

Rush Green Primary School

Date 09/24

Review 09/26



Rush Green Primary

Dealing with Online Incidents Policy

This is a whole school policy which applies to all pupils who attend Rush Green Primary School.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Anti-bullying Policy, the Behaviour Policy, and the Safeguarding Policy (all of which are available on the school's website

www.rushgreenprimary.org.uk)

The school recognises that a bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is *reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm*.

Online Bullying

Online Bullying may be defined as 'the use of electronic communication, particularly mobile phones and the internet, to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature': children may be reluctant to admit to being victims. It can take a number of different forms:

- threats and intimidation
- harassment or 'cyber-stalking' (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages)
- sexting (e.g sending and receiving sexually explicit messages, primarily between mobile phones)
- vilification/defamation
- exclusion/peer rejection impersonation unauthorised publication of private information/images

'trolling' (abusing the internet to provoke or offend others online).

It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target.

However it differs from other forms of bullying in several significant ways:

- by facilitating a far more extreme invasion of personal space. Online-Bullying can take place at any time and intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe and personal (ie, the child's home and bedroom).
- the potential for anonymity on the part of the bully. This can be extremely distressing for the victim
- the potential for the bully to play very rapidly to a larger audience so the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than for other forms of bullying
- through the knowledge that the data is in the world-wide domain, disproportionately amplifying the negative effect on the victim, even though the bully may feel his / her actual actions had been no worse than conventional forms of bullying

- the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages as more people get drawn in as accessories. By passing on a humiliating picture or message a bystander becomes an accessory to the bullying.
- the profile of the bully and target can be different to other forms of bullying as onlinebullying can take place between peers and across generations. NB. Teachers and other school staff can be victims as well
- many cyberbullying incidents can themselves act as evidence so it is important the victim saves the information.

The Law

Bullying is never acceptable and the school fully recognises its duty to protect all of its members and to provide a safe, healthy environment for everyone.

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) outlines some legal powers which relate more directly to cyberbullying. Head teachers have the power 'to such an extent as is reasonable' to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off the school site.
- The Act also provides a defence for staff in confiscating items such as mobile phones from pupils.

Civil and Criminal Law

- There is not a specific law which makes cyberbullying illegal but it can be considered a criminal offence under several different acts including Protection from Harassment Act (1997), Malicious Communications Act (1988), Communications Act (2003) Obscene Publications Act (1959) and Computer Misuse Act (1990).

Preventing online-bullying

As with all forms of bullying the best way to deal with it is to prevent it happening in the first place.

There is no single solution to the problem of online-bullying but the school will do the following as a minimum to impose a comprehensive and effective prevention strategy:

Roles and Responsibilities

The Deputy Headteacher (Mr Andrew Michael), who is also the school Online Safety Ambassador (CEOP trained) will take the overall responsibility for implementation of cyberbullying prevention and response strategies.

- The Deputy Head will ensure that all incidents of cyberbullying both inside and outside school are dealt with immediately and will be managed and/or escalated in line with the procedures set out in the school's Anti-bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding policies (including Peer on Peer Abuse policy)
- ensure that all policies relating to safeguarding, including cyberbullying are reviewed and updated regularly
- ensure that all staff know that they need to report any issues concerning cyberbullying to him, another member of the leadership team or the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- ensure that parents/carers are informed and attention is drawn annually to the cyberbullying policy so that they are fully aware of the school's responsibility relating to safeguarding pupils and their welfare.
- ensure that at the beginning of each academic year, cyberbullying is revisited as part of the Level 1 and Level 2 CP training for staff
- ensure that all pupils are given clear guidance on the use of technology safely and positively both in school and beyond including how to manage their personal data and how to report abuse and bullying online.
- plan and deliver a curriculum on online safety in computing lessons which builds resilience in pupils to protect themselves and others online.
- plan a curriculum and support PSHE team in delivering a curriculum on online safety which builds resilience in pupils to protect themselves and others online.
- ensure adequate safeguards are in place to filter and monitor inappropriate content and alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead to safeguarding issues. The school uses a third-party web-proxy solution to filter all internet access. The internet filter records access to prohibited sites which enables the IT Support and Development Manager (Computer Talk) to report issues immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

How the school will deal with any allegations of online-bullying:

If a member of staff suspects or is told about a cyber-bullying incident, the protocol followed will be:

Mobile Phones

- Ask the pupil to show them the mobile phone
- Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image, to include the date, time and names (refer to details of sexting in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2021)
- Make a transcript of a spoken message, again record date, times and names
- Tell the pupil to save the message/image
- Inform the Deputy Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately and pass them the information that they have

Computers

- If appropriate, ask the pupil to show the questionable content.
- If appropriate, ask the pupil to save the material
- Print off the offending material straight away
- Make sure they have got all pages in the right order and that there are no omissions
- Inform a member of the Senior Leadership team and pass them the information that they have
- Normal procedures to interview pupils and to take statements will then be followed particularly if a child protection issue is presented.

The school will deal with cyberbullying in the same way as other bullying / peer-on-peer abuse. In some cases, the police and/or Children's Services will be contacted and pupil management plans put in place on the basis of dynamic risk assessment.

Guidance for Parents/Carers

It is vital that parents/carers and the school work together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying.

Parents/carers must play their role and take responsibility for monitoring their child's online life.

Parents/carers can help by making sure their child understands the school's policy and, above all, how seriously the school takes incidents of cyber-bullying.

Parents/carers should also explain to their children legal issues relating to cyber-bullying.

If parents/carers believe their child is the victim of cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving the offensive text on their computer or on their child's mobile phone) and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything.

Parents/carers should contact the school as soon as possible. Please contact Mr Michael on 020

- 4940 or email **amichael@rushgreen.bardaglea.org.uk**

If the incident falls in the holidays the school reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school both in and out of term time.

E-Safety at Home

Several sites offer helpful advice to parents/carers, particularly with respect to how they can best monitor their child's use of the computer at home. Here are sites which parents/carers might like to try:

- **www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents**
- **www.saferinternet.org.uk**
- **www.childnet.com • www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk**
- **www.nspcc.org.uk**