



BELIEVING
REWARDING
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ANTI-CYBERBULLYING POLICY

September 2021

**BELFAST
ROYAL
ACADEMY**

Title	Anti-Cyberbullying Policy
Summary	Guidance for all stakeholders regarding: a definition of cyberbullying; the procedures for responding to instances of cyberbullying
Purpose	To ensure an effective response to cyberbullying by the whole School community
Operational Date	September 2021
Next Review Date	August 2022
Author	Vice-Principal (Pastoral)

To be posted on School website	Yes
Date and version posted (if applicable)	September v4

Since cyberbullying is a form of bullying, this policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy.

1. Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology deliberately to upset someone else. It differs from other forms of bullying in a number of ways including:
 - The scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than other forms of bullying.
 - Victims may feel continually threatened and may have no place or time when they feel safe.
 - The person being bullied may not know the identity of the bully.
 - Evidence may be readily available.
2. Cyberbullying is viewed by the School as a Safeguarding concern and as such will be treated with the utmost seriousness by the School. Any reports of cyberbullying by or against a pupil, a member of staff (paid or voluntary), a governor or family members of any of the above, and whether in School or outside School, will be investigated. The information which will be used in deciding any course of action will be the School's Anti-Bullying and Positive Behaviour Policies, the School's Code of Conduct for Staff, and the relevant laws (see Appendix 1).
3. The School will provide all pupils with information sessions on cyber safety. This will include information on the current laws governing the transmission of indecent or malicious material, and how to report offensive material online. In particular, all pupils in Form 1 will attend an Internet Safety presentation in their first term at the school. See Appendix 2 for some useful web sites which deal with Internet safety.
4. The School will use a range of means to inform and support parents regarding cyber safety issues. This will include presentations at Induction Evenings and regular information sent via pupil notes.
5. The parents of all pupils of the School will be required to sign an Acceptable Use Policy regarding the use of School computer equipment by their son(s)/daughter(s). This will include, but not be limited to, information regarding anti-cyberbullying.
6. The information provided for both pupils and parents will include the advice that any evidence of cyberbullying should not be deleted but should be retained as evidence.
7. Where an instance of cyberbullying takes place by a pupil in School, or at a School event, the School will take appropriate disciplinary action according to the School's Anti-Bullying and Positive Behaviour Policies. This may take the form of a verbal warning, an interview with parents, a detention or a suspension which may, in extreme cases, lead to permanent exclusion.

8. For all other instances of cyberbullying outside School by a pupil of the School, the School will seek evidence of the cyberbullying and will inform the parents of the perpetrator and the parents (or other school if appropriate) of the victim. This will generally require the perpetrator's parents to come in to School so that the material may be viewed. The School will regard a direct threat to pupils in School, or content which brings the School into disrepute, as a School disciplinary matter and will respond in line with the School's Anti-Bullying and Positive Behaviour Policies.
9. Where an instance of cyberbullying takes place outside School, by a pupil of another school against a pupil of the School, the School will make all possible efforts to identify and inform the other school. The parents of the victim will also be informed.
10. In all instances of cyberbullying by a pupil of the School, the School will seek the co-operation of pupils, and if necessary, parents and Internet/mobile phone hosts, to have the material removed.
11. Where a parent exercises his or her right to involve the police in an alleged instance of cyberbullying, the School will co-operate fully with the police and will discharge its duties in compliance with the current laws.
12. Where the cyberbullying is judged by the School to be sufficiently serious, the School may refer the matter to the PSNI. Repeat offences may fall into this category.
13. Pastoral support, including counselling by the School Counsellor, will be offered to any pupil who is a victim of cyberbullying.
14. Anti-cyberbullying guidance will be given by the School to any pupil who is a perpetrator of cyberbullying. The help of outside agencies may be sought.
15. A record of all reports of cyberbullying, and of ensuing investigations and actions, will be maintained in school.

Appendix 1: Current Laws Which Address Cyberbullying

1. Malicious Communications Order 1988
2. Section 1 Malicious Communications Act 1988
3. Section 4 Protection from Harassment Act 1997
4. Section 127 Communications Act 2003
5. Section 16 Offences against the Person Act 1861
6. Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights
7. Defamation Act 2013

Appendix 2: Useful Web Sites in relation to Internet Safety

1. www.ceop.police.uk
2. www.thinkuknow.co.uk
3. www.internetmatters.org
4. www.connectsafely.org
5. www.nationalonlinesafety.com
6. www.saferinternet.org.uk