EDEN PARK ACADEMY

Cyber-Bullying Policy

Eden Park Academy believes that everyone in the school community has the right to learn and to teach in a supportive and caring environment without fear of being bullied. We are committed to helping all members of the school community to benefit from information and communication technology, whilst understanding its risks, and to equip children with the knowledge and skills to be able to use it safely and responsibly.

What is Cyber-Bullying?

Cyber bullying includes sending or posting harmful or upsetting text, images or other messages, using the internet, mobile phones or other communication technology. It can include messages intended as jokes, but which have a harmful or upsetting effect.

It can take many forms, but can go even further than face to face bullying by invading home and personal space and can target one or more people.

It can take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others and can include threats and intimidation, harassment, defamation, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation and unauthorised publication of private information or images.

Cyber bullying may be carried out in many ways, including:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages

- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips via mobile phone cameras

- Silent or abusive phone calls or using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible

- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name

- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chat-room

- Unpleasant messages sent during instant messaging

- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook)

In some cases, this type of bullying can be a criminal offence.

Prevention of Cyber Bullying Understanding and information

The Head will act, as an e-Safety Officer, to oversee the practices and procedures outlined in this policy and monitor their effectiveness and 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 (see Appendix 1) 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 as part of their E Safety learning through curricular activities and parents will be provided with information and advice on this.

Pupils and staff are expected to comply with the school's Acceptable Computer Use Policy.

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. 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.

Cyber bullying incidents will be recorded on CPOMS.

Responding to cyber bullying

Cyber bullying will generally be dealt with through the schools countering-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 and 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.

- Contact with the Internet Watch Foundation, the police or the Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Board Officer if images might be illegal or raise child protection issues

- 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 Antibullying 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 of counter bullying procedures
Members of staff will report any incidents of cyber bullying to the Head teacher who will review any serious incident within three months of the school dealing with any reported cases and will ensure that an annual review of Cyber Bullying and the Anti-Bullying procedures are carried out. The review will take into account comments and suggested areas for improvement from staff and students, including input from the School Council.