Cyberbullying in Schools
Guidance & Resources for Management

May 2013

What is cyber bullying?

- **Bullying** is sustained or repeated, intentional, negative behaviour (verbal, psychological or physical) by an individual or group against others. Bullying is always wrong and is unacceptable behaviour which should never be overlooked or ignored. It may include
  - ✓ deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
  - ✓ cyberbullying, and
  - ✓ Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's religion or membership of the Traveller Community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

- A fight or argument between two people of equal power is not usually seen as bullying. Though bullying may well begin when friends fall out, we usually only judge it to be bullying when one person or a group deliberately singles out others as a target and sets out to repeatedly humiliate or threaten them.

- **Cyberbullying** refers to bullying which is carried out using the internet, mobile phone or other technological devices. While not always appreciated, PlayStations, Xboxes and other such devices can also be used to bully (using text and voice messages) where games are being played across the Internet against remote opponents. Similarly, messages can, in certain circumstances, be sent between iPod users.

- **Cyberbullying** generally takes a psychological rather than physical form but it can also be part of a wider pattern of 'traditional' bullying.

- Cyberbullying can take the form of sending nasty, mean or threatening messages, emails, photos or video clips; silent phone calls; putting up nasty posts or pictures on a message board, website or chat room; saying hurtful things in a chat room; pretending to be someone else in a chat room or message board or text message and saying hurtful things; or accessing someone's accounts to make trouble for them.

- Cyberbullying most commonly occurs through social networking sites, for example Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, Google+, Flickr, text/picture/instant messaging, chat rooms, gaming sites and email. However, the range of web-based tools that can be used **to cyberbully** is constantly changing. Most recently, the focus has been on Ask.fm in relation to a number of high profile alleged cases of bullying. An explanation of how different communications technologies can be used to cyberbully may be accessed here.

- While once-off negative behaviour is not usually deemed to be bullying, the once-off posting of nasty comments on someone's profile, or the uploading on to the Internet of photographs intended to embarrass someone, or the 'liking' of such postings **may well be seen as amounting to bullying** because anyone posting such material has to be aware that it is going to be viewed and/or repeated by many others. Here, a single posting will inevitably result in the target being humiliated many times; thus it is reasonable to treat such behaviour as bullying.

- Though once-off negative behaviour may not amount to bullying, it nevertheless constitutes unacceptable behaviour and should not be tolerated by a school. The school should deal with such incidents in accordance with its Code of Behaviour.

- Making young people or adults panic about every unpleasant message they receive is inadvisable as it can undermine a young person's resilience. Some young people are resilient and cope well with one or two nasty messages while others are more easily upset. Where a young person is upset by unwelcome messages/posts, s/he needs support. The support provided will need to be proportionate to the level of the young person's upset.

- In addressing cyberbullying in a school, pressure should not be put on young people to admit to being a victim of bullying. Rather, every effort should be made to 'empower them to take steps to keep safe and to manage the situation as if it were simply a problem to be solved – a problem that does not involve a loss of face for them'[1].

- Bullying of any kind usually involves an imbalance of power so that the victim/s cannot defend themselves. It is inevitably something that is **unwelcome though the target/s may not feel able to make that obvious** either to those bullying them or to those who may be able to assist them.

- There is a clear intention to hurt, humiliate or embarrass.

- New and ever-changing electronic tools make it very easy to harass a target anonymously 24/7 – so the target is not safe anywhere.

- **To protect young people from cyberbullying**, parents/guardians and teachers need to be constantly updated about the ever-changing online world of children and young people and about the resources available to address cyberbullying.

- While research evidence about the extent of cyberbullying is limited, it may be assumed, on the basis of the surveys that have been conducted, that a large number of young people experience abusive or aggressive messages via their mobile phone or the internet. One UK survey found that 49% of respondents had received at least one such message. More worryingly, a sizeable proportion of young people are negatively affected by cyberbullying while a significant number of young people have their adolescence blighted by the experience of cyberbullying – sometimes with tragic results.[2]

- **Some instances of cyberbullying can be unintentional**. They can be the result of not thinking (something sent as a joke may be deeply upsetting or offensive to the recipient) or a lack of awareness of the consequences. For example, saying

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[1]Katz, A. (2012), p 54
[2]Katz, A. (2012)

something negative online about another student or friend that the sender does not anticipate will be forwarded or viewed outside of the immediate group.

This definition is adapted from 'A Guide to Cyberbullying' published by the Office for Internet Safety.

Who engages in cyberbullying? Who is the target of cyberbullying?

- While males and females cyberbully, Irish and International research suggests that females are more likely to cyberbully and to be the targets of cyberbullying.

- Girls tend to be more willing than boys to admit to being cyberbullied thus the extent to which boys are bullied may be understated. This may, to some extent, be interpreted as a macho response to avoid admitting to being a victim, weak or disliked.

- Cyberbullying can happen to anyone. Just look at all the YouTube comment pages or gossip sites and forums that are full of people putting other people down.

- A 2011 NUI Maynooth study of 12 to 18 year olds found that **17% of teens have experienced cyberbullying while one in 10 has carried out bullying**. Indeed, it is believed that these figures, for a variety of reasons, significantly understate the extent of cyberbullying. Boys, In particular, are disinclined to admit to being bullied in any way. Also, young people can be reluctant to report cyberbullying lest their parents restrict their access to social media. The NUIM research also reported the following
  - ✓ One in 5 admitted to having experienced more 'traditional' bullying in the six months prior to the study.
  - ✓ In the case of girls, the bullying was usually done by a single female or small group of females.
  - ✓ Victims of bullying are usually bullied by students who are in the same year but in a different class.
  - ✓ It can be difficult for victims to know who is bullying them due to the anonymity of the internet.
  - ✓ Teenage victims of cyberbullying find it worse than traditional bullying because there is no escape from it.
  - ✓ Due to social media, it's also easier for others to witness the bullying but still do nothing about it.

- Those who are badly bullied are more likely than those who are mildly bullied to say that 'the bullying got worse or stayed the same if they did tell someone' and so they often do not report it.[3]

- The internet and mobile phones have provided 'new tools for bullies to pursue cyberhomophobia.   Perpetrators can conceal their identity to pursue a victim into every corner of their life, 24 hours a day, and amplify the bullying in view of an audience'[4].

- While students are most commonly the victims of cyberbullying, members of staff can also be targeted.

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[3]Katz, A. (2012) p 76
[4]Katz, A. (2012) p 82

How can schools respond effectively to cyberbullying?

