

Gaelscoil an Inbhir Mhóir

Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy

Gaelscoil an Inbhir Mhóir aims to ensure that children in our care are safe and feel safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination. Our school community is committed to teaching children the knowledge and skills to be able to use ICT (Information and Communications Technology) effectively, safely and responsibly.

Aims of this 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 help prevent incidents of cyber bullying
- To ensure that reported incidents of cyber bullying are dealt with effectively and in a timely manner

The pupils in Gaelscoil an Inbhir Mhóir are not permitted to have a mobile phone switched on while on the school premises and grounds. The computers in the school have a blocking system which blocks all social media websites which limits access to opportunities to engage in any inappropriate activity online. This implies that cyber bullying, if it were to occur would most likely occur outside of school. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that parents should seek to ensure the following:

- Children should not have access to the Internet on a phone, computer or any device which cannot be in full view in the home and in particular children should not have unsupervised access to these devices in their bedrooms.
- No child under the age of thirteen years (which is the minimum age to set up a Facebook account) should have access at any time to Facebook or any such social media site which is used by adults.
- Parents should be aware of and monitor all of their children's activity online.

Understanding cyber bullying

Definition of bullying included in DES "action Plan on Bullying" January 2013:

"Bullying is (1) intentional negative behaviour that (2) typically occurs with some repetitiveness and is (3) directed against a person who has difficulty defending himself or herself"

What is cyber-bullying

Cyber bullying can be defined by the definition of bullying above that occurs over the internet or via mobile phone. Cyber bullying can take many forms which include:

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, Twitter, Ask.fm, Bebo, Myspace and Snapchat– although there are others. Game consoles which have internet access and internet gaming opportunities to connect with other users are also a channel which can be misused and abused.

Procedures to prevent cyber bullying

- Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management (BoM) to be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying.
- Staff, pupils and parents will be urged to report any incident of cyber bullying to the school.
- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies.
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies, and other curriculum projects.
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying.
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal's office and monitored regularly.
- Procedures in accordance with the school's Anti-bullying Policy shall apply to this policy also. Incidents of cyber bullying in relation to any member of staff will be taken very seriously.
- In order to ascertain the veracity of an accusation the School Principal may look at material on a child's phone, tablet or other such device in the presence of the child's parent/guardian.

- The Gardaí/Social Services will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content.

Information for pupils

If you are being bullied by phone or the Internet:

- Remember, bullying is never your fault, but it is something over which you can have an influence. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent or call an advice line (e.g. Childline).
- Never give out your personal details online.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent or teacher as evidence.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender.
- There are plenty of online resources advising on how to react to cyber bullying.

Text/video messaging

- You can easily 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 you've changed your phone number.
- If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider about this.
- 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.
- Do not delete messages from cyber bullies. You should keep them as evidence.

This policy has been compiled in consultation with staff, parents/guardians and Board of Management.