

Patrician Primary School

Anti-Cyberbullying Policy



Policy Statement

Patrician Primary School aims to ensure that children are safe and feel safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination in all settings. This school is committed to teaching children the knowledge and skills to be able to use ICT effectively, safely and responsibly.

Rationale

This policy is closely related to the Patrician Primary Anti-Bullying Policy. It focuses on cyber-safety in relation to bullying.

This policy aims to fulfil the following criteria:

- Clarify the role of the school in cyber-bullying situations
- Identify strategies for parents / guardians and their children in the event of cyber-bullying
- Create better awareness for children, parents/guardians and staff of various dangers involved in online activities

Scope

This policy may be used as a reference for the following groups:

- Pupils
- Parents / guardians
- School staff

Defining Cyber-Bullying:

- Cyber bullying is the use of ICT (usually a mobile phone, tablet and or any device capable of accessing the internet) to be abusive towards another person either directly or indirectly
- Cyber-bullying can take place anywhere and involve many people
- Anybody can be targeted, including pupils and school staff
- It can include the following actions: (This list is not exhaustive)
 - Threats
 - Intimidation
 - Harassment
 - Name-calling
 - Use of foul language towards others
 - cyber-stalking
 - Defamation
 - Exclusion
 - Peer rejection
 - Impersonation
 - Unauthorized publication of private information or images etc.
 - Catfishing

Bullying or Once-Off Inappropriate Behaviour?

- The *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013* state that bullying is:
 - Repeated hurtful actions aimed towards individuals or groups
- A hurtful action that is not repeated is deemed to be an inappropriate behaviour but not bullying. These definitions can sometimes get confused in a school setting
- The school may need to examine if alleged actions are deemed inappropriate behaviour or bullying. Neither action is acceptable, but may need to be treated differently, depending on the situation.
- However, due to the nature of the online world, the definition of cyber bullying is slightly different. Any hurtful message, comment or post that is shared on a social networking site/messaging service/gaming platform, can be seen by multiple people, downloaded multiple times or shared with multiple other people. The messages, comments or posts may also be deleted from an individual's device or even from the social networking site itself. In many cases, this does not necessarily mean that the messages have been deleted from other devices or social networking servers. Because of this fact, any single hurtful message, comment or post placed on a social networking site is deemed to be cyberbullying

Examples of Cyberbullying Platforms

Hurtful messages, comments or posts placed on the following forums may be deemed cyberbullying: (This list is not exhaustive)

- Whatsapp groups of at least three people or similar messaging services
- Tiktok, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram comment streams that are visible to followers, the public, friendship groups etc.
- Youtube channels
- Console gaming chatboxes or microphone conversations (including Xbox, Playstation, Nintendo Wii etc.)
- Online gaming chatboxes or microphone conversations (including 'Roblox', 'Crazy Birds' etc.)
- Online chatrooms (including 'Discord', 'House-Party', 'Bunch Group Chat', 'Just Talk Kids' etc.)

Note:

A once-off hurtful comment or conversation in a private online or texting conversation between two individuals is deemed inappropriate behaviour, as it is not public to others. However, repeated hurtful comments or conversations in a private online or texting conversation is deemed cyberbullying.

Overview of Responsibility

After careful research from a range of expert sources*, the following roles and responsibilities in cyberbullying are defined as below:

Responsibilities of Home

- Children's online activities outside of school hours are the responsibility of parents/guardians.

Responsibilities of School

- It is the responsibility of the school to deal with situations of inappropriate behaviour or bullying during school that have resulted from cyberbullying
- It is the responsibility of the school to assist parents/guardians who are investigating a potential cyberbullying situation.
 - The school *can* give advice to parents/guardians on how to deal with a cyberbullying situation
 - The school *can* contact parents/guardians to inform them that an accusation of cyberbullying has occurred and to support them in what to do next
 - The school *can* ask for clarification and take notes from children who have made an accusation of cyberbullying, or who have been accused of cyberbullying. These notes may be used to assist parents/guardians in their own investigations
 - The school *cannot* give out contact details of other families to parents/guardians who are investigating a potential cyberbullying situation
 - The school *cannot* decide on consequences for cyberbullying situations that took place outside of school

- It is the responsibility of the school to educate children about:
 - The definition of cyberbullying
 - The inappropriate nature of cyberbullying
 - What to do to prevent it from happening
 - What to do if it has happened to a child

- It is the responsibility of the school to share educational resources for parents/guardians via this policy, school newsletters, the school website or via parent information evenings (see below for more details)