1   Adopt a whole school approach

The best way to address cyberbullying is to prevent it happening in the first place and, where it does occur, to detect it as early as possible and to provide the target/s with timely and appropriate support and the perpetrators, where identified, with a response that ensures they do not continue to bully. In this regard, while it may be necessary to take disciplinary action against perpetrators, the focus should, wherever feasible, be on rebuilding constructive relationships rather than on sundering relationships.

All available evidence suggests that these goals are most effectively achieved where there is a whole school approach to dealing with bullying and cyberbullying and where there is a real commitment 'on the part of management, staff, students, parents and indeed the wider society to work together'[5] to agree and implement policies and practices to address bullying and cyberbullying.

It is also important to ensure that all school policies and practices that impinge on bullying and cyberbullying are aligned and coherent and that all members of the school community are fully informed on and supportive of the agreed policies and practices.

The whole school community needs to know that the school has clear policies and practices in place to prevent cyberbullying and, where it occurs, to deal with it effectively.

The following policies and practices are central to ensuring that bullying/cyberbullying is addressed effectively in a school.

 i.   The school's **Code of Behaviour** should specifically make reference to bullying and cyberbullying and the consequences for those who engage in it or in any way support it. It should make it very clear that those who further disseminate (even 'like' on Facebook) any material used for the purposes of cyberbullying are also in breach of the Code and that those who come across such material have a responsibility to bring it to the attention of the school staff – so that the offending material may be removed and the target appropriately supported.

Both in their policies and their practices, schools should make every effort to establish a school culture that encourages and facilitates all members of the school community acting as 'unofficial monitors' of what is posted on the websites they visit – with all material they consider might be offensive to others being reported to the relevant internet service provider and school staff.

 ii.   The school's **Anti-bullying Policy** should specifically define cyberbullying.

For example: *cyberbullying refers to a situation where anyone is repeatedly tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another person using text messaging, email, instant messaging or any other type of digital technology.*

There is strong case for a school having a specific Anti-cyberbullying Policy as an addendum to its Anti-bullying policy and a template for such a policy is provided at Annexure C**.**

The Anti-bullying Policy should set out very clearly how the school deals with reports of bullying and cyberbullying and there should be a clear link with the school's Code of Behaviour – particularly in relation to the way alleged breaches

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[5]See Conclusions Chapter in: Guidelines for Preventing Cyber-bullying in the School Environment: a Review and Recommendations. (2012)

of the Code of Behaviour around bullying and cyberbullying are investigated and the disciplinary options that are available to the school where it concludes that a student has breached the Code of Behaviour.

While much bullying and cyberbullying commences in the school, students are also bullied while outside of the school environment but the consequences of this bullying manifests itself in the school – with the target being unhappy or underperforming academically.

A school's anti-bullying policy should explicitly state that bullying behaviour falls within the remit of the school authorities where the bullying is perpetrated by a member of the school community and it impinges on the work or happiness of a student in the school, even where the bullying acts are committed outside of the school, and that the school reserves the right to take disciplinary action against students who bully other members of the school community other than when at school.

Indeed, where it is brought to the attention of school management or staff that a student is being bullied, even where the perpetrator is not a member of the school community, there is an onus on the school to bring this to the attention of the student's parents/guardians at the earliest opportunity and to support the student in every reasonable way as s/he struggles to deal with the situation. This point might also be referred to in both the school's Code of Behaviour and in its pastoral care and related policies.

iii. The **school's Anti-bullying Policy, which should specifically address cyberbullying**, should form part of the school's **Code of Behaviour**. However, this does not mean that the anti-bullying policy needs to be inserted into the middle of the Code of Behaviour. Instead, it might be better to refer in the body of the Code of Behaviour to the fact that the Code proscribes bullying (including cyberbullying) and incorporate, with the use of a hyperlink, the anti-bullying as an Annexure to the Code of Behaviour.

iv. The school's **Internet Acceptable Use Policy** (AUP) should refer to cyberbullying and specify what are and what are not acceptable practices when using the school's IT network – either locally or remotely. A guide to developing an Internet Acceptable Use Policy for schools may be accessed here and a template policy may be downloaded here.

v. Given the potential for schools to use Social Media to facilitate teaching and learning, all schools should have a policy on **The Use of Social Media as a Teaching Tool** and this policy should also address the issue of cyberbullying and reference the school's Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

vi. Build the resilience of young people to deal effectively with bullying and indeed with the inevitable challenges of living in the 21st century. Here, again, there is the need to develop the capacity of the teaching staff to deliver modules that assist in this regard. Schools interested in building resilience and combating depression and anxiety in their students may be interested in the following distance learning delivered courses for some of their staff - Teaching Happiness and Teaching Hope and Optimism. These courses run by the Institute of Child Psychology Europe **(ICEP)** provide practical tools and proven evidence-based strategies to promote the wellbeing of both students and staff.

vii. It is absolutely vital that there is **consistency across all these policies regarding the way the school deals with cyberbullying.** This means that all members of

the school community must clearly understand how the school community (management, teachers, support staff, students and parents) handles such issues. This means that the policies must be provided to all members of the school community and must be accessible to them at all times. This is most easily achieved by prominently displaying the policies on the school website.

viii. A school-wide shared understanding of what does and does not constitute bullying is critical to a school addressing the issue of bullying effectively. In this regard, all members of the school community need to appreciate the differences between banter among students and interactions that can hurt or threaten. The development of this shared understanding will inevitably entail what constitutes bullying being discussed at whole staff sessions and subsequent open and on-going discussions with and between students about what is and is not bullying. Parents also need to be involved in these conversations.

2. Engagement with parents and guardians

Schools that have been successful in combating bullying invariably work collaboratively with parents and guardians. There are two implications here. Firstly, parents and guardians are involved (and feel involved) in the development of school policies and practices to combat bullying and cyberbullying. Secondly, these schools hold regular information evenings for parents in order to provide them with reliable advice on how they may contribute towards combating bullying. In this regard, it is important that parents realise that anyone can be a bully and anyone can be a target of bullying and that it is not just other people's sons and daughters that can bully. While schools make every effort to create a safe and harmonious environment where high quality learning and teaching can flourish, nonetheless bullying of all kinds is a possibility in all schools and we have no option but to address it as such in a constructive manner.

Given media coverage of bullying and cyberbullying in particular, it is important that all members of the school community recognise that disagreements between young people are part and parcel of negotiating the road to adulthood and that we should not automatically treat every youthful conflict as a full-blown bullying episode, even if it involves offensive communications, and its resolution may require adult intervention. Good judgement is critical here.

Meetings with parents should not be confined to parents receiving information; they should also provide parents with the opportunity to inform the school about their perspective on bullying in the school – though there should be no reference to individual students. Where a parent has specific information about particular bullying episodes, s/he should provide it directly to a staff member in the school, ideally the principal or deputy principal, in confidence.

Schools might also put information for parents regarding cyberbullying on their website and they could draw parents' attention to such material by putting a note in with end-of-term reports and other communication between school and home drawing their attention to the availability of such material.

There is some excellent information on cyberbullying available on the World-Wide-Web and parents, school staff and students could benefit from having ready access to this material. Some of this material might, as appropriate, be used to inform capacity building sessions, for members of the school community, in relation to bullying and

cyberbullying. **Remember, some links take you directly to websites while other links result in documents being downloaded. So you may have to go to 'downloads' to access them on your computer.**

- The [Cool School Programme](#) This was developed by the HSE Dublin North East's Child Psychiatry Service and provides an **excellent** evidence-based **overview of the problem**, as well **practical advice** about how to prevent and react to bullying between students in second-level schools.

- A **[Guide](#)** to **Cyberbullying** published by the Office for Internet Safety, this guide is clear, comprehensive and easy to understand.

- [Cyberbullying Policies and Procedures](#) A concise and easy to understand **guide to cyberbullying and the law in Ireland,** including advice about responding to incidents, documenting incidents and reporting on incidents.

- [Countering Bully/Victim Problems in Schools: Supporting the Guidance Counsellor](#) Published by the National Centre for Guidance in Education but also relevant to school management and teachers. Contains useful hyperlinks.

- http://www.internetsafety.ie/ The Office for Internet Safety has been established by the Irish Government to take a lead responsibility for internet safety in Ireland, particularly as it relates to children.

- http://www.webwise.ie - an excellent resource that **covers much of what schools, teachers and parents need to know** in order to deal effectively with cyberbullying. This site is managed by the NCTE.

- www.spunout.ie/cyberbullying (includes a video made for Safer Internet Day 2013) and www.spunout.ie/bullying. These include some **very useful resources**.

  SpunOut is an independent, youth-led national charity working to empower young people between the ages of 16 and 25 to provide an interactive online community for young people to consume health and lifestyle information and find out about health and advice services available to them in their area, online or over the phone.

- http://archive.beatbullying.org/

  BeatbBullying is a voluntary organisation based in the UK (currently used by a significant number of young Irish people; it hopes to establish an Irish office in the near future) that works with children and young people across the UK to stop bullying. Its **aim is to empower young people deeply affected by bullying and to help young people that bully to change their attitudes and behaviour. It does all of this, from 8.00am to 2.00am each day**, through on line mentoring via its professionally moderated and supported CyberMentors website, Those who monitor and support the e-mentoring process include qualified counsellors. BeatBullying also trains student mentors, helps schools build staff capacity around bullying and provides free information and advice to young people, teachers and parents.

- **Department of Education and Skills [Action Plan on Bullying](#) (January 2013)**

  This report of the Anti-Bullying Working Group to the Minister for Education and Skills provides a comprehensive understanding of what bullying entails and what needs to be done to combat it in the school context. It is required reading for those involved education and/or the care and support of young people –

members of boards of management, school leaders, teachers and parents.

- **Department of Education and Skills [Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools](#) (September 2013).** These need to be read in conjunction with the DES [Circular Letter 00452013](#).

- http://www.microsoft.com/security/default.aspx

  This Microsoft site provides **up-to-date advice and resources for using the internet securely and safely** – viruses, family security settings, privacy, cyberbullying and anything else that you might need to know about.

- http://www.fuzion.ie/index.cfm/page/cyberbullying

  Fusion Communications provides **an excellent poster (Tell, Unfriend, and Block)** to help young people enjoy social media properly and provide some assistance to deal with an inappropriate or bullying situation should it occur.

- http://www.facebook.com/help/325807937506242/ Provides easy to follow advice on **how to protect your privacy on Facebook**, thus avoiding cyberbullying on Facebook.

- https://www.facebook.com/help/?faq=247013378662696 Clear advice on **how to report abusive/inappropriate content on Facebook.**

- [Reporting inappropriate material on YouTube](#)

- https://support.twitter.com/groups/33-report-a-violation/topics/122-reporting-violations/articles/15789-how-to-report-violations%23# Advice on **what constitutes a violation on Twitter and how to report** such violations.

- http://ie.reachout.com/inform-yourself/bullying-and-personal-safety/cyber-bullying/

  This link provides **easy to understand information and advice** around **what cyberbullying involves, how to avoid it and how to deal with it.**

  ReachOut.com is an Irish service dedicated to taking the mystery out of mental health by providing quality-assured mental health information and inspiring real life stories by young people to help other young people get through tough times. ReachOut.com is run by the [Inspire Ireland Foundation](#) which is a not for profit, non-government registered charity.

- http://www.socialbrite.org/sharing-center/glossary/

  This provides a **glossary of the terms and phrases** used in the world of social media. The glossary is constantly being updated to keep pace with developments in the field.

- http://old.digizen.org/downloads/cyberbullyingOverview.pdf

  The information available via this link is a summary of the UK Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) **Guidance for schools on preventing and responding to cyberbullying.** This document seeks to give practical advice to young people, their parents and school staff about the issue of cyberbullying. While the information is a little dated, it, nevertheless, is easy to understand and provides a good overview of the topic.

- http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/opinion/2012/1102/1224326036363.html

  This link is to an Irish Times article **'Education the Solution to Cyberbullying Scourge'** by Dr Sharon McLaughlin**,** a lecturer in law at Letterkenny Institute of

Technology. Her PhD studies examined child protection in the online environment and she is a member of EU Kids Online network.

- http://www.hotline.ie/ Irish **hotline for reporting child pornography** and other illegal content on the Internet.

- www.watchyourspace.ie **Provides victims of online bullying with clear, succinct and practical advice and support to deal with cyberbullying**. The site is run by Webwise.ie, the Irish internet safety awareness-raising centre, which is part of the PDST Technology in Education based at Dublin City University.

- EU Kids Online Hugely informative on the way young people use modern communications technology. It contains a specific **report on how Irish young people use these technologies** and the risks and safety for young people in Ireland using the Internet.

- How 'Harmless Slagging' leads to cyberbullying. An interesting Irish Independent article that includes a short video clip.

- Common Sense Media

  This US site offers extensive and free curricular **resources to help educators empower their students to be safe, responsible, and savvy as they navigate the rapidly changing digital world**. It includes **video-rich lessons** (infants through to 6th year) capable of engaging the interests of students and resources that can be used to build the capacity of staff and parents to support young people around using the Internet wisely and safely.

- I was a school bully – very interesting article in the Journal.ie. The author claims to have experienced both sides of the issue; he bullied and he was bullied. It highlights the importance of pastoral rather than disciplinary approaches to dealing effectively with bullying.

- **Homophobic bullying** is a major cause of unhappiness among young people and this video clip produced by BeLonG To (an organisation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered young people, aged between 14 and 23) is an excellent resource in addressing this type of bullying. Each year BeLonG To organise a Stand Up Awareness Week aimed at creating a positive understanding of lesbian, gay and transgender young people and their issues. The 2012 Stand Up campaign was launched by Deputy John Lyons TD – on behalf of the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairi Quinn.

- The Cyberbullying Virus – a short video that **sensitively explores** the whole issue of **Cyberbullying.**

- The father of a young man, who died by suicide after being cyber bullied, tells his son's story and the pain he has to live with for the rest of his life.

A further resource that would be of assistance to schools and parents seeking to respond effectively cyberbullying is *Cyberbullying and E-Safety: What Educators and Other Professional Need to Know*. Adrienne Katz (2012) Published by Jessica Kingsley and available from Amazon.com

This book provides an up-to-date account of the constantly evolving problem of cyberbullying: the forms it can take, how the impact differs on boys and girls of different ages, and which children are most vulnerable. It provides a youth-led, age- and gender-appropriate model for cyber-education, outlines a school-wide model for

preventing and responding to cyberbullying, and provides a wealth of guidance and tools for individuals and schools including templates and lesson plans.

3.　　Engagement with students

Effectively combating bullying in schools inevitably means that the students must be involved in finding and implementing solutions. This engagement has a number of dimensions.

i.　**Survey the student body regularly to identify the extent of bullying and cyberbullying and, in so far as is possible, the students that are most affected.** A suitable survey questionnaire that you may, if you feel it necessary, adapt to suit the needs of your particular school may be accessed here. While there is a charge for this material, the work of Dr Dan Olweus around the whole matter of bullying is internationally recognised and the questionnaire includes items relating to cyberbullying.　The internationally acclaimed **Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme may be accessed** here. This is a hugely valuable resource for schools.

The Cool School Programme, developed within the HSE Dublin North East's Child Psychiatry Service, outlines a number of different approaches to investigating bullying both before and after an episode has been reported. In particular, the Bullying Sociogram, explained at pages 9 to 13 of the Cool School Programme document, would seem well suited (with minor modifications to include more current references to social media) to addressing bullying in the school context.

Every reasonable effort needs to be made, from the very first time a prospective student comes in contact with a school, to engender a culture of students caring for one another and, where they perceive a fellow student to be unhappy, reporting such perceived unhappiness to a member of staff. Schools might also consider identifying some senior students as mentors to first year or new students – as sometimes younger students may be more willing to disclose matters to other students than to adults.

ii.　**The school's SPHE and RSE programmes must specifically address the issue of bullying and cyberbullying with each year group each year.** School assemblies, pastoral care programmes or counselling programmes and Safer Internet Awareness days or weeks may supplement the work done in SPHE and RSE.

In terms of a curriculum to support the prevention of bullying, the curriculum materials developed by Dr Dan Olweus are particularly interesting and may be accessed here. In any case, all students would need to be well informed on the following matters.

✓　**What is cyberbullying** and why it is a totally unacceptable behaviour for anyone.

✓　**How to stay safe using the web**? For example, if the privacy settings on Facebook are correctly set, the chances of being bullied through your Facebook site are virtually reduced to zero. Unfortunately, many young and older users of Facebook do not know how to set them correctly. There is potential here for identifying a group of older students with the necessary expertise to help young people to set their privacy settings correctly. These 'cyber mentors' might also be able to advise and support younger students more generally about concerns they may have in relation to cyberbullying.

✓　**The need to report any concerns about cyberbullying to a member of staff**

or, maybe, where they are available, to student 'cyber mentors or mentors'. The point to be reinforced here is that it is the responsibility of every student to report any evidence that s/he may come across of bullying – even when s/he is not the target. Indeed, since many targets may fear reporting the fact that they are being bullied, oftentimes targets will not be able to escape its clutches unless someone else reports it for them. If cyberbullies know that their 'handiwork' is likely to be reported they might reconsider their actions.

In this context, schools might identify suitable older students who might act as 'cyber mentors' to younger students. These 'cyber mentors' might be identified in some way to the wider school population and, as well as providing general advice to younger students around the whole matter of cyberbullying, they might also visit classes and provide workshops on establishing appropriate privacy settings, netiquette, etc. Of course, these cyber mentors would need to be appropriately trained and supported.

✓ **How to go about reporting inappropriate material** on web to the relevant service providers – see below.

All young people, indeed young and old alike, need to know how to protect themselves online and how to respond if they, or their friends, feel threatened online. In this context, the following tips[6] may be helpful.

How to avoid trouble?
o Never give out your passwords – even to your best friend. Always keep your passwords and PIN numbers to yourself, and make a habit of logging out of your email/Facebook page if you're using computer or using these on your mobile phone.
o Pick your friends carefully – remember whatever you post online can be seen by everyone who's got access to your page or the discussion board. If it's Facebook, only make friends with people you're ok sharing information with. Remember, friendships may not be permanent.
o Use Netiquette – be polite to other people online. Think about what you're saying and whether it might be hurtful or might embarrass them in public, even if it's funny.
o Don't send a message to someone else when you're angry – wait until you've calmed down and had time to think. Once you've sent it, you can't take it back.

How to deal with comments or other material that you find upsetting
o Don't reply – even though you might really want to, don't rise to the bait and reply to messages from someone who's bullying you. They want to know that they've got you worried and upset. Chances are if you never reply they'll get bored and leave you alone.
o Go offline – if you feel like it's invading every bit of your life, remember you can turn off your computer and your phone anytime. Ditch virtual reality for some actual reality for a while.
o Inform your Phone Company or Internet Service Provider (ISP) – they can block texts, calls or online messages from specific people.

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[6] These tips are slight adaptations of what is provided at http://ie.reachout.com/inform-yourself/bullying-and-personal-safety/cyber-bullying/

- Change your contact details – get a new user name, a new email address, a new mobile number and only give them to your closest friends. This doesn't mean you're giving in; you're just getting on with your own life.
- Tell someone – if it's bothering you, don't keep it to yourself. Talk to someone about it. If you're worried your parents will freak out, you could talk to a friend, or a teacher you trust. Check face-to-face help for more.
- Inform the Gardaí – if the messages are ever threatening or it's getting really serious. It's against the law to threaten people, and the Gardaí can put a stop to it. They're there to keep you safe, and they generally want to know about stuff like this. Remember also that the **Gardaí can trace those who harass others** either face-to-face or **using communications technology** – though they may go to considerable lengths to hide their identity.
- Keep a record (screen grabs/shots, save text messages, etc.) of any material that you find offensive – you don't have to read the messages, but keep them and keep a record of the time and date. This can act as evidence if you ever need it, and can help the Gardaí or your service provider find out where the messages are coming from. Remember, some young people are now using 'chat apps' on their phones and it is not always easy to retrieve evidence without the screen shot – as the images and videos disappear within seconds of being opened. Information on how to take screen shots may be accessed here. Similar guidance is available in relation to screen shots on IPhones and Macs.

