



Glenmere Langmoor Academy Trust Cyber Bullying Guidance and Policy



Because of the anonymity that new communications technologies offer, anyone with a mobile phone or Internet connection can be a target for cyber bullying. What's more, bullies can reach much larger numbers within a peer group than they can with conventional bullying. Vindictive comments posted on a website, for instance, can be seen by a large audience, as can video clips sent by mobile phone.

Most cyber bullying is done by students in the same class or year group. Although it leaves no visible scars, cyber bullying of all types can be extremely destructive.

Evidence from the report to the Anti-bullying Alliance by Goldsmiths College, University of London (July 2006: <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org/>) showed that:

- Between a fifth and a quarter of students had been cyber-bullied at least once over the previous few months.
- Phone calls, text messages and email were the most common.
- There was more cyber bullying outside school than in.
- Girls are more likely than boys to be involved in cyber bullying in school, usually by phone.
- For boys, text messaging is the most usual form, followed by picture/video clip or website bullying.
- Picture/video clip and phone call bullying were perceived as most harmful.
- Website and text-bullying were equated in impact to other forms of bullying.
- Around a third of those bullied told no one about the bullying.

Accessible help

- A quarter of the young people who had been cyber-bullied said that knowing how to get hold of and speak to an expert at dealing with cyber bullying would have made a difference.
- Knowing there was a staff member at school dedicated to stopping bullying was cited by 15% as a help.
- 13% said that knowing of a website with advice and tips would have helped them.

Within this guidance document there are five appendices that will provide further information and resources to support schools and parents against cyber bullying; they are:

Appendix 1: A Code of Conduct

Appendix 2: Advice to Students

Appendix 3: Web-Based Resources

Appendix 4: Writing and Updating Your School's Behaviour Policy For Cyber-Bullying

Appendix 5: A Guide to the Law

The key points to recommend within this guidance are:

- Cyber bullying affects a significant number of pupils.
 - There are electronic methods to record and track this type of bullying.
 - The school must have a clear policy for appropriate use, monitoring and sanctions that is owned by the whole school.
 - Students must be taught how to use technology safely and appropriately.
 - There is legislation to protect victims.
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Most of the advice contained within this document has been taken from a number of well-known websites, please see the references at the end of this document.

If you're a school governor or headteacher:

Schools have a duty to ensure that:

- bullying via mobile phone or the Internet is included in mandatory anti-bullying policies, that these policies are regularly updated, and that teachers have sufficient knowledge to deal with cyber bullying in school

- the curriculum teaches pupils about the risks of new communications technologies, the consequences of their misuse, and how to use them safely
- all e-communications used on the school site or as part of school activities off-site are monitored
- Internet-blocking technologies are continually updated and harmful sites blocked
- security systems are in place to prevent images and information about pupils and staff being accessed improperly from outside school
- they work with police and other partners on managing cyber bullying.

Actions School Leadership Teams can take include:

- In part of the Home-School agreement having a section that includes clear statements about acceptable use of e-communications, e.g. school email, mobile phones etc, that the school monitors pupil use of the Internet and email. The Anti-bullying Alliance (www.antibullying.net/cyberbullying1.htm) has suggestions for a code of conduct for schools to introduce to pupils (see appendix 1).
- Regular briefing for parents on:
 - e-communication standards and practices in schools
 - what to do if problems arise
 - what's being taught in the curriculum.
- Support for parents and pupils if cyber bullying occurs by:
 - assessing the harm caused
 - identifying those involved.

If you're a member of staff

- Make sure you're familiar with your role and responsibilities in:
 - teaching children safe Internet etiquette
 - applying school policy in monitoring electronic messages and images
- giving pupils key guidance on:
 - personal privacy rights
 - material posted on any electronic platform
 - photographic images
- taking action if a pupil is being cyber-bullied or is bullying someone else

- teaching pupils the value of e-communications and the risks and consequences of improper use, including the legal implications
- Keep up a dialogue with parents about emerging technologies their child might be using.
- Ensure parents know who to approach at the school if they suspect that their child is being cyber-bullied or is bullying someone else.

The school's anti-bullying policy should therefore recognise cyber bullying and incorporate this into its whole school strategies. The following resources contained within appendix 1 - 4 will help schools to teach students what to do to protect themselves; for schools to be aware of how these technologies can be misused and resources to raise awareness of this area.

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Appendix 1: A code of Conduct



<http://www.antibullying.net/cyberbullying1.htm>

A Code of Conduct

Here are some points that could be included in the code of conduct that you discuss and agree with young people. Use these points to help you start the discussion, but aim to end up with a small number (up to five or so) of short statements that are suitable for the age of the users.

