



**St Mary's Voluntary Catholic Primary  
Academy**

**Cyber Bullying Policy**

## Cyber Bullying Policy

**At St Mary's Catholic Academy, we believe 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 ways in which adults and young people communicate online changes rapidly - and therefore the types of cyber bullying can also change rapidly. At present, this is a list of common platforms where cyber bullying could take place:

1. Text messages - that are threatening or cause discomfort
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 e-mails, 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 web-based chat room.
6. Instant messaging (IM) - unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger) or Yahoo Chat - although there are others.
7. Bullying via 'social networking' websites - such as Instagram, Facebook or Twitter - again there are others.

## **Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy**

### **Children**

At St Mary's Catholic Academy, 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.

At St Mary's Catholic Academy, pupils are taught 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 cyber bullied.
- Report any problems with cyber bullying.

St Mary's Catholic Academy has:

1. Information for parents on: E-communication standards and practices in schools.
2. Support for parents and pupils if cyber bullying occurs by: assessing the harm caused, identifying those involved, taking steps to repair harm and to prevent recurrence.
3. Links to cyber bullying advice websites, both for adults and children, can be found on our school website.

### **Staff**

Each year, all members of teaching staff sign an 'ICT acceptable use Policy' which is available to view on the school's website. The aim of this policy is to ensure that members of staff are fully aware of their professional responsibility when using Information Communication Technology. Due to the ever-changing nature of ICT, the policy does not provide an exhaustive list for staff to adhere to and staff are reminded that the use of ICT should be consistent with the school's ethos, other appropriate policies and the law.

Nationally, evidence indicates that one in five (21%) teachers have reported having derogatory comments posted about them on social media sites from both

parents and children.

**Our staff have the right to teach in a safe environment, without exception.**

To ensure parents are aware of the expectations requiring social media, they sign a home-school agreement (when their child enters school in reception) that includes a specific section relating to the appropriate use of social media.

If staff members are subject to cyber bullying, they are advised to:

- Save evidence of the abuse; take screen prints of messages or web pages and record the time and date
- Report the incident to their phase leader or the head teacher

St Mary's Catholic Academy takes these incidents extremely seriously and, when cases of cyberbullying are reported, the head teacher along with the senior leadership team and the chair of governors will respond to the incident appropriately.

- Where the perpetrator is known to be a current pupil or colleague, the majority of cases will be dealt with through the school's own mediation and disciplinary procedures.
- Where the perpetrator is a parent, the head teacher will invite the person to a meeting to address their concerns, and if they have a reasonable complaint, will make sure they know how to raise this appropriately. The head teacher will also request that the person removes the offending comments.
- If they refuse, it will be an organisational decision what to do next - either the school or the person who the comments were written about can report the matter to the social networking site (if it breaches their terms) or seek guidance from the local authority, legal advisers or support from other agencies for example, The UK Safer Internet Centre.
- If the comments are threatening or abusive, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, the school may consider contacting the local police. Online harassment is a crime.