

St. Sinneach's National School
Colehill
Co. Longford
Uimhir Rolla 14672 F
Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy

Introduction: This policy was formulated by the Principal and staff of St. Sinneach's National School, in consultation with the Board of Management.

St. Sinneach's National School aims to ensure that children are safe and feel safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination. This school is committed to teaching children the knowledge and skills to be able to use ICT effectively, safely and responsibly. *The school believes that it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to monitor their children's social media activity as pupils are not allowed to have their phones in the school.*

What is Cyber Bullying?

- Cyber bullying is the use of Information Communication Technology (social media, usually a mobile phone and or the internet) to abuse another person.
- It can take place anywhere, any time and can involve many people.
- Anybody can be targeted including pupils and school staff.
- It can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorized publication of private information or images etc.
- While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013 (2.1.3.)** states: *"In addition, in the context of these procedures, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour".*

There are many types of Cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. **Text and Social Media messages** – can be threatening or cause discomfort.
2. **Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras** – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed – Snapchat, Viber, WhatsApp, Tik Tok.
3. **Mobile phone calls** – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible.
4. **Emails** – threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name.
5. **Chat room bullying** – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room.
6. **Instant messaging (IM) and Bullying via social media platforms** – communication through social media platforms / online gaming / Apps e.g. Snapchat, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitch, Discord, Houseparty, Playstation, X-Box, Fortnite, Tik

Tok, Zoom, Skype, Facetime, Twitter, farming Simulator, Youtube, VR Headset. (This list is not exhaustive).

7. **Games** – Minecraft, Roblox, Fortnite, Rocket League, FIFA, Human Fall Flat, Rec Room, Halo, Red Dead Redemption, Grand Theft Auto, Car X Drift, UFC, Forza Horizon, Among Us, Animal Crossing, Split Gate, Gang Beasts, Grand Tarismo, Super Mario, Marvel Games.

Explanation of slang terms used when referring to cyber-bullying activity:

1. **Flaming:** Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
2. **Harassment:** Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
3. **Cyber Stalking:** Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety
4. **Trolling:** This term, defined by Merriam-Webster as, “a person who intentionally antagonizes others online by posting inflammatory, irrelevant, or offensive comments or other disruptive content.” Or “to harass, criticize, or antagonize (someone) especially by provocatively disparaging or mocking public statements, postings, or acts.”
5. **Denigration:** ‘Dissing’ someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumours about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
6. **Impersonation:** Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes someone look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships
7. **Outing:** Originally defined as, “disclosing someone’s sexuality without their consent”. The definition has since been extended to include “sharing someone else’s personal, private, or embarrassing information, photos, or videos”.
8. **Trickery:** Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online.
9. **Exclusion:** Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a ‘buddy list’
10. **Sexting:** Texting messages with sexual content.
11. **Fraping:** The word’s origin is a combination of Facebook and rape. Using a Facebook account belonging to someone else without their permission, extending to impersonating someone or logging into a person’s social media profile to post inappropriate content.
12. **Cat-fishing:** This term is defined as a deceptive act by a person. The deceptive act can include but is not limited to creating fake identities for romance, financial gain, or to bullying.
13. **Griefing:** is the act of irritating and angering people in video games through the use of destruction, construction, or social engineering. A “griefer” is deemed a bad faith player who is deliberately irritating or harassing other players within the game by using aspects of the game in unintended ways.

This list is not exhaustive and the terms used continue to change.

Aims of Policy:

- To ensure that pupils, staff and parents/guardians understand what Cyber Bullying is and how it can be combatted
- To ensure that practices and procedures are agreed to prevent incidents of cyber bullying
- To ensure that reported incidents of Cyber Bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly.

Procedures to prevent Cyber Bullying:

- Staff, pupils, parents/guardians and Board of Management (BoM) will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises and letters to parents/guardians
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Stay Safe Programme, Assemblies, Friendship Week activities and other curriculum projects
- The school will engage a speaker to facilitate workshops on cyber bullying for Senior classes.
- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies.
- Parents/guardians will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying.
- Pupils will sign an Acceptable Use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) contract.
- Pupils and parents/guardians will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school -
 - (a) In the event of pupils reporting, our Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies will be followed.
 - (b) In the case of parents/guardians reporting, we will ask the complainant to contact the parents/guardians of the other party, with a view to resolving the matter between themselves in a timely manner. We will check in with the complainant to review the situation and take appropriate action.
- All pupils' reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded and stored safely by the Principal.
- The Gardaí will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content.
- This policy will be reviewed annually. Pupils, parents/guardians and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and procedure.
- Parents/guardians will be notified should there be an incident of Cyber-Bullying within any particular class.

Information for Pupils

If you're being bullied by phone or online:

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent/guardian or call an advice line.
- Never ever disclose or swap your password.
- Never give out your personal details online – if you're in a chat room, 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 to build up a picture about you.
- Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages. Don't engage – take a screenshot of any messages. Retain your screenshots as evidence.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent/guardian or teacher as evidence. Never delete messages from cyber bullies - you don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent and note any details about the sender.
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show your fear as little as possible. Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.
- Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying.
- There's plenty of online advice on how to react to Cyber Bullying. For example, www.webwise.ie
- You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning off your phone - this might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number.
- If the bullying persists, and in very exceptional circumstances, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider about this.

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of our Anti-Bullying Policy Review.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 23rd May, 2022.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Fr. Charlie Healy

Chairperson, Board of Management

Useful Websites

www.antibullying.net
www.sticksandstones.ie

www.webwise.ie
www.abc.tcd.ie