- If you feel you are being bullied by email, text or online, do talk to someone you trust.
- Never send any bullying or threatening messages. Anything you write and send could be read by an adult.
- Serious bullying should be reported to the police - for example threats of a physical or sexual nature.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender.
- Why not log into a chatroom with a different user ID or nickname? That way the bully won't know who you are. You could change your mobile phone number and only give it out to close friends.
- Contact the service provider (Mobile Phone Company / your Internet provider) to tell them about the bullying. They may be able to track down the bully.
- Use blocking software - you can block instant messages from

certain people or use mail filters to block emails from specific email addresses.

- **Don't** reply to bullying or threatening text messages or emails - this could make matters worse. It also lets the bullying people know that they have found a 'live' phone number or email address. They may get bored quite quickly if you ignore them.
- **Don't** give out your personal details online - if you're in a chatroom, watch what you say about where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you build up a picture about you.
- **Don't** forward abusive texts or emails or images to anyone. You could be breaking the law just by forwarding them. If they are

about you, keep them as evidence. If they are about someone else, delete them and don't reply to the sender.

- **Don't** ever give out passwords to your mobile or email account.
- **Remember** that sending abusive or threatening messages is against the law.

Appendix 2: Advice to Students

Bullying with mobile phones

Hi-Tech Bullying & Internet Safety

<http://www.bullying.co.uk>

Problems include:

- Silent calls
- Abusive verbal messages
- Insulting and threatening texts
- Stolen identity

Staying safe with your phone

Although it's nice to have your mobile phone handy to chat to friends, don't flash it about in public because you risk having it stolen. If there's a lock facility on it choose a secret number so that the keypad is locked when you're not using it. If someone you don't know asks to borrow your phone to make a quick call tell them that it's out of credit and only accepts incoming calls.

Be careful when giving out your telephone number. Mobile phones are relatively inexpensive and if you start getting abusive calls or text messages then it might be better to get another SIM card so that the bullies can't contact you.

If you receive abusive messages, keep a note of the times and dates they are received. Don't reply to them or delete them but tell your parents so that they can make a complaint to the police. If there are a series of calls or the calls are part of a bigger picture of bullying then this may amount to harassment which is an offence under the 1997 Harassment Act. BT recommends that you stay calm and try not to show emotion. Don't give your phone number when you answer a call, just say "hello".

Every time a mobile phone is switched on or off it sends a signal to the nearest mast and although the caller may have concealed their number from you, this is information which phone companies will have on their system and it's easy for the police to find out the culprit's phone number. Almost all calls nowadays can be traced.

You can use your voicemail to vet your calls. A lot of mobiles display the caller's number. See if you recognise it. If you don't, let it divert to voicemail instead of answering it. And don't leave your name on your voicemail greeting. You could get an adult to record your greeting. Their voice might stop the caller ringing again.

In recent years, a mobile phone database has been created to block stolen and lost mobile phones so that they will not work on any UK mobile network, therefore making a stolen phone worthless. A note of the IMEI number of the handset (a unique 15-digit serial number) should be kept in a safe place. The IMEI number can be found by looking behind the battery of the phone or by keying in *#06#. The IMEI number of lost or stolen phones should be reported to the network operator or by calling 08701 123 123. The theft should also be reported to the police. The Immobilise Phone Crime website [<http://www.immobilise.com>] provides further details.

Never give any information about yourself unless you are certain you know the caller. A telephone answering machine can be useful at home, leave it on all the time and then when the person starts speaking, if you know them, you can pick up the phone. A genuine caller will speak first. A malicious caller will probably hang up.

How mobile phone operators are combating cyber bullying

If you get your service from BT and receive a malicious or nuisance call and would like advice, call Freefone 0800 666 700. A recorded message will tell you what to do if you need more help.

You can also call free on 150 for personal advice and information about how BT can help you tackle the problem. The service is available 8am to 6pm, Monday to Saturday. If the problem continues then contact your nearest BT bureau on Freefone 0900 661 441 during office hours. The bureau deals exclusively with malicious and nuisance calls.

BT may suggest tracing future calls or changing your telephone number. Almost all malicious calls can now be traced whether they come from private, public or even mobile phones, anywhere in the country.

A dedicated team of specially-trained BT people will work with the police so it will be helpful to any subsequent prosecution of the malicious caller

if you keep a written record of the calls, making a note of the date, time of day, what was said and whether you heard any background noise.

