



# HEADINGTON RYE

OXFORD

## Preventing Cyber-Bullying Policy

[To be read in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying Policy]

Approved by:	Deputy Head Pastoral
Reviewed by:	Deputy Head Pastoral
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# Preventing Cyber-Bullying Policy

This policy has been written and should be read in conjunction with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy, our Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy and our Safeguarding Policy.

Headington Rye Oxford's ethos aims to create an inclusive atmosphere of mutual trust, respect and tolerance amongst all members of the School community. Bullying, in any shape or form, is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This policy and our over-arching Anti-Bullying policy have at their heart our focus on pastoral care and our concern for the welfare of the individual. We seek to concentrate on developing good positive relationships between individuals, thereby creating an environment where bullying is unable to flourish. If an incident of cyber-bullying is reported staff will seek to deal promptly and effectively with any allegation or reports. This may involve liaison with external agencies, for example app providers, designated safeguarding leads at other schools, or the police. As with all cases of bullying, the School will deal with individual cases sensitively and appropriately.

## What is Cyber Bullying?

- Cyber-bullying involves the use of a mobile device or the internet to harass, threaten, intimidate, exclude, impersonate, taunt or ridicule a victim. It can also involve the misuse of associated technologies such as camera or video facilities.
- A cyber-bully can use text messaging, voice, images, video images, instant messenger, social networking sites and apps, video hosting sites, chat rooms, email, etc.
- The bully may contact the victim directly or may send or post messages or images of the victim without their explicit consent.

Cyber-bullying can have far greater impact on an individual victim than other forms of bullying because it can be very intrusive. Cyber-bullies are able to invade their victim's personal space – whether they are at home or at school – anonymously and often continuously. The perpetrator of cyber-bullying has the ability to broadcast upsetting messages and images rapidly to a potentially huge audience, and to continue to do so repeatedly and over a long period of time. Sadly, cyber-bullying can therefore be relentless and inescapable for the victim.

Additionally, cyber-bullying potentially falls foul of a number of laws including those concerning harassment, threatening behaviour, defamation, malicious communications, and the dissemination of indecent images, offensive or obscene material.

It should be noted that Headington Rye Oxford takes the view that online misconduct which takes place out of School – in holiday time as well as term time – but which affects pupils or staff can also be dealt with by the School.

## **Preventing Cyber-Bullying**

The best way to deal with cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. We aim to do this by educating pupils and staff (and parents) about the impact of cyber-bullying and the ways in which it differs from other forms of bullying.

- We promote the safe and responsible use of technology and encourage pupils to view technology in a positive manner, both educationally and socially.
- All staff and pupils are made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of IT and all users of the School computer system sign an acceptable use policy on an annual basis.
- All individuals are made aware that they will be held personally responsible for material they have placed on any website or any online platform, that their internet activity on the School system may be monitored, and what the sanctions for misuse will be.
- It is also made clear that misconduct outside School may be subject to School discipline if the welfare of other pupils or the culture or reputation of the School is placed at risk or brought into disrepute.
- We encourage all members of the School community to treat one another with kindness, respect, courtesy and sensitivity.
- We facilitate a culture of open communication between staff and pupils so that concerns can be reported without fear of reprisal or judgement. Pupils are encouraged to see that asking for help is the right thing to do, and shows strength and good judgement.
- We encourage older pupils to work with their younger peers promoting cyber-safety strategies and encouraging pupils to be aware of their online behaviour. This can involve the delivery of PSHE lessons or shorter form time activities, presentations or Q&A sessions. This effectively provides an informal cyber-mentoring service whereby younger pupils are encouraged to discuss any concerns or issues they have relating to cyber-safety and their use of digital technologies, to ask questions and seek advice.
- We publicise to all members of the School Community the ways in which cyber-bullying can be reported and we provide information on external reporting routes e.g. by mobile phone company, internet service provider, or for specific platforms/apps, Childline, NSPCC, BeatBullying, CEOP, etc.
- Periodically we organise talks by external speakers (e.g. Digital Sisters) for parents to understand the risks and improve their own digital awareness.
- Issues related to cyber-bullying, online safety and digital awareness are discussed throughout the school, as appropriate, in PSHE, Prayers, Year Group Assemblies,

in a variety of lessons and by Form Tutors. This includes talks by representatives of Thames Valley Police who can outline the legal ramifications of cyber-bullying, the sharing of youth produced indecent imagery, and online misbehaviour.

### **Examples of Cyber-Bullying:**

- Using chat rooms, message boards, online personal polling sites, blogs or social networking websites such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok etc. to be critical about people by posting offensive comments about them
- Spamming, harassment or 'cyber-stalking' by repeatedly sending unwanted texts, emails or instant messages
- Posting private information or images of other people on websites without their permission (including so called 'revenge porn')
- Using mobile phone, ipad or digital device cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation e.g. so-called 'happyslapping'
- Making threats or being intimidating via e-technology
- Encouraging exclusion or peer rejection via e-technology
- Malicious use of online gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds
- The use of 'joke' or replica websites that create, for example, authentic looking newspaper articles about individuals or mimic legitimate online accounts
- The use of AI or other software to create fake imagery or video footage purporting to represent specific individuals
- Hijacking or cloning email accounts or impersonating someone via e-technology
- Being a bystander who passes on or shows to others images designed to humiliate
- Being a bystander who takes part in online polls or discussion groups that cause distress to someone else
- Using others' phones, and/or devices or accessing another's online account and purporting to be the owner.