- It is also the responsibility of the school to deal with examples of cyberbullying that occur during school. Examples include:
 - Cyberbullying that takes place on school devices (such as school laptops)
 - Cyberbullying that takes place during school on children's personal devices (The Patrician Primary Smart Device Policy deals with children's personal devices in more detail)

*sources include National Parents Council, CPSMA and Oide Teacher Training Services

Tips for Parents/Guardians on How to Prevent Cyberbullying

Building trust through open, honest and regular discussions:

- When children are being bought or given access to devices at home, good practice is to have an open discussion with them about expectations surrounding usage. This might include both parental expectations and child expectations on the following:
 - Amount of time the device can be used
 - Times of the day the device can be used
 - What happens when the device is misused
 - What sites the child is allowed to use
 - What possible child-lock apps might be installed to prevent the child from accessing inappropriate material (any why)
 - What the child should do if they see something inappropriate
 - What rights and responsibilities the parent/guardian has in supervision of the device

- Good practice also includes encouraging open discussions between the child and parent/guardian on what they saw/played on the device. These discussions will have the best results when they are done consistently and in a positive environment rather than an investigative one.

- Gaming Examples:
 - "Tell me about what you played today."
 - "What's the game about?"
 - "What level are you on?"
 - "What's the best bit of that game?"
- Internet / Social Media Examples:
 - "Tell me about what sites you saw today"
 - "What's good about that site?"
 - "Can I see which profile picture you chose? That's a lovely one!"
 - "Do your friends use that website too?"
 - "Can you talk to other people on it?"
- When these types of open and honest conversations take place regularly, it makes difficult conversations about potentially inappropriate situations easier to talk about and will encourage a sense of trust
- One school cyberbullying trainer remarked "You would always want to know who your child was visiting or what they were doing when they go out the door. Where they go and what they do online should be the same thing"

Creating a shared online agreement contract with your child

- See appendix of this policy for an example given by the National Parents Council
- Best practice for developing a contract like this is to do it with the child and perhaps create compromises between parent/guardian expectations and child expectations
- Best practice is also to review and perhaps update the contract when needed as well as having it visible in the house

Educating your child on how to use their devices for preventing cyberbullying

- Many children do not know how to take screenshots on their phones, tablets etc. This is always a worthwhile skill to learn, particularly when some apps use disappearing messages to communicate.
- Note: The school does not investigate screenshots of evidence from parents/guardians.

Familiarising yourself with online resources and books that support parents/guardians with cyberbullying

Websites

www.webwise.ie

This website is an excellent resource for parents/guardians. It includes short videos, powerpoint presentations and tip sheets on how to prevent cyberbullying. It also includes explanations of all the different apps that our children use and how appropriate they might be for different age groups.

www.npc.ie

The National Parents Council of Ireland offers online training for parents/guardians as well as a range of other supports.

www.cybersafekids.ie

Training for both staff and parents / guardians has been provided by this company since the ratification of this policy.

www.bemediasmart.ie

Aimed at adults

Books for Parents / Guardians

'Parenting the Screenager'
by Richard Hogan

'Parenting in the Screen Age: A Guide for Calm Conversations'
by Delaney Ruston

'Digital Parenting: Safeguarding Your Child's Wellbeing in the Screen Age'
by Daryl Lim

'Get With It – A Guide to Cyberbullying' – free book for parents / guardians
from Barnardos

Books for Children

'Elle Gets a Mobile Phone'
by Nina du Thaler

'Lizzy's Triumph Over Cyberbullying'
by Nina du Thaler

'A Guide to Internet Safety for Children, Teens & Young Adults: An Ideal Gift
From Parents To Their Internet Savvy Child'
by Rajesh Laskary

School initiatives and programmes that can be used to prevent cyberbullying

- As part of our SPHE (Social Personal and Health Education) curriculum, the school will consistently reinforce basic safety rules and advice around cybersafety. Some of the following programmes may be used to deliver this:
 - Stay Safe Programme
 - Walk Tall Programme
 - Webwise Programme
 - HTML Heroes
 - Digitown
- From time to time, staff, parent / guardian and pupil training is provided by the school via different cybersafety companies
- From time to time, the school will promote a 'Digital Detox' week for staff, pupils and families as part of our wellbeing initiatives

Information for Pupils

Below is some of the advice that is taught to pupils in school about how to stay safe online:

If you are being bullied by phone or on the Internet:

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent/guardian/grandparent/sibling.
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible. Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.
- Don't give out your personal details online – if you are in a chat room, do not say where you live, the school you go to, your email address, phone number etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you to build up a picture about you.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent/guardian as evidence.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date that bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender.
- You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning-off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number.
- Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages.
- Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.
- Don't delete messages from cyber bullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.
- Think carefully before you post something online. The Gardaí and social media networks can access and can keep any picture or post you put online. Just because you have deleted it, doesn't mean it is gone.

