



## **PREVENTION OF CYBERBULLYING POLICY**

*Rooted in Christ and Catholic tradition and under the guidance of its patron, St Edmund's aims to realise the God-given potential, in body, mind and spirit, of all members of its community through service and leadership.*

*Avita Pro Fide*

*St Edmund's is committed to ensuring the welfare and protection of children in their care and this commitment is a fundamental part of the role of every employee.*

**It is important that this policy is read in conjunction with:**

- St Edmund's College & Prep School Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- St Edmund's College & Prep School Prevention of Bullying Policy
- St Edmund's College & Prep School Behaviour Policy
- St Edmund's College & Prep School IT, Internet & E-Safety Policy

**Colleagues who need to be involved in the creation, management and maintenance of this policy are:**

- The Headmaster
- The Deputy Head (Pastoral)
- The Assistant Head Pastoral (in his capacity as DSL)
- The Head of the Prep School
- The Head of ICT
- The Network Manager

**General principles for dealing with e-Safety issues**

- An environment should be encouraged where students feel confident when it comes to reporting inappropriate incidents involving the internet or mobile technology.
- St Edmund's makes use of an effective range of technological tools to maintain a safe IT learning environment.
- Roles and responsibilities of staff involved are clearly designated and monitored.
- St Edmund's delivers an ongoing education programme for all concerned.

St Edmund's educates its pupils both in the proper use of telecommunications and about the serious consequences of cyberbullying and will, through PSHE and in IT lessons and assemblies, continue to inform and educate its pupils in these fast changing areas. St Edmund's Acceptable Use Policy, signed by parents and guardians clearly lays out the parameters for safe and proper use of the internet and other electronic and digital services. St Edmund's also makes use of its links with the local police in helping to monitor and take advice on cyberbullying.

St Edmund's trains its staff to respond effectively to reports of cyberbullying or harassment and has systems in place to respond to it. St Edmund's endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems. Where appropriate and responsible, St Edmund's audits IT communications and regularly reviews the security arrangements in place.

## **What is Cyberbullying?**

Cyberbullying is the use of Information Technology (IT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

Cyberbullying may consist of threats, harassment, embarrassment, humiliation, defamation or impersonation. It may take the form of general insults or prejudice based bullying for example homophobic, sexist, racist or other forms of discrimination. It may include photographs or video clips taken by mobile telephone.

## **Cyberbullying and the law**

While there is not a specific criminal offence called cyberbullying, activities can be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including:

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003
- Public Order Act 1986
- The Defamation Acts of 1952 and 1996.

## **Guidance for staff**

### **Prevention of Cyberbullying**

Staff have an important role to play in ensuring that all students are taught proper internet etiquette and ensuring that students, particularly tutees, have an idea of their rights with regards to their personal privacy, the consequences of improper use of the internet and how to take action if they or a friend are being bullied. In contact with parents, formal or informal, it is also helpful to keep them aware of new and changing technologies.

Staff are also directed to 'Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (2014)'.

### **If a bullying incident directed at a child occurs using email or mobile phone technology either inside or outside of school time:**

- Advise the child not to respond to the message
- Refer the matter to the child's Housemaster/Housemistress or Head of Year for investigation in line with the relevant policies including e-safety/acceptable use, anti-bullying and PSHE
- Secure and preserve any evidence
- St Edmund's may then decide to:
  - If possible inform the sender's e-mail service provider
  - Notify parents of the children involved
  - Consider informing the police depending on the severity or repetitious nature of offence

### **If malicious or threatening comments are posted on an Internet site about a pupil or member of staff, refer the matter immediately to the Headmaster or one of his Deputies who will then take action along the following lines:**

- Inform and request the comments be removed if the site is administered externally
- Secure and preserve any evidence
- If appropriate, send all the evidence to CEOP at [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)
- Endeavour to trace the origin and inform police as appropriate

## **Sanctions for the Cyberbully**

Once the student(s) responsible for the cyberbullying has been identified, it is important that, as in other cases of bullying sanctions are applied. These may involve:

- College/After School/Saturday Detention
- Put on report to monitor behaviour towards others in St Edmund's

- A fixed-term exclusion
- Persistent or extreme cases of bullying may result in permanent exclusion

### **Support for the target and perpetrator**

Consideration should always be given to the possibility of and need for further support, either informally or formally (i.e. counselling); bullies can often be or have been the target of bullying themselves and/or the offence unintentional; the 'target' of the bullying may also benefit from thinking about strategies on how to keep him or herself free from harassment in the future.

### **Guidance for parents (and staff) on preventing Cyberbullying**

#### **Where to start**

The best way to deal with cyberbullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Although it may be uncomfortable to accept, you should be aware that your child may as likely cyberbully as be a target of cyberbullying, and that sometimes children get caught up in cyberbullying 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. There is an Anti-Cyberbullying Code (appendix 1) 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, most have features which allow users to block others on their contact list, and conversations can be saved on most IM services. It is also imperative that adequate privacy settings are applied to any social networking profiles.

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.

#### **Responding to Cyberbullying**

It is vital that you have strategies to help your child if they come to you saying that they are being cyberbullied.

#### **The Anti-Cyberbullying Code**

Start by teaching your children the seven key messages in the Anti-Cyberbullying Code. This includes advice on not replying or retaliating to cyberbullying, as well as not assisting a cyberbully by forwarding a message, even as a joke.

#### **Keep the evidence**

Keeping the evidence of cyberbullying 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 or, depending on the platform being used, screenshots.

#### **Reporting Cyberbullying**

If the incident involves a pupil, or pupils, at school, then it is important to let St Edmund's know as soon as possible. There are also a number of organisations can help you if you need to report incidents of cyberbullying.

## 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.

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 cyberbullying 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, and any evidence of sexual exploitation, e.g. grooming, distribution of sexual images, or inappropriate sexual contact or behaviour.

*This policy will be updated at regular intervals or as new technology comes into St Edmund's.*

Owner of policy:	Deputy Head Pastoral		
Reviewed by:	Deputy Head Pastoral		
Frequency of review:	Annually		
Policy last reviewed:	Michaelmas	2021	
Next review date:	Michaelmas	2022	
Sub-Committee reviewed at:	Academic Sub-Committee		

## **Appendix 1 – The Anti-Cyberbullying Code**

1. Always respect others- always show respect to people and be careful with what you say on-line or what images you send. Always ask permission before you take a photo of someone.  
  
Never forward on an inappropriate message or picture about someone else.
2. Think before you send- think carefully as what you say or share can be made public quickly and could stay online forever.
3. Treat your password like you toothbrush – Change it regularly and don't let anyone else use it.
4. Block the Bully – most responsible websites and services allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly.
5. Don't retaliate or reply! Replying to the bully, particularly in anger, is just what the bully wants.
6. Save the evidence- learn how to keep evidence of messages, pictures or online conversations as they can be used by your school, service provider, mobile phone company or even the police to investigate the cyberbullying.
7. Make sure you tell – you have a right not to be harassed and bullied online.

### **There are people that can help:**

- Tell an adult that you trust who can help you to report it to the right place or call a helpline like Childline on 0800 1111 in confidence.
- Tell the provider of the service and check their websites on where to report.
- Tell your school - your tutor or Head of Year/House can help.
- If you see cyberbullying going on support the victim and report the bullying.