Each day, discovery.

ELTHAM COLLEGE

10a Online Bullying and Online Safety Policy

Last reviewed: August 2017

Version Control Information

Reason For Amendment	Name	Date	Main changes
Annual Review	Designated Safeguarding Lead	August 2016	Updated to reflect Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016.
Annual Review		August 2017	Updated to reflect staffing changes, change of terminology ('cyber' to 'online')

Other Related Documents

- Anti-bullying Strategy;

- Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people (available from the gov.uk website).

1   Understanding Online Bullying

Online bullying can be defined as '*the use of information and communications technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.*'

It can be an extension of face to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. However, it differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying: the invasion of home and personal space; the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages; the size of the audience; perceived anonymity; and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target. Research into the extent of online bullying indicates that it is a feature of many young people's lives. It also affects members of school staff and other adults; there are examples nationwide of staff being ridiculed, threatened and otherwise abused online by students.

Online bullying, like all bullying, should be taken very seriously. It is never acceptable, and a range of Education Acts and government guidance outline schools' duties and powers in relation to bullying. The Education and Inspections Act 2011 includes legal powers that relate more directly to online bullying; it outlines the power of head teachers to regulate the conduct of students when they are off-site and provides a defence in relation to the confiscation of mobile phones and other items. Independent schools cover these areas via rules, policies and the parental contract. Although online bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that can apply in terms of harassment and threatening and menacing communications. Schools are advised to contact the police if they feel that the law has been broken.

Online bullying takes different forms: threats and intimidation; harassment or "cyberstalking" (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages); vilification / defamation; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation; unauthorised publication of private information or images (including what are sometimes misleadingly referred to as 'happy slapping' images); and manipulation. Some online bullying is clearly deliberate and aggressive, but it is important to recognise that some incidents of online bullying are known to be unintentional and the result of simply not thinking about the consequences. What may be sent as a joke, may not be received as one, and indeed the distance that technology allows in communication means the sender may not see the impact of the message on the receiver. There is also less opportunity for either party to resolve any misunderstanding or to feel empathy.

It is important that students are made aware of the effects of their actions. In online bullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators – by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, for example, or by taking part in online polls or discussion groups. They may not recognise themselves as participating in bullying, but their involvement compounds the misery for the person targeted. It is recommended that anti-bullying policies refer to those 'bystanders' – better termed 'accessories' in this context – who actively support online bullying and set out sanctions for this behaviour. It is important that students are aware that their actions have severe and distressing consequences and that participating in such activity will not be tolerated.

2   Preventing Online Bullying

The Deputy Head in their capacity as Head of Pastoral Care and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will work with local safeguarding children's boards, IT staff, pastoral staff, and School Council members to prevent online bullying and promote a culture of the responsible use of technology that is consistent with the ethos of the school. Essential elements of prevention are awareness-raising and promoting understanding about online bullying. Presentations are given to each section of the school about online

bullying and online safety. There are online safety presentations at parent's evenings and staff INSED on the subject. It is also a topic within the PHSE programme. The school has recently updated its anti-bullying policies and these, as well as the school rules include specific sections on online bullying. The school has acceptable ICT use policies for students and staff and these are reviewed annually by the ICT committee. The Director of IT is also responsible for monitoring the school network to check whether the existing procedures are adequate.

The school records and monitors incidents of online bullying in the same way as all other forms of bullying and uses this information to develop policies and practices.

Publicising reporting routes is an important element of prevention, raising awareness of the issue but also ensuring that any incidents can be stopped before they become too serious or upsetting. The school tries to ensure that learners, parents and staff are all aware of the different ways available to report online bullying incidents. In addition, schools can signpost information about external reporting routes, providing information about contacting service providers directly.

Education and discussion around the responsible use of technologies and e-safety are key to preventing online bullying and helping children and young people deal confidently with any problems that might arise, whether in or out of school. We emphasize the fact that technology can have a positive role in learning and teaching practice, and we try to ensure that staff are confident about ICT in order to model the responsible and positive use of technologies and to respond to incidents of online bullying appropriately.

The school aims to stay up to date – prevention and responding strategies require continuous review and refinement as new technologies and services become popular. The school aims to publicise progress and online bullying prevention activities to the whole-school community.

3   Responding to Online Bullying

Online bullying is a form of bullying, and as such we are already be equipped to deal with the majority of online bullying cases through their existing anti-bullying and behaviour policies and procedures. However, we recognise the ways in which online bullying differs from other forms of bullying and reflect that in how they respond to it. In addition to considerations about the invasiveness of online bullying, the size of the audience, and other such factors, online bullying yields evidence in a way that other forms of bullying do not. The person being bullied will usually have examples of texts or emails received, and we encourage students to keep these to aid in any investigation.

