



William Brookes Academy Trust

Cyber-Bullying Policy

Updated October 2017

This policy reflects current legislation, accepted best practice and complies with the government guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2015 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016



***Cyber Bullying Policy
William Brookes Academy Trust
(October 2017)***

This policy is due for review in twelve months

Introduction

At William Brookes Academy Trust, the governors and staff fully recognise the contribution the school makes to safeguarding children. We recognise that the safety and protection of all students is of paramount importance and that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting students from harm.

We believe that the school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes all students' social, physical, emotional and moral development. All students and young people at William Brookes School are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment. This means they should be free from all forms of bullying behaviour.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines a number of legal obligations regarding the school's responses to bullying. Under s.89, our school must have measures in place encourage good behaviour and **prevent all forms of bullying** amongst students. These measures are part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all students, school staff and parents.

All staff, parents/carers and students will work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at our school. There will be a zero tolerance policy in place at William Brookes Academy Trust.

At William Brookes Academy Trust communication technology plays an increasingly large and important part in the school curriculum. We understand that in the wider community, students can and do access all types of material online and use technology for social networking. It is therefore important to acknowledge that sometimes, these technologies are used for unpleasant purposes. We accept that there are unfortunate misuses of this technology and we aim to address any breaches of this nature.

At William Brookes Academy Trust we recognise the existence of cyber bullying and the severity of the issue.

We are committed to:

- Educating students, staff and parents about cyber bullying and its consequences.
- Providing a productive and safe learning environment
- Providing a robust policy to prevent, and if necessary deal with cyber bullying, should it arise in school or within the William Brookes Academy Trust community
- Developing and improving the policies and procedures around cyber bullying through regular evaluation and review
- Providing a strong anti-bullying policy and acting upon it where bullying arises

1. Context

- 1.1 Bullying is based on unequal power relations, real or perceived. It will usually be repeated and be difficult to defend against. It is intended to hurt the recipient emotionally and/or physically. It can manifest verbally, in writing or images, and can be done physically, financially (including damage to property) or through social isolation. Verbal bullying is the most common form especially within schools.
- 1.2 Cyber bullying is the use of ICT, commonly a mobile phone or the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.
- 1.3 It can be used to carry out all the different types of bullying; an extension of face-to-face bullying.
- 1.4 It can include threats and intimidation, harassment, defamation, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation and unauthorised publication of private information or images. It can include messages intended as jokes, but which have a harmful or upsetting effect.
- 1.5 Cyber bullying may take place inside school or within the wider community, at home or travelling.
- 1.6 It can draw bystanders into being accessories. It includes:
 - threats and intimidation
 - harassment or 'Cyber stalking'
 - vilification/defamation
 - exclusion or peer rejection
 - impersonation
 - unauthorised publication of private information or images and manipulation
- 1.7 Cyber bullying may be carried out in many ways, including:
 - Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
 - Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips via mobile phone cameras
 - Silent or abusive phone calls or using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
 - Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
 - Intimidating or hurtful responses to someone in a chat-room; Unpleasant messages sent during instant messaging
 - Unpleasant or untrue information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook)

2. Legal Issues

- 2.1 Cyber-bullying is generally criminal in character.
- 2.2 It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites.
- 2.3 The legislation that deals with cyber bullying is section 127 of the Communications Act 2003, which makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.
- 2.4 In addition, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- 2.5 At William Brookes Academy Trust, cyber bullying is considered as serious as any other form of bullying. Cyber bullying issues are dealt with in an appropriate manner dependent on the severity and frequency of the issue and the age of the student.

3. Responsibilities for the prevention of cyber bullying

- 3.1 The Headteacher will be in overall charge of the practices and procedures outlined in this policy and will ensure that their effectiveness is monitored.
- 3.2 The Leadership Team will ensure that the school maintains details of agencies and resources that may assist in preventing and addressing cyber bullying.
- 3.3 All members of staff will be trained to identify signs of cyber bullying and will be helped to keep informed about the technologies that children commonly used by self-study and regular updates.
- 3.4 Students will be informed about cyber bullying through curricular and pastoral activities.
- 3.5 Students and staff are expected to comply with the school's ICT Acceptable Use Policy.
- 3.6 Parents/Carers will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying if requested.
- 3.7 It is made clear in staff meetings and the Staff Handbook that members of staff should not have contact with current students on social networking sites (specifically they should not be-friend students on Facebook). In addition it is advisable not to have past students as friends. (See Social Media Policy).
- 3.8 The delivery of PSHE is important and will discuss keeping personal information safe and appropriate use of the internet.
- 3.9 In addition, students will be educated about e-Safety through projects in other subjects.

