

## Pennington C of E Junior School

### Cyber-bullying: Practical Advice for School Staff

The development of new technologies and systems e.g. mobile phones, email and social networking websites means that bullying is often now taking on a new form; cyber-bullying. Victims of cyber-bullying can experience pain and anxiety as much as traditional forms of bullying, particularly as it can occur outside of the school and school hours, significantly intruding into the personal life of the victim. Whilst it is difficult for schools and teachers to deal with this as they have no direct control over external websites there are a range of actions that school staff can take to reduce the chances of cyber-bullying occurring and actions that can be undertaken where it has already occurred.

The guidelines for Headteachers and Governors in dealing with allegations of bullying or harassment define cyberbullying as “the use of information and communication technologies to threaten, harass, humiliate, defame or impersonate”. Cyberbullying may involve email, virtual learning environments, chat room, social networking sites, mobile and landline telephones, digital camera images and game and virtual world sites.

This practical advice supplements the guidelines and provides links to other guidance available to school staff in relation to Cyberbullying.

#### DOs

- Keep passwords confidential
- Ensure you familiarise yourself with your school's policy for acceptable use of technology, the internet, email and HCC and school intranets.
- Ensure any social site you use has restricted access
- Ensure that you understand how any site you use operates and therefore the risks associated with using the site
- Consider carefully who you accept as friends on a social networking site
- Report to your Headteacher any incidents where a pupil has sought to become your friend through a social networking site
- Check what images and information is held about you online but undertaking periodic searches of social networking sites and using internet search engines
- Take care when publishing information about yourself and images of yourself on line – assume that anything you release will end up in the public domain
- Be aware that any off-duty inappropriate conduct, including publication of inappropriate images and material and inappropriate use of technology could lead to disciplinary action within your employment
- Liaise with your Headteacher and Head/Leader of ICT to remove inappropriate material if it appears on the school website
- Take screen prints and retain text messages, emails or voice mail messages as evidence
- Follow school policies and procedures for e-safety, including access to and use of email, internet and HCC intranet
- Follow school procedures for contacting parents and/or pupils
- Only contact pupils and/or parents via school based computer systems
- Keep your mobile phone secure at all times
- Answer your mobile telephone with 'Hello' rather than your name, if the number on the display is unknown to you

- Use a school mobile phone where contact with parents and/or pupils has to be made via a mobile (e.g. during an educational visit off site)
- Erase any parent or pupil data that is stored on a school mobile phone after use
- Seek support from your manager, professional association/trade union, friend, employee support line as necessary
- Report all incidents of cyberbullying arising out of your employment to your Headteacher
- Report any specific incident on a Violent Incident Report (VIR) form as appropriate
- Provide a copy of the evidence with your Headteacher when you report it and further evidence if further incidents arise
- Seek to have offensive online material removed through contact with the site
- Report any threatening or intimidating behaviour to the police for them to investigate
- Access and use the DCSF guidance on Cyberbullying, specifically the advice on reporting abuse and removal of material/blocking the bully's number/email (see attachment/link below)
- Support colleagues who are subject to cyberbullying

## **DON'Ts**

- Allow any cyberbullying to continue by ignoring it and hoping it will go away
- Seek to return emails, telephone calls or messages or retaliate personally to the bullying
- Put information or images on-line, take information into school, or share them with colleagues, pupils or parents (either on site or off site) when the nature of the material may be controversial
- Accept friendship requests from pupils or parents
- Release your private e-mail address, private phone number or social networking site details to pupils and parents
- Use your mobile phone or personal e-mail address to contact parents and/or pupils
- Release electronically any personal information about pupils except when reporting to parents
- Pretend to be someone else when using electronic communication
- Take pictures of pupils with school equipment without getting parental permission or without being directed to undertake such activity for an appropriate specified purpose
- Take pictures of pupils on your own equipment

The Childnet International have produced a document, "Cyberbullying: Supporting School Staff" which is a useful source of reference to all school staff and leaders. This is linked below:

<https://www.childnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/4-Cyberbullying-Supporting-School-Staff.pdf>