



St Beacons NS
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Cyber Bullying Policy

St. Beacon's N.S. aims to ensure that children are safe and feel safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination. Our school's community is committed to teaching children the knowledge and skills to be able to use ICT effectively, safely and responsibly.

Aims of this policy:

- To ensure that pupils, staff and parents understand what cyber bullying is and how it can be combated
- To ensure that practices and procedures are agreed to help prevent incidents of cyber bullying
- To ensure that reported incidents of cyber bullying are dealt with effectively and in a timely manner

Understanding cyber bullying:

Definition of bullying in DES "Action Plan on Bullying" January 2013:

Bullying is (1) intentional negative behaviour that (2) typically occurs with some repetitiveness and is (3) directed against a person who has difficulty defending himself or herself

What is cyber-bullying?

Cyber bullying can be defined by the definition of bullying above that occurs over the internet or via mobile phones. Cyber bullying can take many forms which include:

1. Text messages – can be 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/embarrassed.
3. Mobile phone calls – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others make them believe the victim is responsible.
4. Emails – threatening or bullying emails, 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 a web-based chat room.
6. Instant messaging (IM) – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations on line using MSM (Microsoft Messenger), Yahoo Chat or similar tools.
7. Bullying via websites – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal 'own web space' sites such as You Tube, Facebook, Ask.fm, Bebo (which works by signing on in one's school, therefore making it easy to find a victim) and Myspace – although there are others. Game consoles which have in-term access and internet gaming opportunities to connect with other users are also a channel which can be misused and abused.

Procedures to prevent cyber bullying:

- The pupils in St. Beacon's N.S. are **not permitted** to have mobile phones on the premises and grounds. The computers in the school have a blocking system which blocks all social media websites which limits access to opportunities to engage in any inappropriate activity online. This implies that cyber bullying, if it were to occur would most likely occur outside of school. Parents/guardians should ensure the following
 - Children should not have access to the Internet on a phone, computer or any device which cannot be in full view in the home. Under no circumstances should children have these devices in their bedrooms.
 - No primary school child should have access at any time to Facebook, Bebo or any such social media site which is used by adults.
 - Parents should be aware of and monitor all of their children's activity online.
- Staff, pupils, parents/guardians and Board of Management (BoM) to be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying.
- Pupils and parents/guardians will be urged to report any incident of cyber bullying to the school.
- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies.
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social Personal and Health (SPHE) assemblies and other curriculum projects.
- Pupils/guardians will sign an Acceptable Use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) contract.
- Parents/guardians will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying.
- Parents/guardians will be expected to sign an Acceptable Use of ICT contract prior to enrolment and to discuss its meaning with their children.
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal's office and monitored regularly.
- Procedures in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy shall apply to this policy also.
- In order to ascertain the veracity of an accusation the School Principal may look at material on a child's phone, tablet or other such device in the presence of the child's parent/guardian.
- The Gardaí/Social Services will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content.

Information for pupils:

If you are being bullied by phone or the Internet:

- Remember, bullying is never your fault but it is something over which you can have an influence. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.

- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent/guardian or call an advice line (e.g. Childline).
- Never give out your personal details on line.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent/guardian or teacher for evidence.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent and note any details about the sender.
- There are plenty of online resources advising on how to react to cyber bullying.

Text/video messaging:

- You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number.
- If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider about this.
- Do not reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages. Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying – visit their website for details.
- Do not delete messages from cyber bullies. You should keep them as evidence

This policy has been compiled in consultation with staff, parents/guardians and Board of Management.

Timeframe , Implementation and Review

Implementation shall be the responsibility of the whole school community

Co-ordination and Review of the policy, acceptance of feedback, updating and evaluation, shall be the responsibility of the Principal

This policy was devised during the school year 2012/2013 in consultation with the Garda Siochana and Brian Comerford who presented a training module for all school staff.

This policy was introduced from the school year 2013/2014 and reviewed every year thereafter.

Latest review on September 16th 2021

Signed Niall Mulhearn
 (Chairperson Board of Management)

Date 16/9/21

Signed: _____
 Niall Mulhearn.

Chairperson Board of Management.

Appendix 1

Explanation of slang terms used when referring to cyber-bullying activity:

1. '**Flaming**': Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
2. '**Harassment**': Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
3. '**Cyber Stalking**': Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety
4. '**Denigration**': 'Dissing' someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
5. '**Impersonation**': Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes someone look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships
6. '**Outing and Trickery**': Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online
7. '**Exclusion**': Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a 'buddy list'

This list is not exhaustive and the terms used continue to change

Appendix 2

Useful Websites

www.spunout.ie

www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying

www.childline.ie/index.php/support/bullying/1395

www.chatdanger.com

www.kidpower.org

www.childnet.int.org

www.antibullying.net

<http://ie.reachout.com>

www.abc.tcd.ie

www.sticksandstones.ie

APPENDIX 3

Advice for Parents on ICT in the Home

During school hours, teachers will guide pupils toward appropriate materials on the internet. Outside school, parents or guardians should bear the same responsibility for such guidance as they normally would with other information sources, such as television, magazines etc.

Parents or guardians should be aware that the internet service provider at home may not be filtered.

It is therefore important that these guidelines are followed:

- Discuss rules for using the internet with your children and decide together when, how long and what comprises appropriate use.
- Be aware of the sites your children are visiting and discuss with them what they are learning.
- Ensure that children do not give out personal identifying information on the internet such as a picture, address, phone number, school name or financial information such as credit card or bank details.
- Encourage your children not to respond to any unwelcome, unpleasant or abusive messages and to inform you if they receive any such messages or images.
- Appropriate home use of internet can be educationally beneficial and can make a useful contribution to home and school work. It should however be supervised and parents be aware that they are responsible for their children's use of the internet resources at home.