Highfields Independent School and Day Nursery

Cyber Bullying Policy

Last Reviewed:	October 2019	Approved on:	09.10.19
Committee Responsible:	Pupil and Personnel	Next Review:	Autumn 2020
Approved by:	Full Govs		

Cyber Bullying is the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, to deliberately upset someone else.

*Bullying can be done verbally, in writing or images, **including through communication technology (cyber bullying) e.g.graffiti, text messaging, e-mail or postings on websites.** It can be done physically, financially (including damage to property) or through social isolation. Verbal bullying is the most common form.*

Bullying is not new, but some features of cyberbullying are different from other forms for bullying:

24/7 and the invasion of home/ personal space.

Cyberbullying can take place at any time and can intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe or personal.

The audience can be very large and reached rapidly.

The difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages means the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than for other forms of bullying. Electronically forwarded content is hard to control, and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for targets to move on.

People who cyberbully may attempt to remain anonymous.

This can be extremely distressing for those being bullied. The person cyberbullying may never be in the same physical space as their target.

The profile of the bully and target.

Cyberbullying can take place both between peers and across generations; teachers have also been targets. Age or size are not important. Bystanders can also become accessories to the bullying; for example, by passing on a humiliating image.

Some instances of cyberbullying are known to be unintentional.

It can be the result of not thinking (something sent as a joke may be deeply upsetting or offensive to the recipient) or a lack of awareness of the consequences – for example saying something negative online about another pupil, or friend that they don't expect to be forwarded or viewed outside their immediate group.

Many cyberbullying incidents can themselves act as evidence.

This is one of the reasons why it's important for recipients or victims of cyberbullying to know how to respond.

Cyberbullying and the law.

Education law: Bullying is never acceptable. All school communities have a duty to protect all its members and provide a safe, healthy environment.

A range of Education Acts and government initiatives highlight these obligations. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) outlines some legal powers which relate more directly to

cyberbullying. Head teachers have the power 'to such an extent as is reasonable' to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off site.

The EIA also provides a defence for school staff in confiscating items such as mobile phones from pupils.

Civil and criminal law:

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in UK law, there are laws that can apply in terms of harassing or threatening behaviour, for example, or indeed menacing and threatening communications. In fact, some cyberbullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, which has both criminal and civil provision, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, section 127 of the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

Methods for preventing 'cyberbullying' within Highfields School.

1. Pupils are educated in an age-appropriate manner on how to keep themselves safe from online bullying, and on appropriate and respectful online behaviours through a rigorous PHSE and IT curriculum and established culture of nurture and respect.
2. Children are not allowed to bring mobile phones to School during the day, nor are they allowed to take them on educational / residential visits. If children need to contact their parents, a message may be relayed by telephone via the Office staff or the teacher(s) in charge.
3. Children do not have access to e-mails at Highfields.
4. The Internet filter we use at Highfields, called NCS, is secure in that it relies upon the ICT technician to unlock websites that teachers have requested access to. We do not subscribe to a filter company that often is relied upon by others to determine what are appropriate or inappropriate websites; instead we have a system that begins, prior to unlocking, with 'zero tolerance.'
5. Support and information for families on IT and online safety.

If a bullying incident directed at a child occurs using email or mobile phone technology either outside of school time AND it is made known to a member of staff at School The Headteacher, as the School's principal Child Protection Officer, should be informed. The parent of the child(ren) concerned should be involved at all stages.

1. Advise the child not to respond to the message
2. Secure and preserve any evidence
3. Inform the sender's e-mail service provider
4. Consider informing the police depending on the severity or repetitious nature of offence
5. Inform the LA e-safety officer

If malicious or threatening comments are posted on an Internet site about a pupil or member of staff
1. Inform and request the comments be removed if the site is administered externally
2. Secure and preserve any evidence
3. Endeavour to trace the origin and inform police as appropriate
4. Inform LA e-safety officer

Children should be confident in a no-blame culture when it comes to reporting inappropriate incidents involving the internet or mobile technology: they must be able to do this without fear.

Headteacher's signature: