



**WINDERMERE
SCHOOL**
FOUNDED 1863

Review Date: January 2027

Reviewed by: SLT

Review Period: 12 months

Staff Responsibility: Sue Brown

Anti-Bullying Policy - Cyber-bullying

This policy has been written taking note of the non-statutory advice: Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (2014) [current in 2024] in conjunction with Preventing and Tackling Bullying (October 2014, updated July 2017)

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

Cyberbullying includes:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- 'trolling' - the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
- sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
- pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

Cyberbullying and the law

While there is not a specific criminal offence called cyberbullying, activities can be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including:

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988,
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003
- Public Order Act 1986
- The Defamation Acts of 1952 and 1996

All members of the Windermere community have rights and responsibilities in relation to cyberbullying and should work together to create an environment in which pupils can learn and develop and staff can have fulfilling careers free from harassment and bullying.

It is completely unacceptable for pupils, parents or colleagues to denigrate and bully via social media, text messages, email, etc. in the same way that it is unacceptable to do so face-to-face. At Windermere School we expect all members of the school community to use social media and messaging responsibly and in accordance with our 'Acceptable Use Policy' (AUP).

What can I do to help prevent cyberbullying as an educational professional?

1. *Understand the tools:* be aware of the reporting mechanisms (see below) on different sites and services so you can support your pupils in making a report.
2. *Discuss cyberbullying:* be proactive in discussing cyberbullying with your pupils; how it occurs, why it occurs, and the consequences of such behaviour.
3. *Know who to report to:* Depending on the severity, either report cyberbullying to the child's Tutor or Form Teacher or to the relevant DSL, in case there are further issues. Appropriate action can then be decided.

As a member of staff, what advice can I give to young people?

The internet is an amazing resource and can be used in a number of positive ways. However, content posted online can be easily misunderstood by others and taken out of context. It is important for young people to recognise the importance of 'thinking before you post' and the need to respect their friends' and peers' thoughts and feelings online. What's considered morally right and wrong offline must also be thought of in the same way online, and treating others with respect on the internet is a good way to ensure that online situations are less likely to escalate into cyberbullying situations.

1. *Don't reply:* most of the time the bully is looking for a reaction when they're teasing or calling someone nasty names. Remind young people not to reply, if they do they're giving the bully exactly what they want.
2. *Save the evidence:* encourage young people to save the evidence of any emails or text messages they receive. This is so they have something to show when they do report the cyberbullying.
3. *Tell someone:* encourage young people to tell a trusted adult if they are being cyberbullied, and to tell them as soon as they can in order to minimise their own upset or worry.

School staff

All school staff are in a position of trust, and there are expectations that they will act in a professional manner at all times. Here is some key advice for staff which may help protect their online reputation:

- Ensure you have read and understand the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).
- [Childnet - Using Technology](#) has more information on what to be aware of.
- Do not leave a computer or other device logged-on when you are away from your desk.
- Ensure you have enabled a PIN or passcode to protect you from losing personal data and images (or having them copied and shared) from your mobile phone or device if it is lost, stolen, or accessed by pupils.

Windermere School takes its duty to support staff seriously to ensure no-one should feel victimised in the workplace. Staff should seek support from the senior management team if they ever feel they are the victim of on-line bullying. Staff should expect the school to react

quickly to reported incidents or support the member of staff concerned to do so. A member of staff who is harassed in this way will receive support and information enabling them to access appropriate personal support. The school will endeavour to approach internet providers or other agencies on their behalf in order to request that the inappropriate material is removed. However, the internet provider may only accept a request from the victim and therefore the person being bullied will need to contact the service providers directly, with support from the school. This might apply, for example, in cases of identity theft, impersonation or abuse via a mobile phone service.

Staff should take steps to protect themselves and their personal information by:

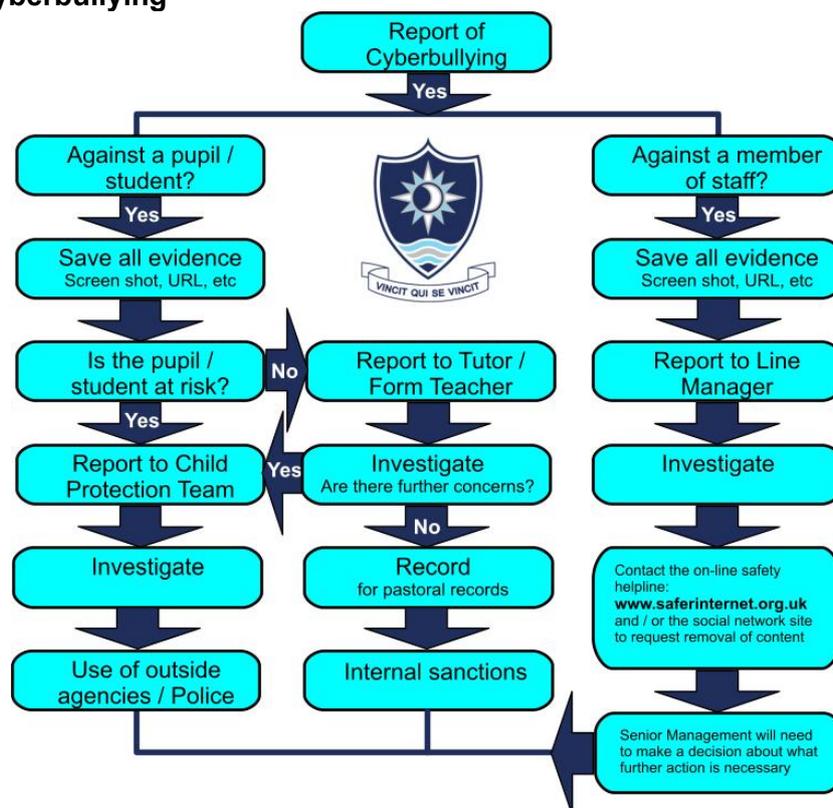
- Keeping passwords secret and protecting access to their accounts.
- Not friending pupils on personal social networking services.
- Keeping personal phone numbers private and not using their own mobile phones to contact pupils or parents.
- Keeping a record of their phone's unique International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number, and keeping phones secure while on school premises.
- Not posting information about themselves publicly that they wouldn't want employers, colleagues, pupils or parents to see.
- Ensuring that rules regarding the use of technologies are consistently enforced.
- Not personally retaliating to any incident.
- Reporting any incident to the appropriate member of staff in a timely manner.
- Keeping any evidence of an incident.