There are also additional reporting routes available, through mobile phone companies, internet service providers and social networking sites. Some forms of online bullying involve the distribution of content or links to content, which can exacerbate, extend and prolong the bullying. There are advantages in trying to contain the spread of these, and options the school might use here include contacting the service provider, confiscating phones, and contacting the police (in relation to illegal content).

Advice is given to those experiencing online bullying on steps they can take to avoid recurrence – for example, advise those targeted not to retaliate or reply; provide advice on 'blocking' or removing people from 'buddy lists'; and ask them to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

We will take steps to identify the person responsible for the bullying. Steps can include looking at the school system and computer logs; identifying and interviewing possible witnesses; and, with police involvement, obtaining user information from the service provider.

Once the person responsible for the online bullying has been identified, as in other cases of bullying, sanctions will be applied. Steps will be taken to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any help that they may need. The school has existing sanctions in place for bullying behaviour, and these will apply equally to online bullying. In addition, we will refer to any Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) for internet and mobile use, and apply sanctions where applicable and practical. Technology-specific sanctions for students engaged in online bullying behaviour could include limiting internet access for a period of time or removing the right to use a mobile phone on the school site, for example.

4   Online Safety

Many of the policies and practices concerned with online bullying also deal with issues of online safety and indeed the programme of talks to parents and students, the staff INSED and the advice booklet for students which are referred to above all deal with online safety. The filtering of material available on and the monitoring of the use of the school network which is carried out, (monitoring is referred to in the school rules and always aims to be reasonable and proportionate) serves to keep students safe from certain unsuitable material as well as being a tool in the anti-bullying strategy.

5   The Role of Technology in our Students' Lives

Technology plays an enormously important part in the lives of all young people. Sophisticated games consoles, together with smartphones provide unlimited access to the internet, to SMS messages, to blogging services (like Twitter), to Skype, to wikis (collaborative web pages), chat rooms, social networking sites (such as Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram) and video sharing sites (such as YouTube).

The school wants to ensure that students are able to use these new technologies safely, whether they are accessing them at home or at school.

Obviously education is crucial and listed above are the various means by which the school seeks to advise students. We are particularly aware of the fact that although filtering and monitoring can help to prevent access to unsuitable sites via the school network, there may be limited or no filtering operating if they access the web from elsewhere. The growth of hand held technologies will make this more of an issue. It is therefore important to ensure that students have a sensible and careful attitude to using the web whatever the extent of filtering or monitoring being applied.

In particular, the school tries to draw attention to the dangers for students on line of the following:

Commerce

Attempts by companies to sell them items which can led to young people getting themselves or parents into debt.

Content

The need for students to be aware that not all content on the web has been vetted for accuracy and that there are sensible approaches and procedures to follow when carrying out research.

Contact

Students can come into contact with a large number of people via the internet through chat rooms, social networking site and increasingly through virtual worlds. There are clearly dangers if contact in the real world is made with some of these people without proper precautions being taken.

6 Sexting

All incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery should be responded to in line with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

When an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery comes to the school's attention:

- The incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible;
- The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff;
- There should be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate);
- Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm;
- At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the Police immediately.

Disclosure

Disclosures about youth produced sexual imagery can happen in a variety of ways. The young person affected may inform a class teacher, the DSL in school, or any member of the staff. They may report through an existing reporting structure, or a friend or parent may inform someone in school or college, or inform the police directly.

All members of staff (including support staff) are made aware of how to recognise and refer any disclosures of incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery. This is covered within staff training and within the school Child Protection Policy.

Any direct disclosure by a young person should be taken very seriously. A young person who discloses they are the subject of sexual imagery is likely to be embarrassed and worried about the consequences. It is likely that disclosure in school is a last resort and they may have already tried to resolve the issue themselves.

7 Involvement with Parents and Guardians

We seek to work closely with parents and guardians in promoting a culture of e-safety. We will always contact you if we have any worries about your son or daughter's behaviour in this area, and we hope that you will feel able to share any worries with us.

We recognise that not all parents and guardians may feel equipped to protect their son or daughter when they use electronic equipment at home. We therefore arrange annual discussion evenings for parents when an outside specialist advises about the potential hazards of this exploding technology, and the practical steps that parents can take to minimise the potential dangers to their sons and daughters without curbing their natural enthusiasm and curiosity