



CYBERBULLYING

BACKGROUND

St Dunstan's College has a duty to protect pupils and staff from online activities that are harmful and damaging and which can, in some circumstances, constitute a criminal act. Cyberbullying poses a growing challenge and the College possess a clear framework of policies giving guidance in this area. The School ensures too that pupils and staff are apprised of the College's expectations. This policy outlines in greater detail how pupils, parents and staff can work together to foster an environment in which Cyberbullying is not tolerated and where the is effective detection of and sanction for those involved in it.

This policy is available on the College website, the College VLE (Firefly) and in the Parent and Student Handbooks. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Expected Pupil Behaviour and College Rules
- ICT Policy and Pupil Acceptable Use Agreement

DEFINITION OF CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. This includes devices and equipment such as mobile phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

Examples of cyberbullying may include:

- Mean text messages, emails or posts on social networking sites
- Rumours sent by text or email or posted on social networking sites
- Embarrassing pictures, videos or websites
- Threatening text messages, emails or posts on social media sites
- Fake profiles on social media sites

Cyberbullying is different from 'in-person' bullying because:

- Cyberbullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and reach a child even when he or she is alone.
- Cyberbullying messages and images can be posted anonymously and distributed quickly to a very wide audience. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source.
- Deleting inappropriate or harassing messages, texts and pictures is extremely difficult after they have been posted or sent
- Children who are being cyberbullied are often bullied in person as well. Additionally, children who are cyberbullied have a harder time getting away from the behaviour.

POLICY

1. St Dunstan's College recognises the particularly detrimental effects of cyberbullying on children, and will deal with all allegations of cyberbullying quickly and seriously in accordance with the College's Anti-bullying policy.
2. All staff receive training in e-Safety in order to model best-practice and to support pupil e-Safety education.
3. E-Safety is taught to all pupils through PSHEE lessons, Skills for Life, special assemblies and in the curriculum.
4. The College recognises the possible criminal nature of cyberbullying, and the DSL and other Pastoral Leaders within the school attend regular training to keep up-to-date on legal responsibilities.

PROCEDURES

What to look for:

Pupils who are being cyberbullied may find it difficult to talk about their experiences. Research suggests that many children who are being cyberbullied don't tell their parents or teachers, so it's important to recognise the signs. They can be hard to spot, but some things to look out for are:

- Sudden or unexpected cessation in using their computer, mobile phone or tablet
- Appearing nervous or jumpy when an instant message, text message or email appears
- Avoiding school or socialising in general
- Being angry, depressed or frustrated after using their phone, computer or tablet
- Becoming withdrawn from friends and family members

What to do:

If you are the victim:

- Don't retaliate or reply to nasty messages.
- Save the evidence – text messages, online conversations, social media posts, etc. Sometimes, taking a 'screenshot' is the easiest way of preserving evidence of cyberbullying.
- Use 'block sender' features on your phone or social media sites to prevent further bullying.
- Tell someone about the incident: ideally, you should tell your Tutor or Head of Year, but any staff member (including the Counsellor and the Chaplain), friend, parent, or trusted adult should be able to help you or find someone who can.
- If you don't want to talk to a member of staff about the incident, ask a friend, family member or trusted adult to talk to a member of staff on your behalf.

If a pupil witnesses cyberbullying:

- Do not be enticed into sending retaliatory messages or posts.
- Do not do nothing – if you see any messages or posts which are hurtful or intending to cause harm, you **MUST** report this to the College. You can be sanctioned as complicit in a cyberbullying offence later on if it is discovered that you were a 'passive bystander' (e.g. party to an online conversation, even you weren't contributing to it) and did not report the bullying.

- Accompany the victim to a trusted adult, or suggest that you see their Tutor or Head of Year on their behalf.
- If possible, save the evidence of the bullying via screenshots for example.

If a member of staff witnesses an incident of cyberbullying or has it reported to them:

- Reassure and support the pupils involved.
- If the pupil has evidence of the cyberbullying, with the pupil's permission take their phone or device on which the evidence is stored directly to the DSL for further advice.
- Advise them that you are required to pass the details on to the relevant member of the pastoral team (DSL).
- Report the incident on MyConcern, or if MyConcern is not available report the incident directly to the DSL.

What will happen?

- Cyberbullying incidents will be dealt with as outlined in the College Anti-bullying policy.
- There is an increased likelihood of a cyberbullying incident to involve criminal offence than in-person bullying.
 - Any incident involving images or videos generated by or of children under the age of 18 that are of a sexual nature will be dealt with according to the College Sexting Policy and the law.
 - Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender. In addition to College-level sanctions, incidents of this nature will be reported to the Police.
 - Under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, it is an offence to send a 'credible threat' of violence, harassing communications targeting specific individuals or 'cyberstalking' communications targeting specific individuals. In addition to College-level sanctions, incidents of this nature will be reported to the Police.
 - Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, it is an offence to send any race- or religion-based threats or aggravated communications targeting specific individuals. In addition to College-level sanctions, incidents of this nature will be reported to the Police.
 - Under the Criminal Justice Act 2003, it is an offence to send any disability- or sexual orientation or transgender identity-based threats or aggravated communications targeting specific individuals. In addition to College-level sanctions, incidents of this nature will be reported to the Police.