

Anti-Cyber-Bullying Policy

Scoil Naomh Buithe aims to ensure that children are safe and feel safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination. This school endeavours to teach the children the knowledge and skills to be able to use ICT effectively, safely and responsibly.

Cyber-Bullying is an issue for families, the community and society in general and we are a cog in the wheel. We want to make a meaningful contribution but ultimately parents must assume responsibility for the action of their children. While we will make every effort to protect the children in school we have no control over children's access to devices, internet etc in the home. Therefore we cannot undertake to remediate all issues that may arise from unsupervised access by children to powerful devices and the internet.

The internet gives your child access to the world and the world access to your child; therefore children's online activities should be strictly supervised by their parents/guardians.

WHAT IS CYBER-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.
 7. **Bullying via websites** - use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal
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websites and online personal 'own web space' sites such as You Tube, Facebook, Ask.fm, Bebo (which works by signing on in one's school, therefore making it easy to find a victim) and Myspace - although there are others.

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

1. **'Flaming'**: Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
2. **'Harassment'**: Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
3. **'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
4. **'Denigration'**: 'Dissing' someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
5. **'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
6. **'Outing and Trickery'**: Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online
7. **'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.

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 school related cyber-bullying.
- To ensure that reported school related incidents of cyber bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly.

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore as far as practicable the relationships of the parties involved rather than to apportion blame.

UNDERSTANDING CYBER-BULLYING:

- Cyber bullying is the use of ICT (usually a mobile phone and or the internet) to abuse another person
- It can take place anywhere and involve many people
- Anybody can be targeted including pupils and school staff
- It can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorized publication of private information or images etc.
- Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. However, in the context of this policy, 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 will be regarded as bullying behaviour. Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

PROCEDURES TO PREVENT CYBER-BULLYING:

- 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.
 - Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), talks from Principal etc.
 - Classes 3rd to 6th will participate in the 'Bullying in a Cyber World' program.
 - Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying.(Website/Information Night)
 - Staff, Pupils and parents will be expected to familiarise themselves with and adhere to the School I.C.T. policy.
 - All reports of school related cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal's office and monitored regularly.
 - Procedures in our school Anti-bullying Policy shall apply.
 - Gardaí will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content.
 - This policy will be reviewed annually.
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Information for Parents Draft

No child under 14 years of age is permitted to register with Facebook. The online forum Ask.FM operates under a cloak of anonymity and is registered in Latvia. (Reference David Ruddy B.L Leadership Journal Issue 72).

INFORMATION FOR PUPILS:

If you are being bullied by phone or on the Internet:

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, or call an advice line.
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible. Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.
- Don't give out your personal details online as these could help someone who wants to harm you to build up a picture about you.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent 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,
Ie.reachout.com 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've changed your phone number.
 - If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider about this.
 - Don't 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.
 - Don't delete messages from cyber bullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.
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Useful Websites

www.spunout.ie

www.childnet.int.org

www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart

www.antibullying.net

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying

<http://ie.reachout.com>

www.childline.ie/index.php/support/bullying/1395

www.abc.tcd.ie

www.chatdanger.com

www.sticksandstones.ie

www.kidpower.org

This Anti-bullying policy was ratified by the BOM and an annual review of the policy will be carried out.