Tesco Mobile has a 24-hour service for young people being cyber-bullied. Just text 'bully' to 60000 to receive advice and support. The cost of texts is donated to NCH.

The specially trained team at O2's Nuisance Call Bureau can be contacted by email or by calling the Customer Service Department on 0870 5214

1. O2 also has useful online leaflets. See www.o2.com/cr/resource/resource_child_protection.asp

Vodafone has a RespondPlus service, where an operator will answer your calls for you; take a message and text it to you.

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 texting 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 (such as Orange, O2, Vodafone or T-Mobile).

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.

Text harassment is a crime. If the calls are simply annoying, tell a teacher, parent or carer. If they are threatening or malicious and they persist, report them to the police, taking with you all the messages you've received.

Chatrooms or Instant Messaging (IM) Email

- If you receive a nasty or abusive email (known as being flamed), **don't reply**. If it's from someone you think you know, like someone at school, they'll want some kind of reaction, just like they would if they were standing in front of you and bullying you. Don't give them the satisfaction of replying, and they'll probably stop.

- Never reply to someone you don't know, even if there's an option to 'unsubscribe'. Replying simply confirms your email address as a real one.
- Give yourself an alias that doesn't give out anything about your age, gender or location.
- Think about what you write - it is very easy for people to get the wrong idea about what you write or how you write it.
- Stick to public areas in chat rooms and get out if you feel uncomfortable.
- If they don't stop then you need to find out from where the email is coming. Using an email client like Outlook or Outlook Express, clicking the right mouse button over an email will reveal lots of details about from where and who the email came. You can then get your parents to contact the school or the service provider of the sender of the email
- The email can also come from people that you don't know, (known as spamming) - email addresses are fairly easy for companies to obtain on the internet, using software called email harvesters. They are also surprisingly easy for specialist computer programs to guess. Under no circumstances should you reply to these types of email, even if they have a Click here and stop receiving this email link - this will just confirm your email address as a real one. The individual sending it can then sell or pass it on to other people and you'll be flooded with even more junk and abusive emails
- You can delete the emails, but if the situation becomes serious, you should save them or print them off so that, if you do need to take action, you have some evidence.
- Learn more about your email program from the Help menu - you should be able to find details of how you can create folders, email filters and folder routing. This won't stop the emails but it can help to shield you from them

Web bullying

If the bullying is on a school website, tell a teacher or parent, just as you would if the bullying were face-to-face.

If you don't know the owner of the website, you can use a specialist search engine to find the owner of the website, for example <http://www.easywhois.com/>. This will help you and your school to identify the author.

Three steps to stay out of harms way

2. Respect other people - online and off. Don't spread rumours about people or share their secrets, including their phone numbers and passwords.
3. If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm - and ignore them.
4. 'Do as you would be done by.' Think how you would feel if you were bullied. You're responsible for your own behaviour - make sure you don't distress other people or cause them to be bullied by someone else.

Appendix 3: Web-based Resources

Secondary school teachers can download an information pack from www.stoptextbully.com including a classroom quiz, poster and top tips to help tackle cyber-bullying.

Childnet International has a DVD for secondary schools about keeping safe in online chatrooms. They have a range of publications to promote e-safety which can be ordered from www.childnet-int.org/order .

www.cybersmartcurriculum.org has lesson plans for teachers on dealing with online bullies.

The Kidscape booklet 'Don't Bully Me!' gives advice to primary school children on what to do if they are bullied.

<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/assets/downloads/ksdontbullyme.pdf>

Some useful information, e.g. chat / text abbreviations and anti-bullying advertisements. <http://internetsafetyadvisor.info/cyber-bullying/>

Appendix 4: **WRITING AND UPDATING YOUR SCHOOL'S BEHAVIOUR POLICY FOR CYBER-BULLYING**

STRUCTURE

- Start with a definition of cyber-bullying, e.g. "*Cyber bullying is the use of modern communication technologies to embarrass, humiliate, threaten, or intimidate an individual in the attempt to gain power and control over them.*" (Glenn R. Stutzky)
- Criminality - make clear that it is criminal behaviour under several different acts (hacking, causing distress, misuse of Telecoms, conspiracy, assault).
- All stakeholders need an understanding of the seriousness of the offence.
- Staff need to know actions expected of them
- Parents and pupils may find advice helpful.
- Could have an "All In" policy that contains material for all (staff, parents, pupils) or could have a core that applies to all ,then separate annexes for specific guidance for each group.
- The policy should be reviewed for content/clarity as follows: do they need it? Will they read it? Can they understand it?

