



Cheadle Hulme School

## **CYBER-BULLYING**

**(This document is part of the ANTI-BULLYING POLICY)**

**Please follow this link for the relevant policy on the School's intranet:  
Anti-bullying Policy; Safeguarding CP Policy & Procedure**

### **Introduction**

All bullying is damaging but cyber-bullying and harassment are invasions of privacy at all times. They may also involve criminal acts. Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group, or an individual, using electronic forms of contact repeatedly, over time, against a victim (who cannot easily defend him/herself).

### **Definition**

Cyber-bullying is generally criminal in character and the misuse of telecommunications to cause alarm or distress; it is criminal harassment if it occurs enough (more than twice) to constitute a course of conduct.

Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on reunion sites is illegal.

Hacking is a criminal offence.

### **School commitments**

- The School will block access to inappropriate web-sites from school equipment.
- The School may monitor ICT communications on school equipment.
- The School will endeavour to ensure that all images of staff and students on the school network are secure.
- The School will train its staff to respond to reports of cyber-bullying or harassment and have systems in place to respond to it.
- The School will support victims and, where appropriate, work with the police to detect those involved in criminal acts.
- The School will use all sanctions available to it, including permanent exclusion to correct, punish or remove students who bully or harass fellow students or staff in this way, in or out of school.
- The School will use its powers of confiscation where necessary to prevent students from committing crimes or misusing equipment.
- If necessary for the protection of students, the School will ban electronic equipment, including mobile phones, from being brought on to its premises
- It is the duty of all members of the School community to bring to the attention of the appropriate member of staff any example of cyber-bullying or harassment they know about or suspect.

## **Systems (for staff)**

The School's Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure applies, even in interactions between current students originating outside School.

## **Advice to parents**

When a child is the target of cyber-bullying — bullying via mobile phone or the internet — they can feel alone and very vulnerable. It is therefore vital that as a parent (or carer) you know how to support your child if they are caught up in cyber-bullying. This short guide will help you.

### **1. Prevent cyber-bullying**

- **Where to start**

The best way to deal with cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Although it may be uncomfortable to accept, you should be aware that your child may cyber-bully as well as be a target of cyber-bullying, and that sometimes children get caught up in cyber-bullying simply by not thinking about the consequences of what they are doing. It is therefore crucial that you talk with your children, and understand the ways in which they are using the internet and their mobile phone. Following this section there is an anti-cyber-bullying code which contains seven key messages for children, which you may find a helpful starting point for a discussion with them about issues, such as being careful about posting images on personal websites and where to go to get help.

- **Use the tools**

Most software and services on the internet have in-built safety features. Knowing how to use them can prevent unwanted contact. For example, IM services such as MSN Messenger have features which allow users to block others on their contact list, and conversations can be saved on most IM services. Social-networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Bebo etc also have tools available, e.g. young people can keep their profile set to 'private' so that only approved friends can see it.

- **Check with providers**

With bullies using text and picture messaging, it is also important to check with your children's internet or mobile-phone provider to find out what protections they can offer, including whether it is possible to change your mobile number should you wish to do so.

### **2. Respond to cyber-bullying**

- It is helpful to have strategies to help your child if they come to you saying that they are being cyber-bullied.

Start by teaching your children the seven key messages in the anti-cyber-bullying code (see advice to students). This includes advice on not replying or retaliating to cyber-bullying, as well as not assisting a cyberbully by forwarding a message, even as a joke.

- **Keep the evidence**

Keeping the evidence of cyber-bullying is helpful when reporting an incident and may help in identifying the bully. This means keeping copies of offending emails, text messages or online conversations.

- **Reporting cyber-bullying**

There are a number of organisations that can help you if you need to report incidents of cyber-bullying:

❖ **The School:** if the incident affecting your child involves a student, or students, at your child's school, then it is important to let the School know. We have measures in place to support the person being bullied and to apply disciplinary sanctions to the student doing the bullying.

❖ **The provider of the service:** most service providers have complaints and abuse policies, and it is important to report the incident to the provider of the service, i.e. the mobile-phone operator (e.g. O2 or Vodafone), the IM provider (e.g. MSN Messenger or AOL), or the social-network provider (e.g. Facebook, MySpace or Bebo). Most responsible service providers will have a 'Report Abuse' or a nuisance call bureau, and these can provide information and advice on how to help your child.

❖ **The police:** if the cyber-bullying is serious and a potential criminal offence has been committed you should consider contacting the police. Relevant criminal offences here include harassment and stalking, threats of harm or violence to a person or property, racist abuse and any evidence of sexual exploitation, e.g. grooming, distribution of sexual images, or inappropriate sexual contact or behaviour.

## **Advice to students**

Being sent an abusive or threatening text message, or seeing nasty comments about yourself on a website, can be really upsetting. This code gives you seven important tips to protect yourself and your friends from getting caught up in cyber-bullying, and advice on how to report it if it does happen.

### **1. Always respect others**

Remember that when you send a message to someone, you cannot see the impact that your words or images may have on the other person. That is why it is important to always show respect to people and be careful what you say online or what images you send. What you think is a joke may really hurt someone else. Always ask permission before you take a photo of someone.

If you receive a rude or nasty message or picture about someone else, do not forward it. You could be assisting a bully and even be accused of cyber-bullying yourself. You could also be breaking the law.

### **2. Think before you send**

It is important to think before you send any images or text about yourself or someone else by email or mobile phone, or before you post information on a website. Remember that what you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever. Do you really want your parents, teacher or future employer to see that photo?

### **3. Treat your password like your toothbrush**

Don't let anyone know your password/s. It is a good idea to change them on a regular basis. Choosing hard-to-guess passwords with symbols or numbers will help stop people hacking into your account and pretending to be you. Remember to only give your mobile number or personal website address to trusted friends.

### **4. Block the Bully**

Most responsible websites and services allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly. Make use of these features, they are there for a reason!

### **5. Don't retaliate or reply**

Replying to bullying messages, particularly in anger, is just what the bully wants.

### **6. Save the evidence**

Learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. These will help you demonstrate to others what is happening and can be used by your school, internet service provider, mobile phone company, or even the police to deal with the cyber-bullying.

### **7. Make sure you tell someone**

You have a right not to be harassed and bullied online.

There are people that can help:

- ❖ Tell an adult you trust who can help you to report it to the right place, or call a helpline like ChildLine (0800 1111) in confidence.
- ❖ Tell the provider of the service you have been bullied on (e.g. your mobile-phone operator or social-network provider). Check their websites to see where to report.
- ❖ Your Form Tutor or other teachers can support you and can deal with the person bullying you to prevent it happening again.
- ❖ Use the Sharp system to make an anonymous report.

Finally, don't just stand there. If you see cyber-bullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying. How would you feel if no one stood up for you?

There are a variety of sites (Google them by putting in 'cyber-bullying') Two particularly useful ones are:

- [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/375420/Advice\\_for\\_Parents\\_on\\_Cyberbullying\\_131114.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/375420/Advice_for_Parents_on_Cyberbullying_131114.pdf)
- <http://www.antibullying.net/cyberbullying6.htm>

(This also has useful links to website abuse contacts in order to get material removed)

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Relevant policy:	Anti-Bullying Policy; Safeguarding CP Policy