

ANTI BULLYING – CYBER BULLYING

1. Policy Statement

In line with our Aims and Ethos, Golden Rules and Code of Conduct statement, Bournemouth Collegiate School [BCS] is committed to the well being of all pupils ensuring that the school environment is a safe place to learn and flourish. We encourage every child to act with integrity, responsibility and concern for others.

Our aim is to establish an environment where bullying of any kind is discouraged and to help members of the school community to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it. Where a pupil engages in severe or persistent bullying the sanction may ultimately be exclusion. Our policy is written with regard to the DCSF Guidance Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti Bullying Work in Schools and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding (Standard 2).

BCS is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this Anti-bullying - Cyber Bullying Policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

This policy is applicable to all pupils in both senior and prep schools, including those in boarding and EYFS and BCS seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.

In line with our Provision of Information policy, this document is available to all interested parties on our website and on request from the Senior school and Prep school offices and should be read in conjunction with the following documents: Child Protection; Anti- bullying; Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions; PSHE and Citizenship Schemes of work; Equal Opportunities.

This document is reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with the key personnel, or as events or legislation change requires. The next scheduled date for review is November 2012.

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3. Key Personnel

Anti-bullying policy and procedure in the Senior school (including Boarding) is coordinated by the Assistant Principal (Pastoral) - Alison Davies

Anti-bullying policy and procedure in the Prep school (including EYFS) is coordinated by the Pastoral Care Coordinator / PSHE and Citizenship Coordinator – Laura Plant

4. Procedures

A. INTRODUCTION

A recent study by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) claimed that up to 34% of 12–15 year olds had experienced some form of cyber-bullying.

Cyber-bullying is the use of ICT, particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Content could include sexist, homophobic and racist messages, or attacks on physical or mental disability, cultural or religious background, appearance, or socio-economic position. In other cases bullies physically assault other children and post images of fights online or send recordings via text messages to other people.

There are distinct differences to other forms of Bullying:

Cyber-bullying can take place at any time and can intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe or personal, like the home. It can be much more intimidating and covert too as cyberbullies can attempt to remain anonymous.

An audience can be very large and reached rapidly.

The scale and scope of cyber-bullying can be greater than for other forms of bullying because of the ability to electronically 'forward' distressing content. The worry of how many people have seen the content, and its permanent and public nature can make it doubly difficult for victims to move on.

The profile of the bully and target.

Cyber-bullying can take place both between peers and across generations. 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 cyber-bullying 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.

Fortunately, many cyber-bullying incidents can themselves act as evidence.

B. STRATEGIES FOR TACKLING CYBER-BULLYING

See Anti-bullying policy but specifically with regard to cyber-bullying the aims of the BCS policy are:

- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour through:
- Monitoring internet use at school
- Pupils signing ICT policy which recognises pupil responsibility in using ICT appropriately
- Education through PSHE and ICT (e.g Year 8 complete a module on cyber-bullying and e-safety), assemblies and participating of Anti-bullying week in November, Internet Safety Day in February
- School ICT accounts can be suspended pending investigation
- Confiscation of mobile phone(s)
- Blocking inappropriate sites

2. To react to cyber-bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.

3. To safeguard the pupil who has experienced cyber-bullying and to trigger sources of support for the pupil.

4. To apply disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the cyber-bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multiagency support. This could include:

- Pupils having their personal ICT account suspended temporarily or, if appropriate, permanently.
- Appropriate school sanctions which in extreme cases could include permanent exclusion.
- Involving the police if appropriate

C. CYBER-BULLYING AND BCS BOARDING

Whilst it is appropriate to restrict access to social networking sites and mobile phones during the school day, at BCS we recognise that our boarders should be able to access these out of school hours. Boarding staff need to be vigilant that boarders are using ICT in an appropriate and safe manner and if not should follow the school procedures on anti cyber-bullying and child protection.

D. WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT A CYBER-BULLYING INCIDENT

At BCS we recognise that parents have a significant role in tackling cyber-bullying and we offer the following advice for parents:

- Be alert to your child seeming upset after using the internet or their mobile phone. This might involve comments or changes in relationships with friends. They might be unusually secretive about their online activities and mobile phone use.
- If you discover an instance of Cyber-bullying, remind your child **not to retaliate**. Keep the evidence of offending emails, text messages or online conversations.
- The next step is to report cyber-bullying. Contact BCS if it involves another pupil, so that they can take appropriate action. If the cyber-bully is not from the school, contact the service provider of the phone or ISP where the bullying took place. If the cyber-bullying is serious and a potential criminal offence has been committed, you should consider contacting the police.

Cyber-bullying and the law

Education law:

The school community has 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 cyber-bullying. 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 cyber-bullying 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.

E. VIDEO-HOSTING AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

If defamatory material is posted on a public site like YouTube, it is possible to get content taken down though the content will need to be illegal or have broken the terms of service of the site in other ways. On most video-sharing sites, it is possible to report content to the site provider as inappropriate. In order to do this, you will need to create an account (this is free) and log in, and then you will have the option to 'flag content as inappropriate'. The option to flag the content is under the video content itself. YouTube, for instance, provides information on what is considered inappropriate in its terms of service.

Similarly, social networking site providers have clear, accessible and prominent reporting features. Many of these reporting features will be within the profiles themselves, so they are 'handy' for the user. If social networking sites do receive reports about cyber-bullying, they will investigate and can remove content that is illegal or breaks their terms and conditions in other ways. They can delete the accounts of those who have broken the rules too.

Be aware of these important sources of assistance if you need more information.

These include:

- www.thinkuknow.co.uk: the main UK Government website with advice for parents on how to keep children safe online
- www.ceop.gov.uk: the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) is the Government body dedicated to eradicating abuse of children. Concerns about inappropriate contacts between a child and an adult, including online, can be reported directly to CEOP.
- www.iwf.org.uk: the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) works to remove illegal material from the internet. If you have found any material you believe to be illegal e.g. child sex abuse images, other obscene material or material which incites racial hatred, you can report it to the IWF.
- A number of specialist websites contain general advice that may be of help to parents: www.nspcc.org.uk, www.nch.org.uk, www.barnardos.org.uk, and www.bullying.co.uk.
- Other sites can offer parents support on broader issues. These include www.parentlineplus.org.uk and www.parents.org.uk.
- www.getnetwise.org – this site helpfully reviews different filtering tools to suit your requirements.
- www.childnet.com contains a Parents Support section which houses an array of resources for parents and carers, including PowerPoint presentations illustrating the gap between parental awareness and actual children's experiences online. Fact Sheets similar to this one are also available to download, covering topics such as mobile phones, internet addiction, posting images on the net, online chatting, search engines and spam mail.
- www.getsafeonline.org is a government website which focuses on online computer security and protection issues. It contains advice about protecting your information and your family.
- www.pro-music.org/musiconline.htm is a site dedicated to alerting users to legal music download sites. Using illegal networks or sites to download copyright material can lead to prosecution.