EATON HOUSE SCHOOLS

CYBERBULLYING

POLICY

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Policy Statement

The possibilities of the internet and mobile phones are endless. Young people benefit from having opportunity to have access to one another and communicate in a variety of different forms. However, not all aspects of Information Communications Technology (ICT) are positive, and it can enable additional routes for those intent on bullying.

Online behaviour is no different in principle from behaviour in the school or face to face. The same rules of politeness and consideration apply, as do the same sanctions for breaches of those rules.

Definition of Cyberbullying

The way in which pupils relate to one another online can have a significant impact on the culture at school. Negative interactions online can damage the school's culture and can lead to School feeling like an unsafe place. The School makes it clear to pupils that the same standards of behaviour are expected online as apply offline, and that everyone should be treated with kindness, respect and dignity.

Cyberbullying van be defined as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices" (http://www.cyberbullying.org/).

Cyberbullying could involve communications by various electronic media, including for example:

- Texts, instant messages or calls on mobile phones;
- The use of mobile phone camera images to cause distress, fear, or humiliation;
- Posting threatening, abusive, sexual, discriminatory, offensive, or humiliating material or comments on websites (including blogs, personal websites, and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter) or YouTube);
- Using e-mail to message others in a threatening or abusive manner;
- Sexting-related bullying;
- Chat room bullying;
- Bullying via websites;
- "de-friending", etc. on social networking sites (in some circumstances);
- Hijacking/ cloning e-mail accounts.

Although similar in many respects to other forms of bullying, cyberbullying also has some very specific features.

- It invades both home and personal space
- The size of the audience can be vast
- Electronically circulated messages can be difficult to control
- The bully can feel relatively anonymous
- It can have a large number of “bystanders” or “accessories”
- Much (if not all) of the bullying may take place out of school

The Aims of the Policy

Through this policy we aim to:

- raise awareness among pupils and staff about cyberbullying
- provide a safe learning environment in which preventative measures are in place to deter cyberbullying
- ensure systems are in place to deal with cyberbullying should it occur

Procedure

Prevention

In order that these aims can be fulfilled, a number of preventative measures will be taken.

Awareness-raising — Pupils

A number of opportunities have been highlighted as part of the curriculum to help pupils stay safe. This is included in our personal, social, health and citizenship education medium-term planning and also in our ICT curriculum. At the beginning of the school year, all classes will discuss safe use of the ICT suite during their first lesson. They will be reminded about the acceptable use policy and a copy of this will be sent out to parents.

If an issue relating to cyberbullying has arisen, the subject may be discussed during circle time. If this is in relation to a particular individual, consideration will be given to how the issue is raised. Pupils will be made aware of the importance of telling an adult, and which adults they can approach in school.

During Anti-bullying Week, cyberbullying is covered as part of whole-school assemblies and anti-bullying activities in all classes.

Issues relating to cyberbullying are raised with the Designated Safeguarding Leads and any problems and solutions are discussed. If any issues fall under Child Protection the Schools Child Protection Policy and procedures are followed.

If pupils wish to express a concern of complaint about the school, they are encouraged to speak to their form teachers and or pastoral team rather than resorting to social media. This is not intended to stifle legitimate concerns but rather to raise awareness that using social media to express these feelings can turn into cyberbullying if not used carefully.

Awareness-raising — Parents

Parents are invited to discuss any concerns or questions they may have with the ICT Co-ordinator. Parents are encouraged to take notice of their children's online activities and to discuss the risks with them. External organisations are invited in to provide training to parents on internet safety.

If parents wish to express a concern or a complaint about the school, they are encouraged to use the complaints system to do so. This is not intended to stifle legitimate concerns but rather to raise awareness that using social media to express these feelings can turn into cyberbullying if not used carefully.

Awareness-raising — School Staff

Staff have a duty to ensure that the pupils in their care stay safe, and that they themselves are alert to the dangers of cyberbullying. This can be particularly difficult for members of staff who have children and relatives in the school. All members of school staff can be affected and staff should inform a line manager at the first opportunity should any incident occur.

Bullying, and cyberbullying form part of INSET training during which new developments of potential sources of bullying may be raised and possible ways of challenging these discussed. New terminology used by the pupils is also shared at this session. Staff need to be aware of what the risks are and the potential for implications of misuse. On occasions an outside speaker is invited to update staff on latest developments.