For more information on what to do about bullying, see what to do if you're being bullied.

3. Hold safe Internet awareness days/weeks

Schools might consider holding Safe Internet Awareness days or weeks to highlight the whole issue of staying safe using modern communications technology.

These awareness days/weeks might be arranged to coincide with the **Annual Safer Internet Day (SID)** organised by Insafe in February each year to promote the responsible use of online technology and mobile phones. Insafe is a world-wide network of Awareness Centres promoting safe, responsible use of the Internet and mobile devices to young people. The theme for the 2013 Safe Internet Day was 'Online rights and responsibilities', and participants were encouraged to 'Connect with respect'. Further details on Insafe and Safer Internet Day may be accessed here.

4. Building staff capacity

Given that cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon in Irish schools and the technology that facilitates it is constantly evolving, it is essential to build the capacity of all staff in a school (management, teachers and support staff) to deal effectively with both bullying and cyberbullying.

The time that a school devotes to building such capacity annually will vary from one school to another. However, it is suggested that a school consider devoting at least one whole staff session each year to 'updating' this capacity and it may be necessary to devote more time to building such capacity in the first instance.

The matter of where to acquire the services of a suitable person/s to deliver the training to the school's staff also merits serious consideration, as cyberbullying is not well understood. It is essential that those who deliver this training have a thorough knowledge of both cyberbullying and the school context.

The PDST Technology in Education has launched a short (40 minutes) online internet course for teachers to help students to be safe and responsible Internet users. Details of this course may be accessed here.

While it will be necessary, in the first instance, to use external trainers, in the medium term, schools should seek to identify a staff member, or a small group of staff, who could become the school's expert/s on all aspects of cyberbullying. Needless to say, this/these person/s would need to have a good knowledge of ICT, an understanding of bullying in the generic sense, and s/he would also need to be well disposed towards combating cyberbullying in a calm and reasonable manner. Needless to say, it is not sufficient to leave the matter of cyberbullying exclusively in the hands of this group of teachers. All staff should be involved in combatting bullying and cyberbullying.

No matter how much cyberbullying may be abhorred, the reality is that social media are a permanent feature of 21st century life and they are particularly significant in the lives of adolescents. The pain that those targeted by cyberbullies suffer is not just a school problem; it is a problem for the wider society.

Effectively addressing this pernicious phenomenon requires all members of a school community to have a good understanding of both bullying and cyberbullying. In particular, school staff need to have the knowledge and skills to deal with the issue calmly in a multi-facetted manner. The issuing of edicts and the punishment of perpetrators, where identified, will not, on their own, eliminate the problem.

It is acknowledged that all schools may not be able to identify someone suited to leading its campaign to address cyberbullying. Consequently, two or more schools might identify someone who could lead the campaign across a number of schools. While such experts would have a fairly wide-ranging remit, they would be particularly helpful in ensuring that offending material is removed from websites as quickly as possible, while ensuring that all relevant evidence is retained.

5.   Investigating cyberbullying incidents

All bullying incidents should be properly recorded and investigated – see Incident Checklist and pointers at **Annexures A & B**.   However, it is important to recognise that that disagreements between young people are part and parcel of adolescence and we should not automatically treat every youthful conflict as a full-blown bullying episode, even if it involves offensive communications, and its resolution may require adult intervention. That said, in a minority of instances, the 'conflict' escalates to a point where some of the communications may be categorised as breaching either criminal or civil law.

It is therefore important that young people realise that **bullying and cyberbullying can be a very serious matter and can, in some instances, constitute a criminal offence**.

For example, cyberbullying may constitute a criminal offence under **Section 10** of the **Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997**.

Section 10 deals with harassment and provides that a person may be guilty of this crime if s/he:

'… without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, by any means including by use of the telephone, harasses another by persistently following, watching, pestering, besetting or communicating with him or her.

'For the purpose of this section, a person harasses another where-

(a) he or she, by his or her acts intentionally or recklessly, seriously interferes with the other's peace and privacy or causes alarm, distress or harm to the other, and

(b) his or her acts are such that a reasonable person would realise that the acts would seriously interfere with the other's peace and privacy or cause alarm, distress or harm to the other'.

Section 10 harassment is an arrestable offence and, if convicted on indictment, carries a jail term not exceeding 7 years. On conviction also, a court may make an order that the guilty party may not, for a specified period, communicate by any means, or come within a specified distance of a person's home or workplace.

Young people need to be aware that this section has actually been used to convict a young person in a case where the harassment was conducted using only email and there was no physical violence. There is absolutely no reason why the sending of threatening messages via social networking sites could not also result in a prosecution using the Section 10 provision.

Section 2 of the Prohibition of **Incitement to Hatred Act (1989)** makes it a criminal offence for a person *to publish or distribute written material, to use words, behave or display written material ... or to distribute, show or play a recording of visual images or sounds, if the written material, words, behaviour, visual images or sounds, as the case may be, are threatening, abusive or insulting and are intended or, having regard to all the circumstances, are likely to stir up hatred*.

Those convicted on indictment under this provision may be sentenced to a maximum of two years imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £10,000.00.

Even where cyberbullying does not amount to a criminal offence, the perpetrator may be held liable for damages in civil court proceedings. For example, **statements made on social media sites are covered by the provisions of the Defamation Act 2009**, which at Section 2 defines a defamatory statement as 'one which tends to injure a person's reputation in the eyes of reasonable members of society'.

Many, young and not so young, seem to feel that by posting anonymously on social networking sites, they can guarantee that their identity is protected. This, however, is not the case. Indeed, in many cases the content of messages makes it easy to identify the perpetrator. In any case, where the Gardaí have grounds for believing that criminal activity may be occurring, applications can be made to the courts requiring the internet service provider or others in possession of relevant information to divulge a perpetrator's identity.

Where it is felt that cyberbullying may amount to a criminal act, a school/VEC (as appropriate) should seek legal advice and the matter should be reported to the Gardaí.

Staff and students should be advised to try and keep a record of the bullying as

evidence. It can be useful to show parents, teachers, pastoral care staff and the Gardaí, if necessary, what has happened.

