

# THE MANOR – A FOUNDATION SCHOOL POLICY DOCUMENT

<CYBERBULLYING POLICY>  
RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE: <WELFARE>



## Policy Statement

The possibilities of the Internet and mobile phones are endless. Young people benefit from having opportunity to access one another and communicate in a variety of different forms. However, not all aspects of ICT are positive and it can enable additional routes for those intent on bullying.

## Definition of Cyberbullying

*Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-bullying Work in Schools — Cyberbullying* (DCSF, 2007) provides the following definition: “Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the Internet, deliberately to upset someone else”.

Following discussion with the School community, it has been agreed to adopt this definition as the School’s.

## Cyberbullying includes:

- text message bullying
- picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone cameras
- phone call bullying via mobile phones
- email bullying
- chat room bullying
- bullying through instant messaging
- bullying via websites

Although similar in many respects to other forms of bullying, cyberbullying also has some very specific features.

- It invades both home and personal space.
- The size of the audience can be vast.
- Electronically circulated messages can be difficult to control.
- The bully can feel relatively anonymous.
- It can have a large number of “bystanders” or “accessories”.
- Much (if not all) of the bullying may take place out of School.

## The Aims of the Policy

### *Through this policy we aim to:*

1. raise awareness among students and staff about cyberbullying
2. provide a safe learning environment in which preventative measures are in place to deter cyberbullying
3. ensure systems are in place to deal with cyberbullying should it occur.

## PROCEDURE

### Prevention

In order that these aims can be fulfilled, a number of preventative measures will be taken.

#### ***Awareness-raising — Students***

A number of opportunities have been highlighted as part of the curriculum to help students “stay safe”. A unit is included in our PSHE and medium-term planning and also in our ICT curriculum. At the beginning of the School year, all classes will discuss safe use of the ICT suite during their first lesson. They will be reminded about the *Acceptable Use Policy* and a copy of this will be sent out to parent/carers with the new *Home School Agreements*.

If an issue relating to cyberbullying has arisen, the subject may be discussed during personal tutoring and mentoring time. If this is in relation to a particular individual, consideration will be given to how the issue is raised. Students will be made aware of the importance of telling an adult, and which adults they can approach in School.

During “Anti-bullying Week”, cyberbullying is covered as part of whole-School assemblies and anti-bullying activities in all classes. There was also a Cyberbullying training event for students in May 2009 which will be repeated annually.

Issues relating to cyberbullying have been raised with the Student Voice Group who have given their view about what the problems are and what the solutions might be.

#### ***Awareness-raising — Parent/Carers***

A leaflet is distributed to parent/carers annually outlining the School’s approach to cyberbullying and providing information about websites that offer additional support and advice. In addition, parent/carers are invited to assemblies during Anti-bullying Week and are invited to discuss any concerns or questions they may have with the ICT co-ordinator. ***Parent/carers are encouraged to take notice of their students’s online activities and to discuss the risks with them.***

#### ***Awareness-raising — School Staff***

Staff have a duty to ensure that the students in their care stay safe, and also that they themselves are alert to the dangers of cyberbullying. This can be particularly difficult for members of staff who have students and relatives in the School. All members of School staff can be affected and staff

should inform a line manager at the first opportunity should any incident occur.

One INSET session annually will be devoted in part to the issue of bullying, and cyberbullying is discussed as an agenda item. It enables new developments of potential sources of bullying to be raised and possible ways of challenging these to be discussed. New terminology used by the students is also shared at this session. Staff need to be aware of what the risks are and the potential for implications of misuse. On occasions an outside speaker is invited to update staff on latest developments.

### **Dealing with Cyberbullying Incidents**

There is usually some visual evidence after cyberbullying has taken place. Students should be encouraged to pass this on to a member of staff or their parent/carers. In some cases, it will be necessary to contact mobile phone companies, Internet service providers or social networking sites.

### **The following advice should be given to those experiencing cyberbullying.**

- Do not retaliate or reply.
- Block or remove offenders from buddy lists.
- Review the information you are giving out.
- Make sure you tell an adult.
- Try to keep calm and do not let the bully see a reaction.

If the person responsible for the bullying is identified, sanctions will be applied under the School's behaviour policy. In addition, the following sanctions might be implemented, depending upon the nature and severity of the bullying:

- confiscating equipment such as mobile phones
- withdrawing access to the Internet for a set period of time
- limiting use of the Internet for a set period of time
- contacting the police, where the cyberbullying is sufficiently severe
- informing external agencies such as social networking or email member sites.

