

Earlscliffe (Sussex Summer Schools Ltd)

ANTI-CYBERBULLYING POLICY

This is in addition to the school's existing Anti-bullying Policy

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.

Several categories of cyberbullying have been identified:

Text message bullying involves sending unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort.

Picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone cameras is used to make the person being bullied feel threatened or embarrassed, with images usually sent to other people. 'Happy slapping' involves filming and sharing physical attacks.

Phone call bullying via mobile phone uses silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes the bullied person's phone is stolen and used to harass others, who then think the phone owner is responsible. As with all mobile phone bullying, the perpetrators often disguise their numbers, sometimes using someone else's phone to avoid being identified.

Email bullying uses email to send bullying or threatening messages, often using a pseudonym for anonymity or using someone else's name to pin the blame on them.

Chat room bullying involves sending menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room.

Bullying through instant messaging (IM) is an Internet-based form of bullying where children and young people are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online.

Bullying via websites includes the use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites. There has also been a significant increase in social networking sites for young people, which can provide new opportunities for cyberbullying.

Earlscliffe recognises that technology plays an important and positive role in children's lives, both educationally and socially. It is committed to helping all members of the 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.

1. Aims

The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

students, staff and parents/carers are educated to understand what cyberbullying is and what its consequences can be;

policies and procedures are in place to prevent incidents of cyberbullying in school or within the school community;

we have effective measures to deal effectively with cases of cyberbullying;

we monitor the effectiveness of prevention measures.

2. Preventing Cyberbullying

2.1 Promoting the positive use of technology

Make positive use of technology across the curriculum.

Use CPD opportunities to help staff develop their practice creatively and support students in safe and responsible use.

Explore ways of using technology to support assertiveness, self-esteem and to develop friendships.

Ensure all staff and children understand the importance of password security and the need to log out of accounts.

2.2 Understanding and discussion

All staff should keep up-to-date with the technologies that children are using.

The students will 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.

Students will be educated about cyberbullying through a variety of means: assemblies, projects (ICT, PSHE, Drama, English), etc.

Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyberbullying via literature, talks, etc.

Parents and students will be asked to sign an IT Code of Practice before their children are allowed to use the internet in school and will be asked to confirm that they have

discussed its contents with their children.

Students, staff and parents will be involved in evaluating and improving policies and procedures.

2.3 Making reporting easier

Ensure staff can recognise non-verbal signs and indications of cyberbullying.

Publicise and promote the message that asking for help is the right thing to do and shows strength and good judgement.

Publicise to all members of the school community the ways in which cyberbullying can be reported.

Provide information for 'bystanders' including reassurances about protection from becoming victims themselves.

Provide information on external reporting routes e.g. mobile phone company, internet service provider, Childline.

3. Responding to Cyberbullying

Most cases of cyberbullying will be dealt with through the school's existing Antibullying Policy. Some features of cyberbullying 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 students 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.

3.1 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 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 student to delete the offending content and say who they have 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.

3.2 Investigation

Staff and students should be advised to preserve evidence and a record of abuse; save phone messages, record or save-and-print instant messenger conversations, print or produce a screengrab 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 safeguarding concerns. If so, contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead or any member of the Safeguarding team.

Identify the bully.

Any allegations against staff should be handled as other allegations and referred to the Head Teacher.

3.3 Working with the bully and applying sanctions

The aim of the sanctions will be:

to help the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop;

to hold the perpetrator to account, getting them to recognise the harm caused and deter them from repeating the behaviour;

to demonstrate to the school community that cyberbullying is unacceptable and that the school has effective ways of dealing with it, so deterring others from behaving similarly.

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 consequence of their actions and providing support to enable the attitude and behaviour of the bully to change.

3.4 Evaluating the effectiveness of prevention measures

Use pupil surveys to hear the students' point of view.

Identify areas for improvement and incorporate pupils' ideas.

3.5 Legal duties and powers

The school has a duty to protect all its members and provide a safe, healthy environment.

Headteachers in all schools have the power 'to such extent as is reasonable' to regulate the conduct of students when they are off-site or not under the control or charge of a member of staff (Education and Inspections Act 2006).

School staff may request a student to reveal a message or other phone content and may confiscate a phone; staff may search the contents of a student's phone

Some cyberbullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws including Protection from Harassment Act 1997.