Every reasonable effort should be made to identify the perpetrator/s, including looking at the school IT systems, identifying and interviewing possible witnesses, and contacting the service provider and the Gardaí, if necessary. Remember, the Gardaí will have to be involved where it is necessary to get the service provider to look into the data of another user. In terms of identifying perpetrators, it needs to be appreciated that online forums (such as ask.fm) permit users to operate under a cloak of anonymity, thus making cyberbullying a very insidious form of bullying.

In seeking to identify perpetrators, the focus should be on protecting and supporting the target/s and getting the perpetrators to see that what they are doing is wrong and to desist from such behaviour in the future.

6.   Working with the bully, and sanctions

Once the person doing the bullying is identified, the focus should be on changing his/her attitude and behaviour and on ensuring that s/he has access to appropriate counselling or other support rather than on disciplinary action. Where disciplinary action is warranted, the following factors should to be considered in determining the seriousness of that action.

- **The impact on the victim:** was the bully acting anonymously, was the material widely circulated and humiliating, how difficult was it to control the spread of the material?
- **The motivation of the bully:** was the incident unintentional or retaliation for being bullied by others. Remember, young people may be bullied as a result of a single online comment 'going viral', though the poster may not have intended this to happen. Also, there is evidence to show that those who use communications technology to communicate with others can become desensitised to the effect their comments may have on those who are their targets.
- Disciplinary action should be **proportionate to the seriousness** of the offence. Remember, disproportionately severe sanctions can be counterproductive. For example, if young people think that reporting another student's inappropriate comments on line may result in dire consequences for the person being reported, they may be less prepared to report matters to those in authority and such reporting is critical to tackling bullying of any kind.

  Technology-specific sanctions for cyberbullying might include limiting Internet access for a period of time or removing the student's right to bring a mobile phone into school.

7.   Reporting violations on social media sites

Where material that constitutes cyberbullying is posted on a social media site and or is sent via a mobile phone, it may be necessary to report the matter to the service provider – Facebook, Twitter, Vodafone, etc. However, before reporting a violation, it is important to distinguish between material that is distasteful and material that is obviously abusive.

Before reporting a violation, it would be advisable to save (take 'screen shots') of the offending material and to date and save these in case they may be required as evidence

in legal or other proceedings. Where phone messages are involved, these should be saved. It is not possible to rely on material remaining on the web, thus the need to save a copy of offending material.

Mobile phone providers are proactive regarding bullying and harassment and most have services similar to 02's *Block It* service where a customer can block unwanted text, picture and video messages from other mobile phone providers.

On the other hand, social networking sites tend to adopt a more liberal stance and rely, to a significant extent, on publishing rules for users to follow. For example, according to Facebook's terms and conditions for users, in the safety section it states 'We do our best to keep Facebook safe, but we cannot guarantee it'.

However, social networking sites usually have procedures for reporting violations (the posting of inappropriate material) and these procedures are invariably posted on their websites. The big difference between the mobile phone providers and the social media sites is that, in the case of the latter, it is only the site management that can remove offending material and material that a user feels should be removed may not, in the eyes of the site management, warrant being removed. In any case, the first step towards getting material removed from a site is to report it.

In the case of an unwanted email, it is simply a matter of designating/marking a mail item from an unwanted source as junk/spam and all mail from that source will go directly into a junk/spam folder – from where it can be deleted with a single mouse click. That said, it is acknowledged that the source only has to make a slight change to his/her email address in order to circumvent the 'block'. So it may be necessary to change one's address in order to avoid being targeted.

8.   Ensuring teachers using social media do so safely

Many teachers use social media in their private lives and a significant and growing number use the Internet and social media to connect with students as part of their teaching work. In doing so, however, they can put themselves at risk of being cyberbullied and they can put their privacy at risk. While social media can provide teachers with an effective two-way means of communicating with their students, it also has the potential to give students access to personal information about teachers and therefore to provide some students with the opportunity to target them with unwelcome communications. This is something that needs to be guarded against in a proactive way.

Another issue that needs to be considered here is the nature of the student teacher relationship. While teachers should foster warm and constructive relationships with their students, it is equally important that these relationships be appropriate in the sense of being professional rather than personal. Indeed, it would be inappropriate for teachers to cultivate anything other than a professional student teacher relationship with their students – either inside or outside the classroom. In this regard, it is also important to note that the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers states, at 3.7 of the Code, that teachers should:

'ensure that any communication with pupils/students, colleagues, parents, school management and others is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as e-mail, texting and social networking sites'.

Regarding the need for teachers to protect their privacy and to ensure that their relationships with their students are manifestly professional, rather than personal, it would be prudent for teachers to have regard for the following[7] in their use of social media in the course of their work.

- Do not use personal Twitter or Facebook accounts for any school-related projects. Instead, teachers should establish a separate Twitter or Facebook account for school-related use.
- Where teachers are considering using social media to facilitate their school work, they should obtain permission from school management to do so. Furthermore, teachers should obtain parental permission for students to participate in school work that involves the use of social media.
- Where teachers use social media in their school work, they should ideally use invitation-only discussion groups. This means that the teacher has control over who joins the 'conversation' and is in a position to moderate the content posted on the site.
- Teachers, when using social media, should avoid connecting directly with students and, instead, use Facebook 'pages'. In this way, a student can access the page without having to be 'friends' with the teacher.
- Teachers or other staff working in schools should maximize their privacy settings on Facebook in order to protect their personal profile. This will minimize the chances of students discovering a staff-member's personal profile. Of course this should also be done for accounts used for school purposes. For advice on how to maximize privacy settings see here.
- Remember, even the best privacy settings do not guarantee absolute privacy as a 'friend' may pass on information.
- Teachers can 'protect' their tweets on Twitter. This means tweets are only viewable to approved users. This is good practice for both personal and school-related Twitter accounts.
- Do not connect with people who cannot be identified or who post questionable content – even from a private account.
- Students should be taught to understand that it is only appropriate to photograph or video/sound record someone with their explicit permission and that, while at school, it is not appropriate to take pictures of or record school staff/students unless specifically required for a school project. Remember, photographing, videoing or sound recording someone without their consent or knowledge, possibly in an inappropriate situation, is an invasion of privacy, and can be extremely distressing for the subject. While the Irish Courts have accepted that there is 'the right to be left alone', this area of law is quite unclear.