### **How is Cyber-bullying different to other forms of bullying?**

Some features of cyber-bullying do differ from other forms of bullying:

- **IMPACT** – the scale and scope of cyber-bullying can be greater than other forms of bullying
- **TARGETS & PERPETRATORS** – the people involved may have a different profile to traditional bullies and their targets
- **LOCATION** – the 24/7 and anywhere nature of cyber-bullying
- **ANONYMITY** – the person being bullied will not always know who is bullying them
- **MOTIVATION** – some pupils may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying
- **EVIDENCE** – unlike other forms of bullying, the target of the bullying will have evidence of its occurrence.

NB: It is possible that a member of staff may be a victim of cyber-bullying and the responses outlined in this policy apply to them, too.

### **Procedure for dealing with Cyber-bullying allegations**

If an incident of bullying is reported, the School will deal promptly and effectively with any allegation or reports, adopting the procedures set out in the Anti-Bullying policy.

Additionally:

- Staff and pupils should be advised to preserve electronic evidence and a record of abuse; save and record phone messages, record or save and print instant messenger conversations, print off or produce a screen shot of social networking site pages, print save and forward to a member of staff whole email messages. Copies should be made in case evidence is later deleted from the original source.
- Further guidance on how to deal with explicit material can be found within the School's Safeguarding Policy.
- A member of staff should ascertain whether the victim has responded to the bullying, and record evidence of any response, making sure the victim understands that there should be no retaliation.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be investigated so that the bullying may be stopped as quickly as possible.
- The School will usually take steps to try to identify an anonymous bully who may have targeted the victim remotely through online platforms. This may include examining School system logs, asking to see content on pupil's personal and school devices, identifying and interviewing possible witnesses (e.g. other pupils who have been members of a chat group), and contacting the service provider and the police if necessary. Sadly it is not always possible to identify an anonymous bully.
- Most social networks have reporting mechanisms in place to report content which breaches their terms and conditions. If the person responsible has not been identified or does not respond to requests to take down the material, the School will discuss with the victim and their parents and will then use the tools on the social networking site directly to make a report. Some service providers will not accept complaints lodged by a third party. In cases of mobile phone abuse, where the person being bullied is receiving malicious calls and messages, the account holder will need to contact the provider directly and parents will be advised of this.
- Before contacting a service provider, it is important to be clear about where the content is; for example by taking a screen shot of the material that includes the web address. Where a School or an individual is requesting a site provider take down material that is not illegal, they will clearly point out how it breaks the site's terms and conditions. Where the material is suspected of being illegal we will

contact the police directly or advise that parents (or dependent on their age the victim themselves) do so.

- If comments or messages posted online are threatening or abusive, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, the School will consider carefully whether it is appropriate to contact Thames Valley Police. Online harassment is a crime. Parents, the bully (bullies) and the victim(s) will be normally be notified of such action.
- Additionally, where indecent images are involved, contact may need to be made with the local police (where there is a case of actual/suspected illegal content) or CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection). [See Safeguarding Policy for further detail]
- Those involved in cyber-bullying may be asked to remove any material deemed to be inappropriate from the public domain.
- The School reserves the right to search any files or other material contained on personal electronic devices brought into the School. Such searches may be carried out where the pupil is reasonably suspected of being involved in cyberbullying or where the pupil is reasonably believed to be storing pornography or any other inappropriate material on such a device.
- A personal mobile device may need to be confiscated so that checks can be carried out and inappropriate content can be captured and/or deleted. Such checks will be carried out in the presence of the pupil who can assist in identifying the offending material. Parents will be informed if such a search is deemed necessary. If the material is of particular concern, the School reserves the right to forward the device and/or material to the appropriate authorities as further action or investigation may be appropriate.
- A pupil suspected of cyber-bullying may have their internet access suspended and have their access to mobile devices restricted whilst at School.
- Incidents will be recorded by the Head of Section / Deputy Head Pupil Experience and/or Deputy Head Pastoral.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
- Support will be provided as appropriate for the victim and the bully.
- Mediation between the parties will be undertaken and the bully (bullies) will be asked to apologise genuinely.
- Sanctions will be considered and implemented in line with the school's Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy. Sanctions will reflect the seriousness of the incident(s) and may include, for example, detention, community service, internal suspension.
- Parents of both the bully and the victim will normally be contacted and the issues discussed with them.
- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.
- If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
- After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place. Any

retaliation by the bully, due to the victim reporting the incident, will be seen as an aggravating factor.

- Through the pastoral system, support will be given to victims of bullying, and the perpetrator, as deemed necessary. This may include a recommendation to see the school counsellor, or contact with external agencies.
- Amendments may be made to the school's PSHE provision and Form Time programme, as necessary.
- Staff are aware that any type of bullying behaviour (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) may also constitute peer on peer abuse. A bullying incident including peer on peer abuse will be treated as a child protection concern and therefore warrant a response under safeguarding as well as, or instead of, anti-bullying procedures when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. In such cases the procedures contained in the school's Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy will be followed.
- Occasionally the bully will be a pupil at another School. The Deputy Head Pupil Experience, Deputy Head Pastoral or Head of Section will make contact with the DSL at the bully's school (where the School is known) and explain the situation. By working closely together it is usually possible to resolve most issues

Parents should be aware that the Education Act includes the provision that a Headteacher can authorise a member of staff to seize an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, in order that the staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and can be used without explicit parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. Headington Rye Oxford reserves the right to utilise this power but would only do so in exceptional circumstances. In most cases parents will be made aware of the need for actions such as this to be taken.