kent youth county council
KYCC

Model Cyberbullying Policy

October 2013

Why do we need a cyberbullying policy?

Cyberbullying is increasingly affecting the lives of young people. The NSPCC report that 38% of young people have been affected by cyber bullying (www.nspcc.org.uk 2012)

Kent Youth County Council believes it is necessary that cyberbullying is dealt with in schools and youth organisations because it affects many aspects of a young person/students school life such as friendships, grades and attendance.

Although cyberbullying often happens more frequently outside of school, we feel that schools need to step up to deal with cyberbullying. We have designed this policy to identify minimum standards of how schools should support both the victim and bully, and how to identify, support, tackle and prevent cyberbullying.

This policy should be used in conjunction with current Anti-Bullying Policies and strategies that you have in place.

KYCC Model Cyberbullying Policy

Definition

Cyberbullying is the process of using the internet, social media or mobile phones to intentionally intimidate, harass, offend or cause distress to someone.

Cyberbullying may include:

- sending abusive messages or emails
- name calling online
- spreading rumours online
- teasing online
- targeting a person because of who they are or who they are perceived to be online
- using social media to blackmail someone
- impersonating someone else online

Identifying Victims of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying will affect different people in different ways so there are no set of signs to look for. Below is a list of just some of the things that we as an organisation will look for, as indicators that bullying is occurring, however, any change in behaviour will be taken seriously and monitored closely:

- Someone becoming withdrawn or unsociable
- An unwillingness to be left alone with a certain person or group of people
- A sudden drop in quality of work and grades
- A decrease in attendance or truanting particular classes
- Signs of emotional distress during or after using the internet or the phone
- Being very protective or secretive of their online activity
- Spending long hours online

Cyberbullying may not just affect students. Adults (staff and parents/carers) can also be victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying.

Supporting Victims of Cyberbullying

All members of the school community (staff, students and parents/carers) will be made aware of how to report and respond to cyberbullying or e-Safety concerns. There will be a lead member of the school leadership team identified to support members of the community with e-Safety and cyberbullying.

We will identify, train and support e-Safety peer mentors for students to be able to approach and talk to or seek advice in private around cyberbullying.

1. We commit to providing an anonymous (email/box) where individuals can seek support around cyberbullying and the issues that they are facing
   - Box – whilst in (tutor/mentoring/form/other) everyone will be given a piece of paper to write down a comment surrounding e-Safety/cyberbullying. If any students have any concerns around being bullied they can write down details and the teacher will address as an anonymous all round comment
   - E-Safety mentors will have a school provided joint email account to which students can email any of their concerns to, and a mentor will email back advice or if they would like to meet and discuss the issue they are facing etc.

2. Lunch Clubs - e-Safety mentors should be flexible in giving up at least one lunch time per week. They will be given a space to run a Lunch Club where students can come up and "escape" normal lunch times, and talk to a mentor if they wish to do so. Mentors will be trained in all aspects of bullying particularly e- Safety to be able to offer support and advice to students and pass information on to staff that are specially trained in e-Safety and supporting victims of bullying if necessary. Key members of staff will support the e-Safety mentors with regards to any issues relating to confidentially and safeguarding.

Tackling & Dealing with Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying will not be tolerated at our school. We commit to tackling both sides of the situation, not just supporting the victim but understanding why the bully has done what they have done and provide necessary support. Action will be taken in line with the schools current Anti-bullying Policy, e-Safety Policy, Searching and Confiscation Policies and any behaviour and discipline policies.

All incidents of cyberbullying reported to the school will be recorded and there are clear procedures in place for staff and students to access support. There is a clear procedure for managing and investigating any concerns bought to the schools attention.

If there is a concern that online content or behaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to the safety of a member of the school community, then the police will be informed and the relevant local safeguarding and protection procedures will be followed.

Preventing Cyberbullying

We will ensure that all members of staff understand what e-Safety and Cyberbullying means and the different methods in which it can take place. We commit to equipping all of our staff with up to date and relevant e-Safety awareness and understanding, including information regarding current trends e.g. what social networking sites young people use regularly, how they work and safe usage.

The school has clear Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) which clearly state the expected behaviour regarding safe and responsible use of ICT that students and staff must follow, which are agreed and signed by all staff, students and parents. We will encourage all staff and students to be aware of their responsibilities in their use of ICT and have clear sanctions in place for any mis-use.

We will ensure that the school educates all students about e-Safety and cyberbullying across the curriculum (not just in one off assemblies or ICT lessons) so that students how to keep themselves safe online, how to use new technologies responsibly and how to respond to any concerns We commit to young people/students receiving appropriate training on e-Safety at least one day per term incorporated into PSHE or similar classes, with up to date, key information with relevance to cyberbullying. This will be compulsory for all students.

We will engage with parents/carers about how they can help protect their children online to ensure that there is a shared approach to responding to any e-Safety or cyberbullying concerns..

We commit to identifying at least 10 students and 2 members of staff as a minimum from the school who will attend training regarding e-Safety and bullying, in order to become e-Safety/Anti-Bullying mentors. Staff members will help initiate ways to support and deal with cyberbullying. This training will be renewed once a year.

- Trained e-Safety mentors will have to sign a contract *(Available on www.kent.gov.uk/kycc)* to commit to their role and this will explain other details (no age limit, etc.)
- Staff must be willing to help if they are going forward for training, offering up their time to talk to victims of cyberbullying and bullies to help solve a situation and prevent any further incidents.
- Termly (at least) Support must be provided to e-Safety mentors to ensure they are carrying out their roles correctly and to phase them out of the scheme if not.

We commit to take part in Anti-Bullying week, or at least one day during the week which will be based around cyberbullying, the effects of it, how it can be prevented further and any other details.

We also commit to taking part in Safer Internet Day to focus on positive use of technology and raise awareness about safe online behaviour with all member so the school community.

Further information

There are many charities and organisations offering Anti-Bullying and e-Safety training and support including:

- Princess Diana Awards
- Safeguarding (staff in particular; training is of a higher standard)
- Child Line
- Beat Bullying
- Human Utopia
- Think U Know
- Childnet International
- UK Safer Internet Centre
- Kent County Council and Kent Safeguarding Children Board