

CREAGH NS

Anti Cyber Bullying Policy

Introduction

Cyber-bullying can be very damaging to individuals and disruptive to school life. Although new technology brings incredible opportunities for educators as well as young people, it is crucial that everyone knows how to use technology responsibly and that policies are in place to support and encourage responsible use.

Scope of this Policy

This policy is aimed at combating cyber-bullying. Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, communication via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and or distress to one or more persons. Cyber bullying includes the use of mobile phones and the internet with the objective of upsetting someone. It may take the form of general insults or impersonation, defamation and/or prejudice based bullying.

While this policy addresses issues related to cyber bullying of students this policy also applies to all school staff including teaching staff, SNAs, Secretary, Caretaker, parents/guardians and others insofar as measures under the policy relate to them.

This policy applies to activities and events that take place:

- During school time (include break times)
- Going to and from school
- School tours/trips
- Extra curricular activities

Creagh National School reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school, which spills over into the school.

Objectives

The policy aims to ensure that:

1. Students, staff, parents and guardians know about cyber bullying and its effects;
2. Members of the school community have the knowledge, policies and procedures to prevent and if necessary, to deal with cyber bullying in school or within the school community;
3. The school monitors the effectiveness of its procedures and amends them where necessary.

Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school

Creagh NS is committed, to the extent permissible by available resources, to helping members of the school community to enhance their learning experiences through the use of modern technology. The school acknowledges that ICT can play an important role in supporting learning, but also that they can be misuses and can present risks.

The school aims to equip members of the school community with the skills and knowledge needed to use these technologies in a safe and responsible manner and to assisting those that encounter difficulties. The school also recognises that it must be vigilant towards bullying perpetrated outside school which spills over into school.

Creagh NS aims at creating a caring environment where those in the school community can work and learn without fear of being bullied.

Creagh NS aims to educate and inform its students as to how to use communications equipment responsibly and about the serious consequences of cyber bullying and will, continue to inform and educate its pupils in these fast changing areas.

Goals

1. To create a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of cyber bullying behaviour.
2. To raise awareness of cyber bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour with school management, school staff, students, parents/guardians.
3. To ensure that the school's SPHE programme raises awareness of the factors associated with cyber bullying behaviour and develops appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviour.
4. To take practical actions to prevent incidents of cyber bullying behaviour e.g. to ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
5. To develop procedures for reporting and recording incidents of cyber bullying.
6. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of cyber bullying behaviour.
7. To develop a programme of support for those affected by cyber bullying behaviour and those involved in cyber bullying behaviour.
8. To work with, and through the various local agencies, in countering all forms of cyber bullying and anti-social behaviour.

Key Measures

- The Principal will act, or appoint staff member(s) to act as Cyber-Safety Officer, to oversee the practices and procedures outlined in this policy and monitor their effectiveness.
- The Cyber Safety Officer 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 will be developed, periodically reviewed and communicated to help students protect themselves from being involved in bullying (as perpetrator or victim) and to advise them on reporting any incidents.
- Students will be informed about cyber bullying in the course of their education in the school.
- Students and staff are expected to comply with the school's policy on the use of computers in the school.
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying.

Definition of Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is aggression conducted by an individual or groups against others-such aggressive behaviour being committed via electronic means or via exclusion from electronic communities or interactions.

Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, communication via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and or distress to one or more persons. Cyber bullying includes the use of mobile phones and the internet with the objective of upsetting someone. It may take the form of general insults or impersonation, defamation and/or prejudice based bullying.

Types of Behaviour

These guidelines provide assistance in identifying and describing the types of behaviour involved in cyber bullying. The means of cyber bullying are constantly changing and the following list of types of bullying behaviour can be expanded in light of the experience of the school community.

Hate Sites

- Building websites that are dedicated to making fun of someone or making defamatory comments about someone.
- Encouraging other people to join the bullying by publishing someone's personal details or linking to their social network page.

Abusive Messages

- Transmitting abusive and/ or threatening messages.

Chat Rooms and Discussion Forums

- Posting cruel and/or abusive comments about someone.

Mobile Phones

- Sending humiliating and abusive video messages or photographic image messages.
- Making silent or abusive phone calls.
- Sending abusive text messages.

Interactive Gaming

- Locking victims out of games.
- Spreading false rumours about someone.
- Hacking into someone's account.

Sending Viruses

- Sending hacking programmes to another person.
- Unauthorised interference with a computer device.

Abusing Personal Information

- Transmitting personal photographs, videos, emails.

Blogs

- Posting blogs where others could see them without the owner of the blog's permission.

Prevention and Response

The school informs students about cyber bullying and also takes available steps to counter and respond to it.

The following measures represent the core of the school's anti cyber bullying activities:

- A positive school culture and climate;
- School-wide approach;
- Effective leadership;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Anti Bullying Policy;
- Consistent recording of reported bullying behaviour;
- Education and training;
- Prevention strategies including awareness raising;
- Intervention strategies.

Creagh NS trains its staff to respond effectively to reports of cyber bullying or harassment and has systems in place to respond to it.

Creagh NS records all reported incidents of bullying behaviour including anonymous bullying reports.

Creagh NS provides information on cyber bullying to all members of the school community.

Creagh NS engages prevention and awareness raising measures and implements strategies to engage students in addressing problems when they see them.

Creagh NS is a "telling school". If a member of the school community "speaks out" and reports an incident of cyber bullying behaviour appropriate action will be taken.

Creagh NS endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites using firewall, anti virus protection and filtering systems and no pupil is allowed to work on the internet in the library/computer room or any other school location without a member of staff present.

While education and guidance remain at the centre of what we do, Creagh NS reserves the right to take action against those who take part in cyber bullying.

Creagh NS supports victims, and when necessary will work with the local Gardaí and other State agencies to identify those involved in criminal acts and to support victims.

Creagh NS will use, as appropriate, the full range of sanctions to correct, punish or remove pupils who bully fellow pupils or harass staff in this way, both inside and outside of the school.

All members of the school community are aware that they have a duty to bring to the attention of the Principal any example of cyber bullying or harassment they know or suspect.

This policy will be reviewed annually, along with the school's Anti Bullying Policy.

Ratified by the Board of Management on February 28th 2017.