- 3.10 Outside the curriculum, students will receive regular pastoral sessions about e-Safety and cyber bullying through assemblies, conferences and anti-bullying week.
- 3.11 Students will have a voice through the William Brookes School Student Council to ensure they are fully engaged and involved in evaluating and improving policy and procedures.
- 3.12 Students from Y7 will sign an Acceptable Use Policy before they are allowed to use school computer equipment and the internet in school.
- 3.13 Parents will be provided with information and advice on e-Safety and Cyber bullying via literature, talks, if such an occasion warrants it.

4. Required actions if cyber bullying occurs

- Advise the child not to respond to the message
- Refer to relevant policies including e-Safety, acceptable use, anti-bullying and apply appropriate sanctions
- Advise the student not to delete the message/image
- Secure and preserve any evidence
- Inform Student Support Team or Tutor
- Notify parents of the children involved
- Consider delivering a parent workshop for the school community
- Consider informing the police depending on the severity or repetitious nature of offence
- Inform the Safeguarding Officer

5. Required actions if malicious posts or threats are made against students or teachers

- Inform site and request the comments be removed if the site is administered externally
- Secure and preserve any evidence including URLs, Screenshots and Printouts
- Inform Head of Student Support
- Inform parents
- Send all the evidence to CEOP when requested
- Inform the Safeguarding Officer

6. Reporting

At William Brookes Academy Trust issues of cyber bullying should be reported along the same chain as our anti-bullying policy.

7. Responding to cyber bullying:

Cyber bullying will generally be dealt with through the schools anti-bullying policy. A cyber bullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response.

Key differences might be:

- Impact: possibly extensive scale and scope
- Location: the anytime and anywhere nature of cyber bullying
- Anonymity: the person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is
- Motivation: the perpetrator might not realise that his/her actions are bullying
- Evidence: the subject of the bullying will have evidence of what happened

8. Support for the person being bullied

The feelings of the victim are paramount and as with any form of bullying, support for the individual will depend on the circumstances. For example:

- Emotional support and reassurance that it was right to report the incident and advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Emotional support and reassurance that they haven't done anything wrong.
- Advice on other aspects of the code to prevent re-occurrence
- Advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked from the individual's sites or services
- Actions, where possible and appropriate, to have offending material removed
- Advice to consider changing email addresses and/or mobile phone numbers
- Discuss contacting the police in cases of suspected illegal content

9. Investigation and Legal Powers

The nature of any investigation will depend on the circumstances. It may include, for example:

- Review of evidence and advice to preserve it, for example, by saving or printing (e.g. phone messages, texts, emails, website pages)
- Efforts to identify the perpetrator, which may include looking at the media, systems and sites used, however members of staff do not have the authority to search the contents of a phone
- Identifying and questioning witnesses
- Contact with the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) if images might be illegal or raise child protection issues
- Requesting a student to reveal a message or other phone content or confiscating a phone
- William Brookes Academy Trust has a duty to protect all its members and provide a safe, healthy environment
- William Brookes Academy Trust staff may request a student to reveal a message or other phone content and may confiscate a phone

10. Working with the perpetrator

Work with the perpetrator and any sanctions will be determined on an individual basis, in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy, with the intention of:

- Helping the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop
- Holding the perpetrator to account, so they recognise the harm caused and do not repeat the behaviour
- Helping bullies to recognise the consequences of their actions and facilitating change in their attitude and behaviour
- Demonstrating that cyber bullying, as any other form of bullying, is unacceptable and that the school has effective ways of dealing with it

11. Cyber bullying Education

As part of our on-going commitment to the prevention of cyber bullying, regular education and discussion about e-Safety will take place as part of ICT and PSHE.