  The ubiquity of the camera phone presents real challenges to schools introducing blanket proscriptions so the matter would need to be considered very carefully before introducing such proscriptions. For this reason, the focus should be on encouraging and modelling what is good etiquette in these matters. That said, however, student codes of behaviour should proscribe the photographing, videoing or sound recording of staff members, other than when students are

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[7] The material in this section is adapted from the cyberbullying guidance for schools published by the Joint Managerial Body in Bulletin 15 - 2012/13.

specifically requested to do so as part of a school project. Furthermore, codes of behaviour should proscribe the 'recording' of other students unless it is manifest that such recording is welcomed.

- School staff should avoid using personal photos in their profile information, or information about their job or school in their bios. Instead, an icon or graphic and a non-school related bio might be used in their personal accounts.
- School staff should not make any comments about students or post pictures of students on social media sites.
- Ideally, schools should look towards establishing a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), using Moodle, SharePoint or some other technology. This would then eliminate the need for teachers to use public social media sites.
- Teachers and students need to be aware of the basic principles of copyright and plagiarism. In particular, posting someone else's work online without appropriately acknowledging the author/creator could result in liability for damages or impairment of a professional reputation. A brief general explanation of these concepts may be accessed here.

Further advice for teachers on the safe use of social networking is available here.

8.   Concluding Comments

Firstly, the **information provided in these guidelines** is not in any sense intended to be prescriptive. Rather, it is **intended to provide general information to schools**, with the hyperlinks providing direct access to more detailed information. Ultimately, however, each school has to work out how best to address a form of bullying that is likely to be with us for the foreseeable future. In doing so, **schools have to make decisions about which resources are most appropriate to use in particular contexts and this is matter for the professional judgement of VECs boards of management, school leaders, and teachers.**

Secondly, cyberbullying is not something that can be fully responded to using technological solutions alone. While the appropriate use of social media and privacy settings, in particular, can help, cyberbullying can only be addressed effectively in the wider context of the school's policies and practices around dealing with bullying in a generic sense.

Cyberbullying needs to be addressed as part of the wider bullying problem rather than as a phenomenon that sits on its own. If there was no bullying problem there would be no cyberbullying problem. Developments in communication technology have simply provided those with an inclination to bully with a set of tools that makes it easier for them to bully – oftentimes in a way that makes it difficult to identify the bully.

Modern communication technologies have also made it easier for what may be intended as 'slagging and teasing' to develop into bullying, though that was never the intention of the 'slagger or teaser'. In this regard, it is important that students be taught to appreciate that what they see as 'slagging and teasing' can be seen in a different light, once they appear on social media sites for everyone to see.

Annexure A

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School Crest/logo here

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Bullying/Cyberbullying Critical Incident Form/Checklist

1. Reporting Details

Name of Person reporting the incident	
Name of Staff member recording incident	
Anonymous Report?	
Date of report	

2. Type of bullying incident (please tick all that apply; this list is not exhaustive)

Via mobile or hand-held device	Involves Internet
Face to Face	Involves IM
Involves chatrooms	Involves SNS
Blackberry Messenger	Friendship feud
Ridicule/humiliation	Demanding money/valuables
Persistent teasing/sarcastic remarks	Involves photographs or videos
Name calling	Coercion
Threats	Encouraging others to join in
Spreading rumours	Provocative/sexist taunts
Unpleasant/hurtful email/texts/web posts combined	Linked to bullying in school
Plans to isolate someone	
Other	

Racist*	Cyberbullying
Homophobic	Due to disability
Sexual	
*If racist report to local authority/The Gardaí /BOM or VEC – as appropriate	

3. Persons involved in incident

Name of victim/target		
Class	Year	
Age		

Name of Perpetrator (s)	
1.	
2.	

3.	
Class	Year
Age (s)	

4. Incident Details

Date(s) of incident	
Day	
Month	
Year	
Approximate times	
Before school	
Morning	
Afternoon	
After school	
Weekend	

Is this a one off incident/event?	
How long has this been going on?	
Has any intervention been tried?	
If Cyberbullying, has this abuse been reported to the service provider or website administrator?	
Is there evidence available e.g. screenshots, printouts?	
Do the Gardaí need to be informed?	
Does a device need to be confiscated or a computer isolated as evidence?	
Does material need to be taken down from social media website?	
Have parents of both students been alerted?	
Who has taken responsibility for the above steps?	

If you are not sure what steps to take, talk to your e-safety lead persons in school or within the Department of Education and Skills. Does the school have the power to search and confiscate a phone?

5. Follow up

Has the bullying stopped?	
Does the target/victim feel safe?	
Is further action required?	
Have those involved changed their behaviours/acknowledged the harm caused?	
Has the case contributed to the learning of the class/year/group in some way?	
Have passwords been changed, privacy settings checked and friends list cleaned?	

Any further note such as the impact of this incident or recommendations:

Signed: ....

Date: ....

Position: ....

This document has been prepared by the Bullying Intervention Group (www.bigaward.org.uk) and can be used as part of an overall School Policy.

Annexure B

- Ask the questions and listen effectively

- Keep the evidence

- Explore with bystanders and witnesses

- Assess harm and impact

- Is prejudice involved?
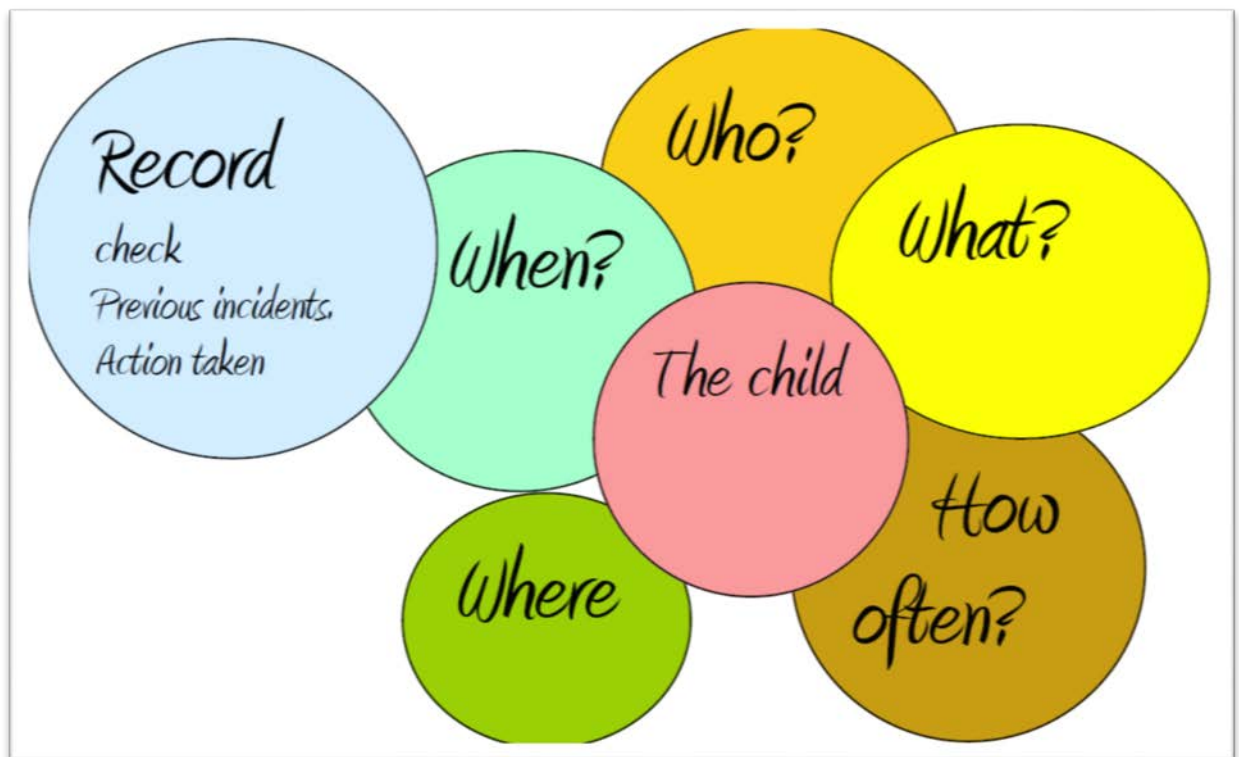
As a result of our intervention:

- *Is the victim safe?*

- *Does the bullying child's behaviour change?*

- *How do we know?*

- *Have we learned from this as a group/class/year group?*

Annexure C

Insert Name of School
Anti-Cyberbullying Policy - Template[8]

Introduction

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

Scope

This document is aimed at combating cyberbullying. Cyberbullying includes (but is not limited to) communicating via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and/or distress to one or more persons. Cyberbullying 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 or prejudice-based bullying.

While this policy addresses issues related to the cyberbullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim(s) of bullying), the policy also applies to teaching and other school staff, 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 (including break times)
- Going to and from school
- On school tours/trips
- During extra-curricular activities

Furthermore, [Insert Name of School] reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school.

Objectives

This policy aims to ensure that:

1. Students, staff and parents know about cyberbullying and its effects;

   Members of the school community have the knowledge, policies and procedures to prevent and, if necessary, to deal with cyberbullying in school or within the school community; and

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[8] This draft policy was developed by James Lillis, Consultant Lecturer in Law: Postgraduate Diploma in Education Management, NUI Maynooth.

3. The school monitors the effectiveness of its procedures and amends them where necessary.

[Insert Name of School] 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 Information and Communication Technologies can play an important role in supporting learning, but also that they can be misused 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 the School.

[Insert Name of School] aims to create a caring environment where those in the school community can work and learn without fear of being bullied. [Insert Name of School] aims to educate and inform its students as to how to use communications technology responsibly and about the serious consequences of cyberbullying and will continue to inform and educate its students in these fast changing areas.

Goals
1. To create a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of cyberbullying behaviour.
2. To raise awareness of cyberbullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour with school management, teachers, students, parents/guardians.
3. To ensure that the school's Social, Personal and Health Education programme raises awareness of the factors associated with cyberbullying behaviour and develops students' appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours.
4. To take practical actions to prevent incidents of cyberbullying 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 cyberbullying behaviour.
6. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of cyberbullying behaviour.
7. To develop a programme of support for those affected by cyber-bullying behaviour and those involved in cyberbullying 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 will appoint a staff member to act, as a Cybersafety Officer, to oversee the practices and procedures outlined in this policy and monitor their effectiveness.

- The Cybersafety 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 cyberbullying 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 as victim) and to advise them on reporting any incidents.
- Students will be informed about cyberbullying in the course of their education at 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 cyberbullying.

Definition of Cyber-Bullying:

Cyberbullying is aggression conducted by an individual or a group against others - such aggressive behaviour being committed via electronic means or via exclusion from electronic communities or interactions.

Cyberbullying includes (but is not limited to) the communicating via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and/or distress to one or more persons. Cyberbullying includes is 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 or prejudice-based bullying.

Types of behaviour involved

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 out of 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 or abusive comments about someone.

Mobile phone
- Sending humiliating and abusive video, photographic or text images/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 programs to another person.
- Unauthorised interference with a computer device.

Abusing personal information
- Transmitting personal photos, videos or 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 policies;
- Consistent recording of reported bullying behaviour;
- Education and training;
- Prevention strategies including awareness raising;
- Intervention strategies.

 [Insert Name of School] trains its staff to respond effectively to reports of cyber-bullying or harassment and has systems in place to respond to it.

[Insert Name of School] schools record all reported incidents of bullying behaviour including anonymous bullying reports.

[Insert Name of School] provides information on cyber-bullying to all members of the school community.

[Insert Name of School] engages prevention and awareness raising measures and implements strategies to engage students in addressing problems when they see them.

[Insert Name of School] is a "telling school". If a member of the school community "speaks out" and reports an incident of cyber-bullying appropriate action will be taken.

[Insert Name of School] endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems and no pupil is allowed to work on

the Internet in the Computer Room, or any other location within the school which may from time to time be used for such work, without a member of staff present.

Whilst education and guidance remain at the centre of what we do, [Insert Name of School] reserves the right to take disciplinary action (up to and including suspension and expulsion) against those who take part in cyber-bullying.

[Insert Name of School] supports victims and, when necessary, will work with the Gardaí and other State agencies to identify those involved in criminal acts and to support victims.

[Insert Name of School] 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 the school.

All members of the School community are aware they have a duty to bring to the attention of the Principal any example of cyberbullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.

Other Useful Links

- http://www.webwise.ie An excellent resource that covers much of what schools, teachers and parents need to know in order to deal effectively with cyberbullying. This site is managed by the NCTE.

- SPHE Bullying Prevention- First Steps for Teachers http://www.sphe.ie/downloads/bull/bull_respond.pdf

- The Stay Safe programme http://www.staysafe.ie/

- Secondary Assemblies for Online Safety http://www.optimus-education.com/shop/secondary-assemblies-online-safety-ebook

- ThinkB4Uclick http://www.thinkb4uclick.ie/

- Facebook page on stopping Cyber-bullying

- Bully4uAnti bullying services: http://www.bully4u.ie/

- Olweus Prevention Program: http://www.violencepreventionworks.org

- Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum

- Bullying Intervention Group(BIG)
- http://old.digizen.org/downloads/cyberbullyingOverview.pdf

- http://facecrooks.com/Safety-Center/Facebook-Privacy-and-Security-Made-Simple-345.html