



Countering Cyberbullying - Statement of School Policy and Guide to Parents

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Reed's School Anti-Bullying Policy. It has regard to advice from the Department of Education, 'Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies' (July 2017) and "Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and school staff (2014) as well as guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, September 2020).

2. Definition of Cyber bullying

- 2.1 The NSPCC define Cyberbullying as "bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying in the real world, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone."
- 2.2 It is a method of bullying where the perpetrator uses technology as a means of conducting the bullying. Cyberbullies can make use of e-mail, mobile phone and text messaging, digital photography, instant messaging, personal websites, chat rooms, blogs and social networking sites.
- 2.3 Cyberbullying, like all bullying, is never acceptable and is taken extremely seriously by the School.
- 2.4 It is recognised that members of staff and other adults can be victims of cyberbullying if they are ridiculed, threatened or otherwise abused online by pupils.

3. Forms that Cyberbullying can take

- Threats and intimidation, where serious threats are sent to victims by mobile phone, email or via comments on social networking and gaming sites
- Harassment or 'cyber-stalking', e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages
- Vilification/defamation, e.g. upsetting or defamatory remarks about an individual are posted online
- Exclusion or peer rejection, particularly on social networking sites
- Impersonation or 'hacking' to obtain unauthorised access to an account, with the potential for identity theft or unauthorised use of private information.
- Unauthorised publication of private information or images, which are very difficult to contain once they have been made public.
- Upskirting
- Manipulation, e.g. putting pressure on someone to reveal personal information or to arrange a physical meeting.

- As with any form of bullying, it can constitute peer on peer abuse and be dealt with as a safeguarding issue.

How is Cyberbullying different to other forms of bullying?

- 3.1 Cyberbullying differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying;
- It can take place at any time and can invade the victim's home and other personal space that would otherwise be thought safe.
 - It has the potential to reach a far wider and larger audience than other forms of bullying.
 - The difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages and the incredible speed with which cyberbullies can distribute and redistribute messages and images.
 - Perceived anonymity, although cyberbullying leaves a trail of evidence, which if kept can aid investigations.
 - The profile of the person doing the bullying and their target. Age and size are not necessarily relevant as the bully does not need to be stronger, taller or older than the person they are cyberbullying.
 - The effects of cyberbullying are similar to the effects of other forms of 'face-to face' bullying but can be more severe and long lasting.

4. Initiatives against Cyberbullying

- 4.1 The School has a wide range of initiatives and responses to counter bullying and these are also appropriate in cases of cyberbullying. In addition, the School delivers programmes for increasing awareness and understanding among pupils and parents about cyberbullying. All pupils have to complete the Online Safety Alliance's (OSA) Certificate of Online Safety on joining the School at 11+ and 13+.

5. Reporting

- 5.1 All incidents of cyberbullying are recorded and written records are kept by the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

6. ICT Acceptable Use Policy and Additional Guidance

- 6.1 Pupils have an IT Acceptable Use Policy in their Record Books. In addition, to ensure safe and proper use of IT, as well as completed the OSA Certificate of Online Safety all pupils are advised;
- To avoid putting personal information such as full name, birthday, address, mobile phone number, e-mail address, bank account details, instant messenger ID, and any images of themselves anywhere on the internet
 - To keep passwords safe — they should be hard to guess, changed regularly and never divulged to anyone else
 - Not to give mobile phone numbers and personal e-mail and internet addresses to anyone other than trusted friends

- To think carefully before communicating via e-mail and especially before posting messages and images on social networking sites — whatever is sent can very quickly be spread widely and could stay online indefinitely
- Not to forward any defamatory or otherwise offensive message or image that is received
- Not to respond to text messages, phone calls or e-mails that could be regarded as bullying in nature — those that are in any way abusive, intimidating or otherwise malicious and unwelcome
- To report receipt of such communication immediately — the content, time, date and any caller identification (or that the number was withheld or made unavailable) should all be noted; if at all possible the whole communication should be kept and saved
- To be wary of opening files that come from people who are not known ‘in the real world’
- To regard as online friends only those who are already known as friends ‘in the real world’; the Internet allows people to pretend very easily to be somebody they are not

6.2 Pupils need to be aware that they are not granted privacy to send obscene or abusive emails or post malicious material on the internet from school. Reed’s School retains its right, where it is considered necessary to investigate suspected incidents of cyberbullying, to monitor e-mails and other messages sent from its own network.

6.3 Responsibility for allowing offensive material to remain on an internet site rests with the person who set up and ‘owns’ the site as much as with the writer of the material. Pupils must accept the implications of creating an opportunity for others to post comments about a third party. The ability to insult or otherwise abuse or take advantage of other people by this remote means, in public and with the potential to reach a mass audience, is proving to be one of the most unwelcome downsides of the rapid development of electronic communications. The School will not condone such action, even when it is undertaken from the privacy of a pupil’s own home.

6.4 Pupils should always bear in mind that information concerning themselves and their activities that are placed on such sites can be accessed by universities and potential employers, who may take such information and the manner in which it is presented into account before considering making any offer.

6.5 Cyberbullying can in some cases be considered illegal under various Acts of Parliament and the school will treat such cases appropriately. The relevant Acts include the following:

- Protection from Harassment Act (1997)
- Malicious Communications Act (1988)
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994)
- Defamation Act (2013)
- Communications Act (2003)

- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994)
- Education Act (2011)
- Obscene Publications Act (1959)
- Voyeurism Act (2019)
- Computer Misuse Act (1990)

6.6 In addition to following internal reporting guidelines, pupils who feel they are experiencing cyberbullying of one kind or another may want to contact their phone network provider, internet service provider or social networking site. Details of how to do this are published by the Anti-Bullying Network www.antibullying.net. Further guidance to support those affected by such bullying can be found in the document Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and school staff (2014). This, along with other effective support methods will be offered to those affected.

Compiled by: Deputy Head (Pastoral)	Revision Number: 8 (Summer Term 2020)
Approved by: Welfare Committee	Next Revision date: Summer Term 2021