



Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy

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

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying includes (but is not limited to) communicating via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and/or distress to one or more persons. Cyber bullying includes the use of mobile phones and the internet with the objective of upsetting someone. It may take the form of general insults or impersonation, defamation or prejudice-based bullying.

Unlike other forms of bullying a once-off posting can constitute bullying. (See Bí Cinealtas plan)

While this policy addresses issues related to cyber bullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim[s] of bullying) the policy also applies to teaching and other school staff.

This policy applies to activities and events that take place during school time. St. Patrick's National School reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school.

Key measures to combat cyber bullying

- Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy
- Students will be informed about cyber bullying in the course of their education at the school.
- Serious cyber bullying issues may be reported to the Gardaí.
- If takes place outside of school hours, the school recommends parents report to Gardaí.
- Stop, Block, report posters on display in school.
- Teachers/facilitator will dedicate a standalone lesson to deal with the issue of cyber bullying bi-annually to pupils from 3rd -6th class
- Students and staff are expected to comply with the school's policy on the use of computers in the School. (Acceptable use of the Internet Policy).
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying on school website.
- Age restrictions on social apps should be recognized by students and parents.

- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones in school
- Teachers will investigate, record and report all incidents of cyber bullying which takes place in school.

Cyber Bullying outside of school

- Parents should acknowledge that they are responsible for monitoring what age appropriate apps their children are using. They should act if there is suspected cybering bullying by first ensuring their child is safe, next reporting bullying to the parents of person who committed the cyber bullying and then contacting the guards if it is serious.
- School should be contacted then to inform class teacher of what happened so they can support the well-being of pupil involved.
- It is not advised for a parent to share with a teacher that they suspect there is cyber bullying in some form going on with a group of children or their child having not taking action themselves. The class teacher cannot investigate this or police it. It is the parents responsibility once they give their child a phone, to monitor how their child is using their phone, what apps they are on ect. If they suspect their child is in harm online, they must take responsibility themselves to take action and not shift this responsibility to the school (Unless the cybering bullying took place during school time).
- The school will support children who were involved in cyber bullying through well being programmes ect if it spills over into school.
- The school advises against group communication apps for children. Children do not have the social skills to be able to continually engage in online conversation with their peers as they do not really understand that if they say something negative or cruel about someone, it can be screen shot and repeatedly shared and this is deemed as bullying.
- St. Patrick's National School endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems.

What is cyber-bullying?

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

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 or embarrassed
3. **Mobile phone calls** – silent calls, 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 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 online 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 and Ask.fm – although there are others

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

'Denigration': 'Dissing' someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumours about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships

4. **'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
5. **'Outing and Trickery'**: Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online
6. **'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

Aims of 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 prevent incidents of cyber-bullying
- To ensure that reported incidents of cyber bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly

Supervision and monitoring of pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Prevention of harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified, i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability or race.

Procedures to prevent cyber-bullying

- Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management (BoM) will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), IT/ class discussion and from parents

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- The school will engage a speaker to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for pupils in 3rd to 6th class bi-annually
- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying
- Pupils will sign an Acceptable Use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) contract.
- Pupils, teachers and parents will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school if they occurred during school time. If they occurred outside of school time parents are urged to act themselves. Pupils are urged to screen shot, block and tell anyone they trust and action will be taken.
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded and monitored regularly
- The Gardaí may be contacted in cases of cyber bullying

Procedures in the ***Code of Behaviour*** will be followed to deal with cases of Cyber bullying. Sanctions for children engaging in cases of Cyber Bullying are the same for any type of bullying within the school. See Code of Behaviour sections on Consequence sheets, Suspension and Expulsion.

Information for Pupils

If you are being bullied by phone or the Internet;

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and can usually be traced.
- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent or call an advice line
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible. Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue
- Never give out your personal details online. If you are in a chat room, watch what you say about where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these details can help someone who wants to harm you build up a picture about you.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images These can be shown to a teacher or parent as evidence
- If you can, make a note of the time and date the bullying messages or images were sent and any details about the sender.

Text /Video Messaging

- You can 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 that you have changed your number
- If the bullying persists you may have to change your number. Your mobile service provider will help with this

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- Never reply to abusive or worrying texts. Your mobile provider service will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying
- Don't delete messages from cyber bullies. You don't have to read them but you should keep them as evidence

Useful websites

www.webwise.ie
www.spunout.ie
www.antibullying.net
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying

www.childnet.int.org
www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart
www.chatdanger.com
www.sticksandstones.ie

This review was ratified at a Board of Management meeting on 22nd Oct 2025

Signed Eddie Conboy Chairperson

Signed 22/10/25 Principal

Date 22.10.2025

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