



St. Patrick's School. Drumcondra, D09XH2

Scoil Phadraig, Droim Conrach, Ath Cliath D09 XH52

Email: secretary@saintpats.ie Telephone: (01)8373714
Charity number:20116453

Anti-Cyber-Bullying Policy

Introduction:

St. Patrick's Boys National School aims to ensure that children are safe and feel safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination. Though new technology brings incredible opportunities for educators as well as for young people, it is crucial that everyone knows how to use this technology responsibly and that policies are in place to support and encourage responsible use. This school is committed to teaching children the knowledge and skills to be able to use ICT effectively, safely and responsibly, and how to identify and report incidents of cyberbullying.

Relationship to School Ethos

'At St Patrick's National School, we believe all children are entitled to develop their fullest potential - academically, socially, emotionally, physically, morally, spiritually and aesthetically, enabling each child to grow in confidence to participate in the wider community.' (our Mission Statement)

St Patrick's BNS is committed, to the extent permissible by available resources, to helping pupils to enhance their learning experiences through the use of modern technology. The school acknowledges that information and Communication Technologies can play an important role in supporting learning, but also that they can be misused and can present risks. St Patrick's BNS aims to "provide a happy caring and stimulating environment promoting self-esteem and confidence." (our mission statement). Therefore, the school aims to equip members of the school community with the skills and knowledge needed to use these technologies in a safe and responsible manner and to assist those that encounter difficulties.

Aims of the policy

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

Understanding Cyber - Bullying

What is cyber- bullying?

1. Cyber- bullying is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies.

Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night).

2. Anybody can be targeted including pupils, school staff and parents/ guardians
3. Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages, or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc. Cyber - bullying can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images etc
4. Pupils are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults, and free from supervision. The nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, 2013**, (paragraph 2.3.5) states: *In the context of the Anti-Bullying Procedures "placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people" is also regarded as bullying behaviour.*
5. While cyber bullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school.

Cyber bullying includes (but is not limited to) the communicating via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, upset, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and/or distress to one or more persons. It may take the form of general insults or impersonation, defamation or

prejudice based bullying.

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. **Text messages** – can be threatening or cause discomfort. Also included here is “Bluejacking” (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using bluetooth 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, 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 a web-based chat room
6. **Instant messaging (IM)** – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using online platforms and social media such as Snapchat, Tiktok and Whatsapp or similar tools.
7. **Bullying via websites** – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal ‘own web space’ sites such as YouTube, Facebook,
8. **Bullying via interactive gaming-** Purposefully excluding someone from an online group/game, passing or posting upsetting or abusive messages while children conduct real-time conversations online , hacking into someone’s account
9. **Sending viruses-** Sending hacking programmes to another person., unauthorised interference with a computer device.

Explanation of slang terms used when referring to cyber-bullying activity

‘Flaming’: Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language

‘Harassment’: Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting message

‘Cyber Stalking’: Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety

‘Denigration’: ‘Dissing’ someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumours about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships

‘Impersonation’: Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes someone look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships

‘Outing and Trickery’: Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online

‘Exclusion’: Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a ‘buddy list’
This list is not exhaustive and the terms used continue to change.

Procedures to prevent Cyber- Bullying

1. Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management (BoM) will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises
2. Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies, friendship week activities and other curriculum projects
3. The school will engage a speaker to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for senior classes on a regular basis.
4. Pupils are encouraged to be “upstanders”, and reports an incident of cyber-bullying appropriate action will be taken
5. Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies. Teachers will refer to <https://www.pdst.ie/primary/antibullying> www.tacklebullying.ie and www.webwise.ie for current resources on bullying
6. Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying
7. Pupils and/or parents will sign an Acceptable Use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) contract.
8. The school endeavours to block access to inappropriate websites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems and pupils can only access the internet for such work, with a member of staff present
9. Pupils and parents will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school
10. All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal’s office and monitored regularly
11. Procedures in our school Anti-bullying Policy shall apply
12. The Gardaí will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content
13. This policy will be reviewed annually. Pupils, parents and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and any related school procedure
14. Parents and pupils will be reminded of age restrictions on social media sites and networks e.g. Snapchat, Tiktok, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Whatsapp, etc

Implementation of procedures:

If a case of cyber bullying is brought to the attention of staff, and investigated and recorded as such, LEVEL 2 and/or LEVEL 3 of Bullying Procedures will be implemented at the discretion of the Principal. Please refer to the Anti-Bullying Policy for Procedures.

The Cyber Bullying Policy will be reviewed annually as part of the Anti-Bullying Policy

Signed:



Anne Looney (Chairperson)

Natasha Bassett (Principal)



Date: 12 February 2023