



Portsmouth  
High School

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## Cyber-Bullying Policy

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Pre-School, Prep, Senior and Sixth Form

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# Cyber-Bullying Policy

Recent research from a number of sources has pointed to a growing trend of inappropriate PC and on-line behaviour: The National Bullying Survey recently found that 7 per cent of school pupils received unpleasant or bullying emails, Instant Messages or text messages. The MSN Cyber-bullying Report suggests that 11 per cent of 12-15 year olds have been cyber-bullied and the NCH Bullying survey found 10 per cent of pupils had a photo taken of them that made them feel uncomfortable, embarrassed or threatened.

Young people have fully embraced the use of information and communication technologies to maintain contact with friends and make new ones. They send emails, create their own websites, post intimate personal news in blogs (online interactive diaries), send text messages and images via mobile phones, message each other through IMs (instant messages), chat in chat rooms, post to discussion boards, and seek out new friends in teen community sites.

While most interactions are positive, there are increasing reports of these technologies being used to harass and intimidate others. This has become known as cyber-bullying.

## Definition

*'Cyber-bullying is when someone is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed, or otherwise targeted by another child, pre-teen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. It has to be a minor on both sides, or at least have been instigated by a minor against another minor.'*

- [www.stopcyberbullying.org](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org)

*'Cyber-bullying is when one person or a group of people aim to threaten, tease or embarrass someone else by using a mobile phone, the internet or other technologies'.*

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

Bullying does not have to take place face-to-face for it to be frightening or harmful. With the introduction and adaptation of new technologies and gadgets, bullies intimidating their victims constantly. They are managing to do this through the new means of 'Cyber-Bullying'.

Online bullying, called cyber-bullying, happens when teens use the Internet, mobile phones, or other devices to send or post text or images intended to hurt, humiliate or embarrass another person. Cyber-bullying is a problem that affects almost half of all teens. With more of us having access to and using email on a regular basis as well as the fascination with mobile phones, bullying does not have to take place in person. It can simply happen by silent phone calls or through abusive text messages or emails. This can be just as distressing or agonising for the victim as being bullied face-to-face. Cyber-bullying takes place when the bully sends or posts harmful or cruel text or images either on the internet or through other electronic communication devices.

At Portsmouth High School bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Perpetrators will be dealt with severely. The aim of our school is to offer a caring and supportive learning environment and with this policy we will endeavour to ensure this will happen.

The University of London has identified 7 categories of where and how cyber-bullying can take place:

1. Text messaging bullying: this involves sending unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort or hurt in any way.
2. Picture/video-clip via mobile phone cameras: this is used to make the person being bullied feel threatened or embarrassed, with images usually sent to other people without the consent of the victim. 'Happy Slapping' involves filming and sharing physical attacks.
3. Phone call bullying via mobile phone: this is when silent calls are made or abusive text messages are sent to victims. On certain occasions sometimes the victim's phone is stolen and used to harass others; the victim is then blamed as they own the phone. As with all phone bullying, the bully often disguises their numbers, sometimes using someone else's phone to avoid being identified. Remember the coward is the bully.
4. Email Bullying: this uses email to send bullying or threatening messages, often using a false name or using someone else's name again to avoid being identified or to put the blame on someone else.
5. Chat-room Bullying: this involves sending menacing or upsetting responses to children and young people when they are in a web based chat room.
6. Bullying through direct messaging (DM): this is an Internet-Based form of bullying where children and young people are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online (i.e. Facebook, Snapchat, Skype etc.).
7. Bullying via websites: this includes using defamatory or insulting blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites. There has also been a significant increase in social networking sites for young people, which can provide new opportunities for cyber-bullying

*Source: University of London Spring 2008*

Staff at Portsmouth High School have the responsibility to ensure that:

- No forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying are tolerated;
- Staff are aware of cyber-bullying;
- Students are aware of the consequences of cyber-bullying;
- A code of conduct is in use for technology, including computers and mobile phones, whilst on the school premises;
- All cases of cyber-bullying are reported to the Deputy Head and responded to promptly.

