

# St Michael's Catholic Primary School Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy



<b>Approved by:</b>	LGC
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## Anti Cyber Bullying Policy

**St Michael's RC Primary School believes that all people in our community have the right to teach and learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. We believe that every individual in school has a duty to report an incident of bullying whether it happens to themselves or to another person.**

### WHAT IS CYBER-BULLYING?

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common include ...

1. **Text messages** —that are threatening or cause discomfort - also included here is "bluejacking" (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using "Bluetooth" wireless technology)
2. **Picture/video-clips** via mobile phone cameras - images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed.
3. **Mobile phone calls** — silent calls or 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. **Chatroom bullying** — menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in web-based chatroom.
6. **Instant messaging (IM)** — unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real time conversations online using programs such as MSM (Microsoft Messenger) or Yahoo Chat
7. **Bullying via websites** — use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal "own web space" sites such as Bebo and Myspace

**At St Michael's, we take this bullying as seriously as all other types of bullying and, therefore, will deal with each situation individually. An episode may result in a simple verbal warning. It might result in a parental discussion. Clearly, more serious cases will result in further sanctions.**

Technology allows the user to bully anonymously or from an unknown location, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Cyber-bullying leaves no physical scars so it is, perhaps, less evident to a parent or teacher, but it is highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be very severe.

Young people are particularly adept at adapting to new technology, an area that can seem a closed world to adults. For example, the numerous acronyms used by young people in chat rooms and in text messages (POS - Parents Over Shoulder, TUL - Tell You Later) make it difficult for adults to recognise potential threats.

### **At St Michael's, pupils are taught how to:**

- ❖ understand how to use these technologies safely and know about the risks and consequences of misusing them.
- ❖ know what to do if they or someone they know are being cyberbullied.
- ❖ report any problems with cyberbullying.

If they do have a problem, they can talk to the school about it.

### **St Michael's has:**

- ❖ An Internet Use Policy that includes clear statements about acceptable use and ecommunications
- ❖ Information for parents on e-communication standards and practices in schools, what's being taught in the curriculum
- ❖ Support for parents and pupils if cyberbullying occurs by: assessing the harm caused, identifying those involved, taking steps to repair harm and to prevent recurrence
- ❖ Specific Internet Safety lesson plans across from Reception to Year 6 covering safety. In Upper Key Stage 2 these also cover acceptable use of ecommunications. These are progressive and are taught in the Autumn term and recapped when appropriate through the year.

### **Three steps to stay out of harm's way**

- ❖ Respect other people - online and off. Don't spread rumours about people or share their secrets, including their phone numbers and passwords.
- ❖ If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm – and ignore them, but screenshot anything you feel would be useful to share with an appropriate adult.
- ❖ '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.

### **The law is on your side.**

The **Protection from Harassment Act**, the **Malicious Communications Act 1988** and Section 43 of the **Telecommunications Act** may be used to combat cyberbullying. People may be fined or sent to prison for up to six months.