Roles and Responsibilities

Modern online activities of young children are changing and broadening at a very fast pace. The following stakeholders have responsibility in the following areas in relation to this policy:

Board of Management

- Review this policy each year as part of the annual anti-bullying review or more often if necessary

Principal

- Keep the Board of Management updated in any changes within this area that are relevant
- Maintain records of cyberbullying cases that are deemed relevant to the school or are deemed the responsibility of the school under the *DES 2013 Anti-Bullying Procedures*
- Organise continuous professional development for the various stakeholders (BoM, parents / guardians, staff, pupils) when necessary

Teachers

- Become familiar with the contents of this policy
- Continually develop their own awareness of the risks associated with child-related online activity
- Liaise with the principal in dealing with any potential cyberbullying cases that may be deemed relevant to the school or are deemed the responsibility of the school under the *DES 2013 Anti-Bullying Procedures*

Parents / Guardians

- Become familiar with the contents of this policy
- Be aware of the role of the school and their own responsibilities regarding cyber safety
- Engage in cyber safety information talks when organised by the school

Related Documents

- Patrician Primary Anti-Bullying Policy
- Patrician Primary Code of Behaviour
- Patrician Primary Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Patrician Primary Smart Device Policy

Contact

Any queries regarding this policy should be directed to info@patricianprimary.ie or by phoning 045 432 174

Communication, Ratification and Review


This policy was originally ratified and adopted by the Board of Management of Patrician Primary School in November 2023 after consultation with staff and Parent Association representatives.

It will be reviewed annually as part of the anti-bullying procedures or when necessary.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents Association.

Signed: Brian Mulvey

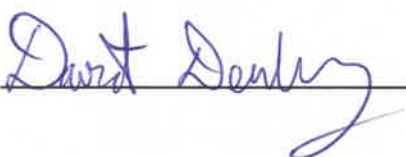
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)



Date: 23/10/24

Signed: David Dempsey

(Principal)



Date: 21/10/24

Appendix

Guide for developing an Online Agreement for using Devices

This guide is intended to guide parents/guardians on how a discussion about device usage might inform you on drawing up a family agreement about internet safety

The following sections will provide areas that need to be included in the agreement. Each family's agreement will look different, especially when we take into account our individual situations, our values, beliefs, children's maturity and needs.

Time Spent Online – what constitutes screen time?

Try to keep the conversation positive – what do they enjoy online? What do they like about it? How do they find videos or profiles they like?

Use the following tables to explore and define what they currently do, this will form part of the agreement later.

<i>Type of Screen Time</i>	<i>How often and for how long do they typically do this for?</i>
School work or projects	Click or tap here to enter text.
Information, news,	Click or tap here to enter text.
Learning new skills, art & creativity	Click or tap here to enter text.
Socialising e.g. social media and messaging, video calls	Click or tap here to enter text.
Passive activity, e.g. watching videos, YouTube clips etc.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Interactive activity – Developing and creative activities, playing games, alone or with others	Click or tap here to enter text.

Sharing Online

What information is OK to share?	Click or tap here to enter text.
What information is NOT OK to share?	Click or tap here to enter text.
How do we keep information safe?	Click or tap here to enter text.
What do we know about password use and security?	Click or tap here to enter text.
Do we know how to use privacy and safety settings?	Click or tap here to enter text.

Parents can learn how to set up parental controls at the below link:

<https://www.webwise.ie/parents/parental-controls-2/>

Online Content

When is it OK to download games or apps – or click on a link?	Click or tap here to enter text.
Do we know what the age requirements mean on the apps and games we use?	Click or tap here to enter text.
Do we need restrictions for making 'in-game' 'in-app' purchases?	Click or tap here to enter text.
How do we know if the information we see is correct?	Click or tap here to enter text.
What can we do if we see something that doesn't seem accurate or correct?	Click or tap here to enter text.



**Supporting Parents
Supporting Children**

Communicating Online

Who can we chat to or play with online?	Click or tap here to enter text.
How do we treat people online?	Click or tap here to enter text.
What can we do if we see someone being treated badly online?	Click or tap here to enter text.

Getting Help

What can we do if we are bothered by something we see online?	Click or tap here to enter text.
Do we know where the block and report buttons are on the apps, websites and games we use?	Click or tap here to enter text.

Online Agreement

Who is this agreement for?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Screen time – We agree to:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Sharing content – We agree to:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Online content – we agree to:

Click or tap here to enter text.


Communicating – We agree to:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Getting Help – we agree to:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Version Control

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