## Advice for Pupils

Being a victim of cyber-bullying can be a common and painful experience. Some young people who cyber-bully:

- Pretend they are other people online to trick others;
- Spread lies and rumours about victims;
- Trick people into revealing personal information;
- Send or forward mean text messages;
- Post pictures of victims without their consent.

When teens were asked why they think others cyber-bully, 81 percent said that cyber-bullies think it's funny. Other teens believe that young people who cyber-bully:

- Don't think it's a big deal;
- Don't think about the consequences;
- Are encouraged by friends;
- Think everybody cyber-bullies;
- Think they won't get caught.
- Don't think it will escalate.

## How to Stop Cyber-Bullying and Stay Safe

Contrary to what cyber-bullies may believe, cyber-bullying is a big deal, and can cause a variety of reactions in teens. Some teens have reacted in positive ways to try to prevent cyber-bullying by:

- Blocking communication with the cyber-bully;
- Deleting messages without reading them;
- Talking to a friend about the bullying;
- Screenshot and save the message/post/image;
- Reporting the problem to an Internet service provider or website moderator.
- Spend time away from being online.

Many young people experience a variety of emotions when they are cyber-bullied.

Young people who are cyber-bullied report feeling angry, hurt, embarrassed, or scared. These emotions can cause victims to react in ways such as seeking revenge on the bully, avoiding friends and activities or cyber-bullying back. Such negative reactions should be avoided.

Some teens feel threatened because they may not know who is cyber-bullying them.

However, although cyber-bullies may think they are anonymous, they can be found. If you are cyber-bullied or harassed and need help, save all communication with the cyber-bully and talk to a parent, teacher, law enforcement officer, or other adult you trust.

et Safety Tips and Danger Signs

Whether you've been a victim of cyber-bullying, know someone who has been cyber-bullied, or have even cyber-bullied yourself, there are steps you and your friends can take to stop cyber-bullying and stay cyber-safe:

- Never save or give anyone your password, especially to your phone.
- Never give out your real name, age or birthdate.
- Never tell anyone where you go to school
- Only meet someone from a chatroom in a public place with one of your parents or another adult. If they are genuinely who they say they are they will be happy to do this
- Never give out your address or telephone number
- Never agree to meet anyone from a chatroom on your own
- Tell an adult if someone makes inappropriate suggestions to you or makes you feel uncomfortable online:
  - If the person tries to insist on having your address or phone number
  - If the person emails you pictures which make you feel uncomfortable and which you would not want to show to anyone else
  - If the person wants to keep their chats with you secret
  - If the person tells you that you will get into trouble if you tell an adult what has been going on
  - If the person wants you to email them pictures of yourself or use a webcam in a way which makes you feel uncomfortable
  - If the person shares information with you and tells you not to tell anyone else about it
  - If the person wants to meet you and tells you not to let anyone know
- Respect other people – online and off-line. Do not spread rumours about other people or share their private details, including phone numbers, email addresses or passwords;
- 'Do as you would be done by'! Think how you would like to be treated, or how you would feel if you were being bullied. You are responsible for your own behaviour - make sure you don't annoy or insult other people or cause them to be bullied by someone else.

Don't forget that even though you can't see a cyber-bully or the bully's victim, cyber-bullying causes real problems. If you wouldn't say it in person, don't say it online. Don't write it. Don't forward it.

If you are being bullied, remember bullying is never your fault, no matter what the bully may tell you. It can be stopped and it usually can be traced.

Don't ignore the bully. 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.

There is plenty of online advice on how to react to cyber-bullying. For example:

- [www.kidsscape.org](http://www.kidsscape.org)
- [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

## Specific Advice

### Text/Video messaging:

- You can turn off incoming messages for a couple of days;
- If bullying persists you can change your phone number (ask your mobile phone service provider);
- 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.

### Email:

- Never reply to unpleasant or unwanted emails;
- Don't accept emails or open files from people you do not know;
- Ask an adult to contact the sender's ISP by writing [abuse@](mailto:abuse@) and then the host, e.g. [abuse@hotmail.com](mailto:abuse@hotmail.com)

### Web:

If the bullying is on the school website, tell a teacher or parent, just as you would if the bullying was face-to-face.

