
St Mary's C of E Academy, Walkley

Cyber-Bullying Policy



***"I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full."***

John 10:10

Reviewed: Spring 2022

Approved by Governors: Spring 2022

Date of next review: Spring 2023



Policy

At St Mary's, we want our children to be happy & safe as well as understand what it is to be part of a church school family where everyone is valued & accepted. We aim always to provide a caring environment where every child can thrive and is supported to achieve their unique & amazing potential as a child of God. As such, this means that no child is bullied & this includes all aspects of Cyber Bullying.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Anti-Bullying Policy.

What is Cyber-Bullying?

*"Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself."*¹

Eight categories of cyber bullying have been identified:

1. Text message bullying involves sending unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort.
2. Picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone cameras, is used to make the person being bullied feel threatened or embarrassed, with images usually sent to other people.
3. 'Happy slapping' involves filming and sharing physical attacks.
4. Phone call bullying via mobile phone uses silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes the bullied person's phone is stolen and used to harass others, who then think the phone owner is responsible. As with all mobile phone bullying, the perpetrators often disguise their numbers, sometimes using someone else's phone to avoid being identified.
5. Email bullying uses email to send bullying or threatening messages, often using a pseudonym for anonymity or using someone else's name to pin the blame on them.
6. Chat room bullying involves sending menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room.
7. Bullying through instant messaging is an Internet-based form of bullying where children and young people are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online.
8. Bullying via websites includes the use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites. There has also been a significant increase in social networking sites for young people, which can provide new opportunities for cyber bullying.

What can we do about it?

While other forms of bullying remain prevalent, cyber-bullying is already a significant issue for many young people. St Mary's recognise that staff, parents and children need to work together to prevent this and to tackle it whenever it occurs.

School Governors, Head teachers and schools have a duty to ensure that: bullying via mobile phone or the Internet is included in their mandatory anti-bullying policies, that these policies are regularly updated, and that teachers have sufficient knowledge to deal with cyber bullying in school.²

St Mary's ensures that:

- the curriculum teaches pupils about the risks of new communications technologies, the consequences of their misuse, and how to use them safely including their own rights in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 13, 16 & 17 UNCRC);
- all e-communications used on the school site or as part of school activities off-site are monitored;
- clear policies are set about the use of mobile phones at school and at other times when young people are under the school's authority;
- internet blocking technologies are continually updated through the Smoothwall system and harmful sites are blocked;
- we work with pupils and parents to make sure that new communications technologies are used safely, taking account of local and national guidance and good practice;
- security systems are in place to prevent images and information about pupils and staff being accessed improperly from outside school;
- we work with police and other partners as applicable on managing cyber bullying.

ICT and Mobile Phone Policy:

If a cyber-bullying incident directed at a child occurs using internet or mobile phone technology, either inside or outside school time, St Mary's will take the following steps:

- advise the child not to respond to the message;
- refer to relevant policies, e.g. Online Safety, Anti-Bullying and apply appropriate sanctions;
- secure and preserve any evidence;
- inform the sender's internet service provider;
- notify parents of the children involved;
- consider informing the police depending on the severity or repetitious nature of the offence. The school recognises that some cyber bullying activities could be a criminal offence under a range of different laws including: the Protection from Harassment Act 1997; the Malicious

Communication Act 1988; section 127 of the Communications Act 2003
and the Public Order Act 1986

- Inform the LA Online Safety officer.

If malicious or threatening comments are posted on an Internet site or Social Networking Site about a pupil or member of staff, St Mary's will also:

- inform and request that the comments be removed if the site is administered externally;
- secure and preserve any evidence;
- send all the evidence www.ceop.gov.uk/contact_us.html
- endeavour to trace the origin and inform the police as appropriate.
- inform the LA Online Safety Officer.

Code of Conduct:

The St Mary's Code of Conduct references our approach and attitudes towards cyber bullying as well as our policy on the use of social media by staff & volunteers.

¹ Research commissioned by the Anti-Bullying Alliance from Goldsmiths College, University of London

² The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 require schools to have anti bullying policies; the anti-bullying policy should include or refer to a cyber bullying policy. The ICT policy should also refer to Cyber Bullying.