Support will be provided for the victim. This may include meeting the bully to discuss what has happened and agree a way forward.

It is important that all students and staff recognise that when an incident of cyberbullying takes place it is dealt with swiftly. Parent/carers should be told, in the early stages of any bullying, what actions have been taken to remedy it.

### Use of the Internet in School

This School has its own Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) that clearly identifies how the ICT suite and Internet should be used. Students and parent/carers are reminded of this policy annually. Some of the main features are as follows:

1. Students should not allowed unsupervised access to the Internet.
2. Students should be made aware of their own responsibility in reporting anything they identify that causes them concern.
3. Permission must be given from parent/carers for students to use the Internet and students must also agree to follow Internet usage rules.

The ICT co-ordinator is responsible, along with the senior leadership team and the LA, for reviewing how the School network is monitored.

### Use of Mobile Phones in School by Students

Students are not allowed to bring their mobile phones to School unless permission has been sought by parent/carers and given by the Principal. This might happen if an older child comes to School on his or her own, and requires a mobile phone in case of emergencies.

Where this agreement is made, the mobile phone must be clearly labelled with the student's name, handed in to the office on their arrival at School and collected on leaving. It should be expressly understood and agreed that under no circumstances should the mobile phone be used while on Schools premises, including for taking photographs. The School retains the right to confiscate mobile phones where they are brought into School without permission or when they are being used inappropriately.

### Use of Mobile Phones in School by Adults

Although parent/carers will bring mobile phones onto the premises, it must be understood that these should not be used for the purpose of taking photographs and they should be switched on to vibrate mode while on School premises.

**No member of staff should carry his or her phone around School with them, except for the School caretaker and any member of staff who is taking students out on a School field or on a trip.**

**All members of staff must be careful about giving out their mobile number.** Wherever possible, the School's mobile phone should be used for School trips and visits. However, there may be times when more than one phone is necessary. Where this is the case, a member of staff may use their personal phone but access to this should be restricted to a senior member of School staff. If any situation arises where this needs to be extended, permission should be secured first.

### E-mailing and Instant Messaging

**No member of staff may give a student their personal email address.** Students and staff should never reply to unpleasant or unwanted emails or open files from people they don't know.

When writing emails or instant messages, think carefully about the content. When angry or distressed, you might send something likely to cause further anguish. Leave the computer and

discuss the issue with someone else.

### **Bystanders**

The issue of being a bystander or accessory is addressed with all students regularly, and the School Council has compiled some bystander guidelines. Students are encouraged to respect other people on- and offline and to recognise how sharing a secret and passing on numbers and passwords can cause harm and distress to others.

#### **Being a bystander can include:**

- forwarding messages
- contributing to discussions
- taking part in an online poll.

### **Recording and Reporting**

The whole School community is made aware of ways of reporting incidents of bullying. Bullying is reported to a member of School staff who will then report it to his or her line manager, and the appropriate action will be taken. All incidents of cyberbullying are logged as part of the School's anti-bullying policy and this information is shared annually with the governing body.

### **Special Needs**

Students with special needs are particularly vulnerable to all forms of bullying. Members of School staff are alert to changes in behaviour and ensure that there are opportunities and established methods for students with SEN to communicate should the need arise.

### **Equal Opportunities**

As with other forms of bullying, cyberbullying is prone to being driven by prejudice. Staff are alert to the possibilities of sexist, racist and homophobic cyberbullying. Although all victims of bullying can be reluctant to discuss their experiences, victims of homophobic bullying may be particularly so.

### ***Has It Been Successful?***

The following questions will be asked by the reviewing group to ascertain the success of the policy [insert your own questions; the following is an example].

- How many incidents of cyberbullying have been recorded in the past 12 months?
- Is there evidence of actions resulting from students reporting incidents of cyberbullying?
- Have the actions been effective, ie has the behaviour desisted?
- When talking to students in the School, is there an awareness of what cyberbullying is and what to do if they encounter it?

Student, parent/carer and staff surveys will also include questions about the effectiveness of this policy.

### Linked Policies

Other policies which should be referred to include:

- Behaviour
- Anti-bullying
- ICT and Internet
- Acceptable Use

### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on the date below by Ben Slade, Principal, and the Inclusion Team in September 2011.