to reply to bullying online.
- Keep the evidence of bullying emails, text messages or online conversations.
- Report cyberbullying: contact your child's school if it involves another pupil so that they can take appropriate action; contact the service provider or website; if the cyberbullying is serious and a potential criminal offence has been committed consider contacting the police.

Responsibilities of Governing Body

- Read, understand, contribute to and help promote the school's eSafety policies and guidance.
- Develop an overview of the benefits and risks of the Internet and common technologies used by pupils.
- Develop an overview of how the school IT infrastructure provides safe access to the Internet.
- Develop an overview of how the school encourages pupils to adopt safe and responsible behaviours in their use of technology in and out of school.
- Support the work of the IT Leader in promoting and ensuring safe and responsible use of technology in and out of school, including encouraging parents to become engaged in eSafety activities.

- Ensure appropriate funding and resources are available for the school to implement their eSafety strategy.

Responding to Cyberbullying

Most cases of cyberbullying will be dealt with through the school's existing Anti-Bullying policy and Behaviour Policy. Some features of cyber bullying differ from other forms of bullying and may prompt a particular response. The key differences are:

- Impact: the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than other forms of bullying
- Targets and perpetrators: the people involved may have a different profile to traditional bullies and their targets
- Location: the 24/7 and anywhere nature of cyberbullying
- Anonymity: the person being bullied will not always know who is bullying them
- Motivation: some pupils may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying
- Evidence: unlike other forms of bullying, the target of the bullying will have evidence of its occurrence
- It is possible that a member of staff may be a victim and these responses apply to them too

Investigation

- Staff, pupils and parents should be advised to preserve evidence and record of abuse; save phone messages, record or save-and-print instant messenger conversations, print or produce a screen-grab of social network pages, print, save and forward to staff whole email messages
- If images are involved, determine whether they might be illegal or raise child protection concerns
- Identify the bully
- Any allegations against Staff should be handled as other allegations following guidance in *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*

Support for the person being bullied

- Offer emotional support; reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling
- Advise the person not to retaliate or reply. Instead, keep the evidence and take it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advise the person to consider what information they have in the public domain
- Unless the victim sees it as a punishment, they may be advised to change details e.g. mobile phone number
- If hurtful or embarrassing content is being distributed, try to get it removed from the web. If the person who posted it is known, ensure they understand why it is wrong and ask them to remove it. Alternatively, contact the host provider and make a report to get the content taken down
- Confiscate mobile phone, ask pupil to delete the offending content and say who they sent it on to
- Contact the Police in cases of actual/suspected illegal content

- In some cases, the person being bullied may be able to block the person bullying from their sites and services

Working with the Bully and applying sanctions

The aim of the sanctions will be to help the person being harmed to feel safe again and to assure them that the bullying will stop. They will also demonstrate the school community and reinforce the fact that cyberbullying is unacceptable and that the perpetrator knows they will be accountable for their actions.

- Sanctions for any breaches of AUP
- In applying sanctions, consideration must be given to type and impact of bullying and the possibility that it was unintentional or was in retaliation
- The outcome must include helping the bully to recognise the consequences of their actions and providing support to enable the attitude and behaviour of the bully to change

Evaluating the policy and its effectiveness

The policy will be reviewed annually and also in light of any technological advancements that may arise before this date. The School Council will be used to gather pupil's opinions and points of view. There will be an annual evaluation and review of recorded cyberbullying incidents and their outcomes. The school will endeavour to publicise findings; celebrating what works and what improvements are planned for the coming year.

Policy reviewed Autumn 2021

Date of next review Autumn 2022