

*St John's Walworth CE Primary School*

**E – Safety Policy**



## **1.1 What is cyberbullying and why does St John's Walworth Primary School need to take it seriously?**

Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

Cyberbullying is a sub-set or 'method' of bullying. It can be used to carry out all the different 'types' of bullying (such as racist bullying, homophobic bullying, or bullying related to SEN and disabilities), but instead of the perpetrator carrying out the bullying in person, they use technology as a means of conducting the bullying. Cyberbullying can include a wide range of unacceptable behaviours, including harassment, threats and insults, and like face-to-face bullying, cyberbullying is designed to cause distress and harm.

Cyberbullying can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. However, cyberbullying does differ in several significant ways to other kinds of bullying, e.g. the invasion of home/personal space, the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages, and even in the profile of the bully and target. These differences are important ones for people working with children and young people to understand.

Cyberbullying takes place between children, between adults, but also across different age groups. Young people can target staff members or other adults through cyberbullying.

## **1.2 The role of technology in young people's everyday lives**

Today's children and young people have grown up in a world that is very different from that of most adults. Subsequently, how young people use technology is not always understood by parents, carers and staff members.

Digital media, computers, mobile phones and the internet have been a taken-for-granted part of most children and young people's upbringing and environment. Many rely on technology not just to keep in touch, but as a way of developing their identities, socialising and belonging to groups. Technology can play a positive, productive and creative part of young people's activities, development and social participation.

The school has barred school network access to particular sites that young people use, such as social networking and gaming sites, but does not necessarily prevent young people from using them. They will still access them, via their own devices and connections, by bypassing blocks or by finding new, unrestricted sites. Education and discussion around responsible use and e-safety is key to helping them deal confidently with any problems that may arise, whether in or out of school.

## **1.3 Forms that cyberbullying can take.**

Cyberbullying takes different forms, some of which are harder to detect or less obviously associated with bullying than others.

### **Threats and intimidation**

Serious threats can be sent to both staff and pupils by mobile phone, email, via comments on websites, social networking sites or message boards.

### **Harassment or stalking**

Harassment and stalking can take several and often multiple forms online, and may or may not be a continuation of offline harassment or lead to physical harassment and stalking.

Forms of harassment include:

- repeatedly sending unwanted text or instant messages, or making phone calls (including silent calls)

- using public forums, such as message boards or chatrooms, to repeatedly harass, or to post derogatory or defamatory statements in order to provoke a response from their target (sometimes referred to as 'flaming')

### **Vilification/defamation**

Cyberbullying can include posting upsetting or defamatory remarks about an individual online or name-calling using a mobile device for example.

### **Peer-rejection/exclusion**

Online exclusion can be harder to detect than children obviously being marginalised in a space, such as a classroom, where there are adults present.

### **Identity-theft, unauthorised access and impersonation**

'Hacking' generally means accessing someone else's account by finding out or guessing their username and password information.

### **Publicly posting, sending or forwarding personal or private information or images**

Once electronic messages or pictures are made public, containing them becomes very difficult. Video or pictures can be passed between mobile phones either by a local wireless connection (which allows free messages to be sent between devices that are close to each other), sent by text to other phones, uploaded to websites or posted to public video hosting sites.

## **1.4 How is cyberbullying different to other forms of bullying?**

In cyberbullying, the audience for the bullying can be very large and reached rapidly.

This is a particularly significant way in which cyberbullying is different from other forms of bullying; a single incident can be experienced as multiple attacks. For example, a humiliating video posted to the web can be copied to many different sites.

Children and young people are not the only ones that may be subject to cyberbullying. School staff have also been victimised and have suffered distress at the hands of school-aged bullies. The seeming anonymity and distance that technology provides means size and age are not necessarily relevant. People who cyberbully do not need to be physically threatening. They don't need to be stronger, taller or older than the person they are cyberbullying. They may never be in the same physical space as the person they are bullying.

Cyberbullying can take place at any time and can intrude into spaces that might previously have been regarded as safe or personal. The person being cyberbullied can be left feeling that there is no place to hide and that they might be attacked at anytime. Sending abusive text messages, for example, means that cyberbullying can take place any time of the day or night, and the target of the cyberbullying can be reached in their own home, even their own bedroom.

## **2. Preventing cyberbullying**

Effectively addressing cyberbullying means making sure the whole-school community knows that cyberbullying is not acceptable and knows how to identify and take action against cyberbullying. St John's Walworth takes this seriously and all members of staff are aware of previous incidents and the importance of preventing new incidents.

School staff with responsibility for pastoral care, behaviour and ICT systems, as well as the Pupil Voice meetings, will work together to prevent cyberbullying.

Although there is no single solution to the problem of cyberbullying; it is regarded by the school as a live and ongoing issue. The school will address the issue with the children through curriculum delivery within Citizenship and PSHE, and the work undertaken as part of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme (SEAL). Also through the use of KidSMART 'Kara Winston and the Smart crew' DVD for KS1 and KS2.

### 3. Dealing with Cyberbullying

#### 3.1 Cyberbullying is a form of bullying

It is important to recognise that cyberbullying is a form of bullying, and as such the school is already equipped to deal with the majority of cyberbullying cases through their existing anti-bullying and behaviour policies and procedures (see school's anti-bullying).

In all cases of bullying, incidents will be properly documented, recorded and investigated. Support will be provided for the person being bullied, other staff members and parents will be informed as appropriate, and those found to be bullying will be interviewed and receive appropriate sanctions.

There are particular features of cyberbullying that differ from other forms of bullying which are recognised and taken into account when determining how to respond effectively. 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 any-place nature of cyberbullying.
- **Anonymity** — the person being bullied will not always know who is attacking them.
- **Motivation** — some pupils 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.

Practices and procedures to report and respond to incidents of bullying and discrimination are already in place in the school, and the majority of cyberbullying cases are be effectively dealt with within existing protocols.