### Chat room & instant messaging:

- Do not show yourself inappropriately.
- If you do send inappropriate images don't be embarrassed or ashamed tell someone asap before it escalates. There is advice on firefly in our community – pastoral section.
- COVER YOUR WEBCAM unless you are using it
- Never give out you name, address, phone number, school name or password online;
- It's a good idea to use a nickname;
- Do not give out photographs of yourself;
- Do not accept emails or open files from people you do not know;
- Remember it might not just be people your own age in a chat room;
- Stick to public areas in chat rooms and get out if you feel uncomfortable;

- Tell your parents if you feel uncomfortable or worried about anything that happens in a chat room;
- Think carefully about what you write – don't leave yourself open to bullying;
- Do not participate in cyber-bullying;
- Do not use mobile phones, cameras or other digital devices to record audio and visual material that is not authorised as part of the school curriculum programme;
- Do not breach the privacy of students, staff and members of the school community through any unauthorised recording or filming;
- Do not disseminate inappropriate information through digital media or other means;
- Report incidents of cyber-bullying to a member of staff;
- Advise students being victimised by cyber-bullying to talk to an adult;
- Offer to speak to an adult on behalf of the student who is being victimised by cyber-bullying.

## Why Should We Report Bullying Incidents?

Many students do not want to report incidents of bullying as they fear it may make the situation worse. Surveys have shown that reporting bullying behaviour of any kind can significantly help the situation. It will help both the victim and the bully.

Not reporting bullying can just prolong your fear and anxiety. The bully also needs help in order to change her antisocial behaviour.

Students can report incidents in school by talking to their Tutor or their Head of Year. They can also talk to any adult in the school that they trust.

- A member of staff will talk to you and will take a statement;
- The incident will be logged and your Head of Year, if she/her is not already dealing with the incident, will then be informed;
- An investigation will take place. This will usually mean that your Head of Year will talk separately to the bully or bullies and to any witnesses;
- Action will be taken. It is likely that school staff and others will use a 'no blame approach'. This approach is used as this has proved to be the most successful way of dealing with bullying incidents.

If you are being subjected to a sustained level of unpleasantness, which includes any of the behaviours or categories listed within this policy, then this should be treated as bullying and should be reported to your Parents, Tutor or Head of Year.

Useful Websites:

- <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/>
- [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)
- <http://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/CyberBullying.aspx>
- <http://www.antibullying.net/>

- [www.stopcyberbullying.org](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org)

## Advice for Parents

- Don't wait for something to happen before you act. Make sure your daughter understands how to use these technologies safely and knows about the risks and consequences of misusing them;
- Make sure she knows what to do if she or someone she knows is being cyber-bullied;
- Encourage your daughter to talk to you if she has problems with cyber-bullying. If she does have a problem, contact the school, the mobile network or the Internet Service Provider (ISP) to do something about it;
- Parental control software can limit who your daughter sends emails to and who she receives them from. It can also block access to some chat rooms.
- Moderated chat rooms are supervised by trained adults. Your ISP will tell you whether they provide moderated chat services;
- Make it your business to know what your daughter is doing online and who your daughters' online friends are. It is important that parents ensure their children are engaged in safe and responsible online behaviour.
- School Council advice is to limit internet time.
- Reassure your daughter

Some suggestions for parents to stay involved are:

- Keep the computer in a public place in the house. Periodically check on what your child is doing. Discuss the kinds of internet activities your child enjoys;
- Be upfront with your daughter; tell her that you will, at various times check the files on the computer, the browser history files, and your child's emails and public online activities;
- Search your daughter's name online, look at her profiles and posting on teen community sites, review web pages or blogs;
- Tell your child that you may review her private communication activities if you have reason to believe you will find unsafe or irresponsible behaviour.
- Watch out for secretive behaviour as you approach the computer, such as rapidly switching screens, and for attempts to hide online behaviour, such as empty file history.

**Date: February 2017**

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**H J Trim with Senior School Council**