

# St Michael's Catholic Primary School

## Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy



Approved by:	LGC
Last reviewed on:	December 2025
Next review due by:	December 2026

## **Anti Cyber Bullying Policy**

**St Michael's Catholic Primary School believes 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?**

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like mobile phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation.

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

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Tik Tok
- Text messaging and messaging apps on mobile or tablet devices
- Instant messaging, direct messaging, and online chatting over the internet
- Online forums, chat rooms, and message boards, such as Reddit
- Email
- Online gaming communities

**At St Michael's, 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.

Young people are particularly adept at adapting to new technology, an area that can seem a closed world to adults. For example, the numerous acronyms used by young people in chat rooms and in text messages (POS - Parents Over Shoulder, TUL - Tell You Later) make it difficult for adults to recognise potential threats.

## **Prevention of Cyber Bullying**

### Understanding and information

- The Head Teacher and Computing Subject Leader will act, as e-Safety Officers, to oversee the practices and procedures outlined in this policy and monitor their effectiveness.
- The e-Safety Officer will ensure that the school maintains details of agencies and resources that may assist in preventing and addressing bullying.
- Staff will be trained to identify signs of cyber bullying and will be helped to keep informed about the technologies that children commonly use.
- A Code of Advice will be developed, periodically reviewed and communicated to help pupils protect themselves from being caught up in cyber bullying and to advise them on reporting any incidents.
- Pupils will be informed about cyber bullying through curricular and pastoral activities.
- Pupils and staff are expected to comply with the school's Acceptable Computer Use Policy.
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying i.e. on the school's newsletter.

### **At St Michael's, pupils are taught how 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 cyberbullied.
- ❖ report any problems with cyberbullying.

If they do have a problem, they can talk to the school about it.

## **Practices and Procedures**

- The responsibilities of the school and of pupils as set out in the Anti-Bullying Policy apply also to this policy.
- Positive use of ICT will be promoted and the Acceptable Computer Use Policy will be kept under review as technologies develop.
- CPD will be used to help staff develop their own practices and support pupils in safe and responsible use of ICT.

- The school will encourage safe use of ICT, emphasising, for example, the importance of password security and the need to log out of accounts.
- The school will promote the message that asking for help is the right thing to do and all members of the school community will be informed how cyber bullying can be reported.
- Confidential records will be kept of all cyber bullying incidents.

**St Michael's has:**

- An Internet Use Policy that includes clear statements about acceptable use and e-communications
- Information for parents on e-communication standards and practices in schools, what's being taught in the curriculum
- Support for parents and pupils if cyberbullying occurs by: assessing the harm caused, identifying those involved, taking steps to repair harm and to prevent recurrence
- Specific Internet Safety lesson plans across from Reception to Year 6 covering safety. These are progressive and are taught at the start of every Computing lesson as well as part of the PSHE curriculum .

**Responding to Cyber Bullying**

Cyber bullying will generally be dealt with through the schools anti-bullying policy. A cyber bullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Key differences might be:

- Impact: possibly extensive scale and scope
- Location: the anytime and anywhere nature of cyber bullying
- Anonymity: the person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is
- Motivation: the perpetrator might not realise that his/her actions are bullying
- Evidence: the subject of the bullying will have evidence of what happened

**Support for the person being bullied**

As with any form of bullying, support for the individual will depend on the circumstances. Examples include:

- Emotional support and reassurance that it was right to report the incident

- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice on other aspects of the code to prevent re-occurrence
- Advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked from the individual's sites or services
- Actions, where possible and appropriate, to have offending material removed
- Advice to consider changing email addresses and/or mobile phone numbers
- Discuss contacting the police in cases of suspected illegal content

### **Investigation**

Again, the nature of any investigation will depend on the circumstances. It may include, for example,

- Review of evidence and advice to preserve it, for example by saving or printing (e.g. phone messages, texts, emails, website pages)
- Efforts to identify the perpetrator, which may include looking at the media, systems and sites used. Witnesses may have useful information.
- Requesting a pupil to reveal a message or other phone content or confiscating a phone. Staff do not have the authority to search the contents of a phone.

### **Working with the perpetrator**

Work with the perpetrator and any sanctions will be determined on an individual basis, in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy, with the intention of:

- Helping the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop.
- Holding the perpetrator to account, so they recognise the harm caused and do not repeat the behaviour.
- Helping bullies to recognise the consequences of their actions and facilitating change in their attitude and behaviour.

- Demonstrating that cyber bullying, as any other form of bullying, is unacceptable and that the school has effective ways of dealing with it

### **Evaluating the effectiveness**

Members of staff will report any incidents of cyber bullying to the Head teacher.

- The headteacher will deal with the incident and follow up to make sure all stakeholders feel happy with an outcome.
- The review will take into account comments and suggested areas for improvement from staff and students, including input from the School Council.

### **Three steps to stay out of harm's way**

- ❖ Respect other people - online and off. Don't spread rumours about people or share their secrets, including their phone numbers and passwords.
- ❖ If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm – and ignore them, but screenshot anything you feel would be useful to share with an appropriate adult.
- ❖ 'Do as you would be done by.' Think how you would feel if you were bullied. You're responsible for your own behaviour – make sure you don't distress other people or cause them to be bullied by someone else.