CONTENT

- Definition
- School statements
- School commitments
- Systems (for staff)
- Advice to parents
- Advice to pupils
- Code of conduct for the use of communication equipment

SYSTEMS

- Must be appropriate to the school and how it works
- First point of contact must be clearly identifiable and accessible
- Provide staff with clear guidance on what to do e.g. confiscate mobile; do not access its contents; remove pupil from computer; etc.
- Provide staff with clear protocol on passing on information to nominated person, dealing with the behaviour and how they are to act. Must be done by person with time e.g. Head, Deputy, senior admin assistant, etc. The action might be: contact the web-site host etc.

ADVICE TO PARENTS

- The message about criminality must be made clear to parents and children.
- Parents must make the statement clear to children.
- What to do if child is a victim: there is a clear need for parents to support their child following the advice.

ADVICE TO CHILDREN – see appendix 2 – advice to Students.

ICT CODE OF CONDUCT – see appendix1 Code of Conduct

Appendix 5: A Guide to the Law (<http://wiredsafety.org/gb/stalking/index.html>)

Cyber-stalking & Harassment

This section has been prepared by Neil Addison, a Barrister and member of our Advisory Board in the UK. More information on the law relating to cyber-stalking and other forms of stalking and harassment can be found on Neil's website www.harassment-law.co.uk.

The law in the UK provides a number of remedies for people suffering from Cyber-stalking or other forms of harassment.

Under Section 1 of the Malicious Communications Act 1998 it is an offence to send an indecent, offensive or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person and under Section 43 of the Telecommunications Act 1984 it is a similar offence to send a telephone message which is indecent, offensive or threatening. In both cases the offence is punishable with up to six months' imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £5000. As the Malicious Communications Offence is more wide-ranging than the Telecommunications offence it is more likely to be used by the Police than the Telecommunications Act offence.

In most cases involving malicious communications or cyber-stalking however there will be more than one offensive or threatening letter or telephone call and therefore the police will often choose to charge the offender with an offence contrary to Section 2 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997; also punishable with up to six months imprisonment. Part of the reason for using this charge is that when someone is convicted of an offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 the court can make a Restraining Order preventing them from contacting their victim again. Breach of a Restraining Order is punishable with up to five years' imprisonment. A Restraining Order cannot be imposed for a conviction under the Malicious Communications or Telecommunications Acts.

If the e-mails, cyber-stalking etc. causes the victim to fear that violence will be used against them then the police can choose to charge the offender with an offence contrary to Section 4 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 which is punishable with up to five years' imprisonment and also allows the court to make a Restraining Order.

If the e-mails, cyber-stalking etc. is racist in nature or motivated by religious hostility then charges could be brought of Racially or Religiously-Aggravated Harassment contrary to Sections 32(1)(a) or 32(1)(b) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. If convicted offenders could face up to 7 years' imprisonment.

The fact that an offensive telephone call, letter e-mail etc. may be received in the course of work and have been sent by a work colleague or manager does not justify the message or prevent it being an offence. Offensive messages sent within the workplace can still constitute criminal offences. In addition they may justify a claim for constructive dismissal and compensation under employment law.

In many situations the recipient of malicious messages knows who the sender is. It may be a former partner or a relative which may mean that the victim is reluctant to involve the police. In those circumstances the victim could consider taking out an Injunction under Section 3 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. However we would always advise informing the police especially if the messages are in any way threatening. Even if the police decide not to prosecute they may give the offender a formal warning which could be used in evidence if they repeated their behaviour in future.

In addition to criminal prosecutions victims of harassment can sue the offender under Section 3 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 for damages arising out of the anxiety caused by the Harassment and any financial loss it caused.

References:

Anti Bullying Network

www.antibullying.net/cyberbullying1.htm

British Education and Communication Technology Agency, (Becta)

www.becta.org.uk

Bullying

<http://www.bullying.co.uk>

Department for Education and Skills, (DfES)

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying/>

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Internet Safety – Keeping Our Children Safer Online

<http://internetsafetyadvisor.info/>

Kidscape,

<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

Putting U in the Picture,

Tesco/NCH Survey 2005,

http://www.nch.org.uk/uploads/documents/Mobile_bullying_%20report.pdf

Report by Goldsmiths College for the Anti-Bullying Alliance

Anti-Bullying Alliance, July 2006: <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org/>

I would also like to thank Mike Parks, Head of ICT, South Wilts Grammar School for Girls for advice about the anti-cyber bullying policy