The Professional Online Safety Helpline

<http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/> is a free service for professionals and volunteers working with children and young people, delivered by the UK Safer Internet Centre. The helpline provides signposting, advice and mediation to resolve the e-safety issues which staff face, such as protecting professional identity, online harassment, or problems affecting young people; for example cyberbullying or sexting issues.

The Safer Internet Centre has developed strategic partnerships with the key players in the internet industry. When appropriate, this enables the Professional helpline to seek resolution directly with the policy and safety teams at Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google, Tumblr, Ask.FM, Rate My Teacher and more.

Reporting Cyberbullying



Where appropriate, we will contact the police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or other outside agencies.

If the bully is a member of the school community:

- We will work with and take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully.
- The school will take care to make an informed evaluation of the severity of the incident, taking into account the ways in which cyberbullying differs from other forms of bullying.
- The school will deliver appropriate and consistent sanctions.

Useful resources

Parentzone.org.uk has established a training programme designed to enable schools and professionals working with parents to deliver their own sessions on internet safety. They also provide innovative resources for schools to help and support parents, particularly around e-safety. The Diana Award also runs a whole school Anti-Bullying Programme, information and good practice can be found at www.antibullyingpro.com.

Facebook has produced Empowering Educators support sheet specifically for teachers and launched the Bullying Prevention Hub with Yale's Centre for Emotional Intelligence.

Getting offensive content taken down

If online content is offensive or inappropriate, and the person or people responsible are known, you need to ensure they understand why the material is unacceptable or offensive and request they remove it. Most social networks have reporting mechanisms in place to report content which breaches their terms. If the person responsible has not been identified or does not

respond to requests to take down the material, the staff member should use the tools on the social networking site directly to make a report.

Some service providers will not accept complaints lodged by a third party. In cases of mobile phone abuse, where the person being bullied is receiving malicious calls and messages, the account holder will need to contact the provider directly.

Before you contact a service provider, it is important to be clear about where the content is; for example, by taking a screen shot of the material that includes the web address. If you are requesting that they take down material that is not illegal, be clear to point out how it breaks the site's terms and conditions. Where the material is suspected of being illegal the school will contact the police directly.

Contact details for reporting issues on social networking sites

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/reporting-to-social-media-sites-/>

Checklist

Due to the rapidly changing technology which enables cyberbullying, the following checklist will be used regularly by the school.

- School governors, head teachers, and senior management team members are familiar with the cyber bullying guidance: <https://www.childnet.com/resources/cyberbullying-guidance-for-schools>
- The whole-school community understands what is meant by 'cyberbullying', it's potential impact, how it differs from other forms of bullying and why it is unacceptable.
- All staff have been provided with information and professional development opportunities regarding understanding, preventing and responding to cyberbullying. Emphasis has been placed on the importance of understanding child protection and other legal issues that may relate to cyberbullying incidents.
- Current school policy, guidance and information relevant to cyberbullying has been reviewed regularly, to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils and staff. This includes: Behavioural agreements; Acceptable Use Policies, including the use of mobile phones and cameras within school; Employee terms and conditions; Pupil and staff support and pastoral care.
- The whole-school community understands reporting routes and responsibilities and the flow chart (above) is displayed in prominent places.
- Learning strategies and targets, as well as staff development programmes, support the innovative and engaging use of technologies and promotes its positive use which models safe and effective practice.
- The impact of prevention and response policies and practice is being monitored annually. Staff, pupils and parents feel confident that we effectively support those who are cyberbullied.

Reviewed	Version 8	September 2014	J Parry
Revised	Version 8.1	December 2014	J Parry
Reviewed	Version 9	September 2015	J Parry
Reviewed	Version 10	September 2016	J Parry
Revised and reviewed in line with new ISI regulations			
Revised	Version 16.1	January 2017	J Parry/J Davies
Reviewed	Version 17	September 2017	J Parry/J Davies
Reviewed	Version 18	September 2018	J Parry/J Davies
Reviewed	Version 20	July 2020	J Davies
Approved	Version 21	September 2021	L Moses
Reviewed	Version 22	August 2022	L Moses
Reviewed	Version 24	November 2024	F Thompson
Reviewed	Version 25	January 2026	F Thompson