



# Cyber Bullying Policy

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## **Statement of intent**

Firs Primary School understands that everyone in the school community deserves to learn and teach in a supportive and caring environment, without fear of being bullied or harassed.

Communication technology plays an increasingly large and important part in the school curriculum. As a result, it is important to acknowledge that sometimes, new technologies can be used for unpleasant or illegal purposes.

We recognise the existence of cyber bullying and the severity of the issue.

The school is committed to:

- Educating pupils, staff and parents about cyber bullying and its consequences.
- Providing a productive and healthy learning environment.
- Providing a robust policy in order to prevent and, if necessary, deal with any cyber bullying should it arise at school or within the school community.
- Developing and improving the policies and procedures around cyber bullying through regular evaluation and review.
- Providing a strong anti-bullying policy and acting upon it wherever bullying arises.

## 1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006
- The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Education Act 2002

1.2. This policy also has due regard to guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2016) 'Keeping children safe in education'

## 2. School policies

2.1. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the procedures outlined in the following school policies and documents:

- Acceptable Use Agreement
- E-safety Policy
- Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy: Staff
- Anti-bullying Policy: Pupils
- Allegations Against Staff Policy

## 3. What is cyber bullying?

3.1. For the purpose of this policy, “**bullying**” is an act which is based on unequal power relations, real or perceived. It will usually be repeated and be difficult to defend against, and is intended to hurt the recipient emotionally and/or physically. It can manifest verbally, in writing or images, and can be done physically, financially (including damage to property) or through social isolation.

3.2. For the purpose of this policy, “**cyber bullying**” includes sending or posting harmful or upsetting text, images or other messages, using the internet, mobile phones or other ICT for the purpose of bullying.

3.1. Cyber bullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading home and personal space, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others.

3.2. Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips sent via mobile phone cameras
- Silent or abusive phone calls or using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chat-room
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

NB. The above list is not exhaustive and cyber bullying may take other forms.

3.3. All cases of cyber bullying are considered to be as serious as any other form of bullying.

3.4. Cyber bullying issues are dealt with in an appropriate manner dependent on the severity and frequency of the issue, in accordance with the school's Anti-bullying Policy.

## **4. Roles and responsibilities**

4.1. The headteacher is responsible for:

- The practices and procedures outlined in this policy and ensuring that their effectiveness is monitored.
- Ensuring that the school maintains details of agencies and resources that may assist in preventing and addressing cyber bullying.
- Reviewing the procedures outlined in the school's E-safety Policy to ensure that pupils protect themselves from cyber bullying online.

4.2. Ensuring that all incidents of cyber bullying are reported and dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-bullying Policy.

4.3. All members of staff are responsible for identifying signs of cyber bullying and staying informed about the technologies that pupils commonly use.

4.4. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that issues surrounding cyber bullying are explored in the curriculum and pupils are aware of how to respect others.

4.5. Pupils, staff and parents are responsible for complying with the Acceptable Use Agreement.

## **5. Preventing cyber bullying**

5.1. The school recognises that both staff and pupils may experience cyber bullying, and will commit to preventing any instances that may occur by creating a learning and teaching environment which is free from harassment and bullying.

- 5.2. Staff, pupils and parents will be regularly educated about cyber bullying and the importance of staying safe online, in accordance with the school's E-safety Policy.
- 5.3. Teachers will discuss cyber bullying as part of the curriculum, and diversity, difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through various lessons.
- 5.4. Pupils will be educated about the importance of reporting instances of cyber bullying and will be fully informed of who they should report any concerns to.
- 5.5. The school will provide opportunities to extend friendship groups, and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events, e.g. drama productions, sporting activities, etc.
- 5.6. Staff will be regularly educated about the signs of cyber bullying in order to promote early identification and intervention.

## **6. Signs of being cyber bullied**

- 6.1. All members of staff will receive training on the signs of cyber bullying, in order to identify pupils who may be experiencing issues and intervene effectively.
- 6.2. Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is being cyber bullied:
  - Becoming withdrawn or shy
  - Showing signs of depression
  - Becoming extremely moody or agitated
  - Becoming anxious or overly stressed
  - Displaying signs of aggressive behaviour
  - Avoiding use of the computer
  - Changing eating and/or sleeping habits
  - Avoiding participating in activities they once enjoyed
  - Engaging in self-harm, or threatening/attempting suicide
  - Changing their group of friends suddenly
- 6.3. Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a pupil is cyber bullying others:
  - Avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
  - Appearing nervous when using the computer or mobile phone
  - Acting in a secretive manner when using the computer or mobile phone
  - Spending excessive amounts of time on the computer or mobile phone
  - Becoming upset or angry when the computer or mobile phone is taken away

- 6.4. Parents will also be invited to attend training sessions in order to educate them on the signs and symptoms of cyber bullying, and will be advised to report to the child's teacher if their child displays any of the signs outlined in 6.2 and 6.3 of this policy.

## **7. Procedures for dealing with cyber bullying**

- 7.1. Responses to cyber bullying incidents, including the necessary sanctions, will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-bullying Policy.
- 7.2. Any cyber bullying incidents that involve members of staff will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy: Staff and Allegations Against Staff Policy.
- 7.3. Staff are required to report any concerns to the headteacher, who will investigate the matter and will conduct an appropriate response.
- 7.4. All incidents of cyber bullying, including any concerns, will be recorded and kept by the Safeguarding Team.
- 7.5. The Learning Mentor will arrange a discussion with the victimised pupil in order to gain knowledge about the situation, and will use this to inform a discussion with the pupil who has been accused of cyber bullying.
- 7.6. The Learning Mentor will discuss the incident with any witnesses and will gain evidence of the cyber bullying incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos, etc., provided by the victim. This information will be passed on to the headteacher.
- 7.7. The school understands that pupils at primary level, and particularly younger children, may not be aware of their actions and, as such, may not mean to intentionally cyber bully another pupil. This information will be passed on to the headteacher.
- 7.8. The headteacher will take into account the nature of the cyber bullying incident and the way in which it has been conducted, including if it is evident that it was intentional or if the pupil's age and knowledge of cyber bullying is a contributing factor to the incident, when deciding on the appropriate sanction.
- 7.9. If necessary, the headteacher may decide to involve the police for appropriate response to the cyber bullying incident.
- 7.10. If necessary, the headteacher will issue an appropriate sanction, such as by removing internet access, monitoring the pupil's internet use, etc., in accordance with the E-safety Policy.

## **8. Support for the pupil being bullied**

- 8.1. The Learning Mentor will discuss the support available with the victim and, therefore, their feelings and requests are paramount to the support provided.

8.2. The support available includes:

- Emotional support and reassurance from the Learning Mentor.
- Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be taken.
- Liaison with the pupil's parents to ensure a continuous dialogue of support.
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff.
- Advice on other aspects of e-safety procedures to prevent re-occurrence.
- Discussion with the pupil's parents to evaluate their online habits.
- Age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online.
- Actions, where possible and appropriate, to have offending material removed.
- Discussion with the pupil's parents on whether police action is required (except in serious cases of child exploitation where the police may be contacted without discussion with parents).

8.3. The school will also use additional support, such as involvement with external agencies, where necessary, as outlined in the Anti-bullying Policy.

## **9. Monitoring and review**

9.1. This policy will be reviewed on an 2 yearly basis by the headteacher, who will make any changes necessary, taking into account previous cyber bullying incidents and the effectiveness of procedures, and will communicate changes to all members of staff.

9.2. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.