



Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy

Scoil Mhuire aims to ensure that children are safe and feel safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination. This school is committed to teaching children the knowledge and skills to be able to use ICT effectively, safely and responsibly.

Understanding Cyber Bullying:

- Cyber bullying is the use of ICT (usually a mobile phone and or the internet) to abuse another person. It can take place anywhere, it involves a far wider audience than traditional bullying and can affect the victim even when not in the presence of the bully.
- Anybody can be targeted including pupils and school staff
- It can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection impersonation unauthorized publication of private information or images etc.
- While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013, states:

In addition, in the context of these procedures placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour

What is Cyber-Bullying

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. Text messages – can be threatening or cause discomfort. Also included here is ‘Blue jacking’ (the sending of anonymous text message over short distances using Bluetooth wireless technology)
2. Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras-images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
3. Mobile phone calls – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim’s phone using it to harass others to make them believe the victim is responsible
4. Emails – threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else’s name
5. Chat room bullying – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room
6. Instant messaging(IM) – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger), Yahoo Chat or similar tools
7. Bullying via websites – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal ‘own web space’ sites such as You Tube, Facebook, Ask.fm, Twitter, Myspace, Snapchat, TikTok- although there are others

Explanation of slang terms used when referring to cyber-bullying activity:

1. 'Flaming': online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
2. 'Harassment': repeatedly sending offensive, rude and insulting messages
3. 'Cyberstalking': repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety
4. 'Denigration': 'dissing' someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumours about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
5. 'Impersonation': pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes some look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships
6. 'Outing and Trickery': tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is shared online
7. 'Exclusion' 'Cancelling': intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a buddy list
8. 'Trolling': malicious online behaviour seeking to provoke, upset and harm others via inflammatory messages and posts.

*This list is not exhaustive and the terms used continue to change

Aims of Policy

- To ensure that pupils, staff and parents understand what cyber bullying is and how it can be combated
- To ensure that practices and procedures are agreed to prevent incidents of cyber-bullying
- To ensure that reported incidents of cyber bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly

Procedures to Prevent Cyber-Bullying

- Phones/any recording devices will be switched off on school grounds
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the principal's office and monitored regularly
- Pupils and parents will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school
- Pupils and their parents will sign a mobile phone usage contract if requesting permission to have a phone at school
- Pupils and parents will sign an Acceptable Use Policy annually
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying through talks arranged by ICT post holder, information provided in the school newsletter and on the e-safety page of the school website
- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies
- This school will engage a speaker to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for 5th and 6th class annually. Classes from 1st – 6th will participate in the 'Bullying in Cyber World' programme
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies, anti-bullying week activities and other curriculum projects
- Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management(BOM) will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises
- Teachers/facilitator will dedicate a standalone lesson to deal with issue of cyber bullying annually
- Procedures in our school Anti-Bullying Policy
- The Gardaí will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content

- This policy will be reviewed annually. Pupils, members of the Board of Management will be involved in reviewing and revision this policy and any related school procedure

Information for Pupils

If you are being bullied by phone or on the Internet:

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent or call the advice line
- Don't give out your personal details online – if you are in a chat room, do not say where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harem you to build up a picture about you
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible. Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent or teacher as evidence
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender
- There is plenty of online advice on how to react to cyber bullying. For example ie.reachout.com and www.wiredsafety.org have some useful tips

Text/video messaging

- You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person messaging you by making them believe you've changed your phone number
- If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider about this.
- You can block contacts on your phone so they are unable to message you
- Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages
- Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details
- Don't delete messages from cyber bullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence

Information for parents:

It is strongly recommended that in order to prevent or curb cyber bullying, parents should seek to ensure the following:

- Children should not have access to the internet on a phone, computer or any device which cannot be in full view in the home and in particular children, should not have unsupervised access to these devices in their bedrooms
- Parents should become aware of cyber bullying, there are a number of excellent websites which can help you understand bullying for example www.esafety.ie
- Parents should be aware and monitor all their children's activity online
- If a parent becomes aware that their child is being bullied via online routes by another child within the school, we strongly advise that parents do not approach other parents but instead bring the matter to the attention of the school

Useful Websites

www.spunout.ie

www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart

www.bbc.co.uk./schools/bullying

www.childline.ie/index.php/support/bullying/1395

www.abc.tcd.ie

www.chatdanger.com

www.kidpower.org

www.sticksandstones.ie

www.antibullying.net

www.childnet.int.org

<http://ie.reachout.com>

Our policy is to maximise opportunities to raise awareness within the school on all issues concerning bullying and cyber bullying

- The Anti-Bullying Policy of Scoil Mhuire's school shall apply to this policy also
- In order to ascertain the veracity of an accusation, the School Principal may look at material on a child's phone, tablet or other such device in the presence of the child's parent/guardian
- Incidents of cyber bullying in relation to any member of staff will be taken very seriously

This policy has been compiled in consultation with staff and members of the Board of Management

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Signed: John Curran
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Carol Burke-Heneghan
Principal

Date: 4 April 2022

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Date of Next Review: 2023