Dealing with Cyberbullying Incidents

The School will follow the procedures set out in this policy and in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy where relevant for incidents of cyberbullying, taking such disciplinary action that is considered reasonable in the circumstances, with a view to regulating pupil conduct and protecting the reputation of the School, and the welfare of its pupils.

Although cyberbullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that may apply to communications of a harassing or threatening manner or the unauthorised publication of private images, upskirting, sharing nudes/semi-nudes, and sexting. Where the School considers that a reported incident of cyberbullying may amount to a criminal offence, it will inform the Police.

The School's procedure for dealing with incidents involving the sharing of nudes or semi-nudes is set out in the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

If staff are notified or become aware of an incident of nudes or semi-nudes being shared by a pupil or of a pupil, they will refer the incident to the DSL as soon as possible. The DSL will follow the UKIS guidance "Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people" when responding to a report of sharing nudes and/or semi-nudes. In some circumstances the DSL may make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care.

There is usually some visual evidence after cyberbullying has taken place. Pupils should be encouraged to pass this on to their parents; staff and parents should pass evidence on to the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher. In some cases, it will be necessary to contact mobile phone companies, internet service providers or social networking sites to block material or have it removed.

The following advice should be given to those experiencing cyberbullying.

- Do not retaliate or reply
- Save the material in question by making an electronic copy or screenshot
- Block or remove offenders from friends lists
- Review the information you are giving out
- Make sure you tell a senior staff member (or other appropriate adult, if you are a pupil)
- Try to keep calm and do not let the bully see a reaction

If the person responsible for the bullying is identified, sanctions will be applied under the behaviour policy (for pupils), the disciplinary procedure (for staff) or appropriate mechanism (for others). In addition, the following sanctions might be implemented, depending upon the nature and severity of the bullying.

- Confiscating equipment such as mobile phones
- Withdrawing access to the internet for a set period of time
- Limiting use of the internet for a set period of time
- Contacting the police, where the cyberbullying is sufficiently severe
- Informing external agencies such as social networking or email member sites
- Excluding pupils, either temporarily or permanently; dismissing or issuing disciplinary warnings to staff

Support will be provided for the victim. This may include meeting the bully to discuss what has happened and agree a way forward.

It is important that all pupils, parents and staff recognise that when an incident of cyberbullying takes place it is dealt with swiftly.

Use of the Internet in School

This school has its own acceptable use policy that clearly identifies how the ICT suite and internet should be used. Pupils and parents are reminded of this policy annually. Some of the main features are as follows:

- Pupils should not be allowed unsupervised access to the internet
- Pupils should be made aware of their own responsibility in reporting anything they identify that causes them concern
- Permission must be given from parents for pupils to use the internet and pupils must also agree to follow internet usage rules

The IT Manager, along with the senior leadership team are responsible, for reviewing how the school network is monitored.

Use of Mobile Phones in School

For detailed guidance on the use of mobile phones, please refer to the School's Mobile Phone Policy.

Emailing and Instant Messaging

No member of staff may give a pupil their personal email address. Pupils and staff should never reply to unpleasant or unwanted emails or open files from people they don't know.

When writing emails or instant messages, think carefully about the content. When angry or distressed, you might send something likely to cause further anguish. Leave the computer and discuss the issue with someone else.

Social Networking Sites

Staff will not accept a pupil's invitation to be their "friend" on a social networking site. It is recognised that the removal or "blocking" of access to a social networking site might be seen

as a form of bullying by those who experience it and this will be discussed as part of our PHSEE curriculum or tutorial system.

Bystanders

The issue of being a bystander or accessory is addressed with all pupils regularly. Pupils are encouraged to respect other people on and offline and to recognise how sharing a secret and passing on numbers and passwords can cause harm and distress to others.

Being a bystander can include:

- forwarding messages
- contributing to discussions
- taking part in an online poll

Recording and Reporting

The whole school community is made aware of ways of reporting incidents of bullying. Bullying is reported to a member of school staff who will then report it to his or her Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher, and the appropriate action will be taken. All incidents of cyberbullying are logged as part of the Schools anti-bullying strategy.

SEND

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are particularly vulnerable to all forms of bullying. Members of school staff are alert to changes in behaviour and ensure that there are opportunities and established methods for pupils with SEND to communicate should the need arise.

Equal Opportunities

As with other forms of bullying, cyberbullying is prone to being driven by prejudice. Staff are alert to the possibilities of sexist, racist and homophobic cyberbullying. Although all victims of bullying can be reluctant to discuss their experiences.

Complaints Procedure

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our Complaints Procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that any concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly. Parents of EYFS children should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted, if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled.