



Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy

St Joseph's is a **happy**, welcoming **community**, enriched by our **diversity**, where we strive to be **better than our best**.

A place where we **love** one another, love **learning**, love **Jesus** and **love life**.

The Children's and Young People plan aims to ensure that children are safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination under the Stay Safe Every Child Matters Agenda. St. Joseph's Primary School believes that all people in our community have the right to teach and learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. We believe that every individual in school has a duty to report an incident of bullying whether it happens to themselves or to another person.

Aims of Policy

- To ensure that pupils, staff and parents understand what cyber bullying is and how it can be combated.
- To ensure that practices and procedures are agreed to prevent incidents of cyber bullying.
- To ensure that reported incidents of cyber bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly.

What is Cyber Bullying?

Cyber-bullying is defined by Patchin and Hinduja (2006) as, 'willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text.'

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

1. **Text messages** – that are threatening or cause discomfort – also included here is “Blue jacking” (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using “Blue tooth” wireless technology).
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. **Chat room bullying** – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in web-based chat room.

6. **Instant messaging (IM)** – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger) or Yahoo Chat – although there are others.
7. **Bullying via websites** – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal “own web space” sites such as Bebo (which works by signing on in one’s school, therefore making it easy to find a victim) and Myspace – although there are others.

At St. Joseph’s Primary School, we take this bullying as seriously as all other types of bullying and, therefore, will deal with each situation individually. An episode may result in a simple verbal warning. It might result in a parental discussion. Clearly, more serious cases will result in further sanctions.

Technology allows the user to bully anonymously or from an unknown location, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Cyber-bullying 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. For example, the numerous acronyms used by young people in chat rooms and in text messages (POS – Parents Over Shoulder, TUL – Tell you Later) make it difficult for adults to recognise potential threats.

At St. Joseph’s Primary School, pupils are taught to:

Understand how to use these technologies safely and know about the risks and consequences of misusing them.

Know what to do if they or someone they know are being cyber bullied.

Report any problems with cyber bullying. If they do have a problem, they can talk to the school, parents, the police, the mobile network (for phone) or the Internet Service Provider (ISP) to do something about it.

St. Joseph’s Primary School has:

1. An Acceptable and Responsible Use of the Internet Policy that includes clear statements about e-communications.
2. Information for parents on: E-communication standards and practices in schools, what to do if problems arise, what’s being taught in the curriculum.
3. Support for parents and pupils if cyber bullying occurs by: assessing the harm caused, identifying those involved, taking steps to repair harm and to prevent recurrence.

Information for Pupils

If you are being bullied by phone or the Internet:

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
- Do not ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent or call an advice line.
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible. Do not get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.
- Do not give out your personal details online – if you are in a chat room, watch what you say about where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you build up a picture about you.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent or teacher as evidence.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender.

There is plenty of online advice on how to react to cyber bullying. For example, www.kidscape.org and www.wiredsafety.org have some useful tips:

Text/video messaging

You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you have changed your phone number.

If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider about this.

Do not reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages. Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.

Do not delete messages from cyber bullies. You do not have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.

Text harassment is a crime. If the calls are simply annoying, tell a teacher, parent or carer. If they are threatening or malicious and they persist, report them to the police, taking with you all the messages you have received.

Phone calls

If you get an abusive or silent phone call, do not hang up immediately. Instead, put the phone down and walk away for a few minutes. Then hang up or turn your phone off.

Once they realise they cannot get you upset, callers usually get bored and stop bothering you.

1. Always tell someone else: a teacher, youth worker, parent, or carer. Get them to support you and monitor what is going on.

2. Do not give out personal details such as your phone number to just anyone. Never leave your phone lying around. When you answer your phone, just say 'hello', not your name. If they ask you to confirm your phone number, ask what number they want and then tell them if they have got the right number or not. You can use your voicemail to vet your calls. A lot of mobiles display the caller's number. See if you recognise it. If you do not, let it divert to voicemail instead of answering.

3. Do not leave your name on your voicemail greeting. You could get an adult to record your greeting. Their voice might stop the caller ringing again. Almost all calls nowadays can be traced. If the problem continues, think about changing your phone number. If you receive calls that scare or trouble you, make a note of the times and dates and report them to the police. If your mobile can record calls, take the recording too.

Emails

Never reply to unpleasant or unwanted emails ('flames') – the sender wants a response; so do not give them that satisfaction.

Keep the emails as evidence and tell an adult about them.

Ask an adult to contact the sender's Internet Service Provider (ISP) by writing abuse @ and then the host, e.g. abuse@hotmail.com.

Never reply to someone you do not know, even if there is an option to 'unsubscribe'.

Replying simply confirms your email address as a real one.

Web bullying

If the bullying is on a website (e.g. Bebo) tell a teacher or parent, just as you would if the bullying were face-to-face – even if you do not actually know the bully's identity.

Serious bullying should be reported to the police – for example threats of a physical or sexual nature. Your parent or teacher will help you do this.

Chat rooms and instant messaging

Never give out your name, address, phone number, school name or password on line.

Never post photographs of anyone on a website.

It is a good idea to use a nickname and do not give out photographs of yourself.

Do not accept emails or open files from people you do not know.

Remember it might not just be people your own age in a chat room.

Stick to public areas in chat rooms and get out if you feel uncomfortable.

Tell your parents or carers if you feel uncomfortable or worried about anything that happens in a chat room.

Think carefully about what you write; do not leave yourself open to bullying.

Do not ever give out passwords to your mobile or email account.

Never share user names and passwords with anyone, including your friends.

Three steps to stay out of harms way

1. Respect other people – online and off. Do not spread rumours about people or share their secrets, including their phone numbers and passwords.
2. If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm – and ignore them
3. ‘Do as you would be done by’. Think how you would feel if you were bullied. You are responsible for your own behaviour – make sure you do not distress other people or cause them to be bullied by someone else.

Review

The Governing Body will review this policy annually. They governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the Governing Body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

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