Anti Bullying Policy adopted by Cromford Church of England Primary School

1. INTRODUCTION

At Cromford Church of England Primary School we are committed to providing a warm, caring and safe environment for all our children to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential.

We would expect pupils to feel safe in and out of school, including an understanding of the issues relating to safety, such as bullying. We also want them to feel confident to seek support from school should they feel unsafe.

We acknowledge that bullying does happen from time to time – indeed, it would be unrealistic to claim that it does not. When bullying does occur, everyone should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively in accordance with our anti-bullying policy.

2. POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Previously, this policy was formulated in consultation with the whole school community with input from members of staff, governors, parents/carers and children.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head Teacher - Has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the governing body, parents/carers, LA and outside agencies and appointing an Anti-bullying coordinator who will have general responsibility for handling the implementation of this policy.

The Anti -bullying Coordinator in our school is Ian Wilson.
Her responsibilities are:
- ❖ Policy development and review involving pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers and relevant local agencies
- ❖ Implementing the policy and monitoring and assessing its effectiveness in practice
- ❖ Ensuring evaluation takes place and that this informs policy review
- ❖ Managing bullying incidents
- ❖ Managing the reporting and recording of bullying incidents
- ❖ Assessing and coordinating training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate
- ❖ Coordinating strategies for preventing bullying behaviour

The nominated Governor with the responsibility for Anti-bullying (Behaviour) is Helen Wallace

4. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

'Behaviour by an individual or group usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'.
Safe to Learn: embedding anti bullying work in schools (2007).

How does bullying differ from teasing/falling out between friends or other types of aggressive behaviour?

- ❖ There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate.
- ❖ There is a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves.
- ❖ It is usually persistent.

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been

repeated or persistent - if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of sexual, sexist, racist or homophobic bullying and when children with disabilities are involved. If the victim might be in danger, then intervention is urgently required.

What does bullying look like?
In the main it consists of:
- **Physical bullying** – hitting, kicking, pinching, sexual assault, extortion, stealing, hiding or damaging belongings;
- **Verbal bullying** – name calling, taunting, insulting, making offensive remarks, sexual innuendo, threatening, mockery (of person's demeanour, way of speaking, difficulty or disability, contribution to work, clothing, belongings, religious observance, dietary habits, country of origin)
- **Indirect bullying** – spreading unpleasant stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, graffiti, defacing of property, display of pornographic, classist, disabilist, homophobic, racist or sexist material, refusing to co-operate in work or play (refusing to sit next to someone)
- **Cyber bullying** - inappropriate text messaging; sending offensive or degrading images or messages by phone or via all areas of the internet (such as email, internet chat Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok and House Party)

Although bullying can occur between individuals it can often take place in the presence (virtually or physically) of others who become the 'bystanders' or 'accessories'.

Where does bullying happen?
It can happen anywhere – in the classroom, in the corridor, in the toilets, in the dining hall, in the playground, on residential trips, in group activities.

Bullying may also happen outside school premises, for instance, on the way to and from school, in cyberspace (on mobile phones or computers at home). At Cromford CofE Primary School, we are concerned with our children's conduct and welfare outside as well as inside school and we will do what we can to address any bullying issues that occur off the school premises.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on. The headteacher will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member.

Why are children and young people bullied?
Specific types of bullying include:
- bullying related to race, religion or culture
- bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities
- bullying related to appearance or health or perceived socio-economic class
- bullying related to sexual orientation – homophobia/not fitting in with gender stereotypes
- bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- sexist or sexual bullying

There is no hierarchy of bullying - all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Bullying can take place between:
- young people
- young people and staff
- between staff
- individuals or groups

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of one person or persons over another. This can be achieved by:

- The size of the individual,
- The strength of the individual
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity – through the use of cyberbullying or using email, social networking sites, texts etc

Certain groups of pupils are known to be particularly vulnerable to bullying by others. These may include pupils with special educational needs such as learning or physical disabilities; young carers, Looked After children, those from ethnic and racial minority groups and those young people who may be perceived as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender or questioning their gender role.

Signs and Symptoms
A child may indicate, by different signs or behaviour, that he or she is being bullied.
Adults should be aware of these possible signs and investigate further if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine/route to school
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to under perform in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- starts swearing or using aggressive language for no apparent reason
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received
- Unwilling to talk or secretive about their online activities and mobile phone use
- Spending much more or much less time texting, gaming or using social media
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be taken seriously and investigated as soon as possible.

What can you do if you are being bullied?
Wherever you are in school, you have the right to feel safe. Nobody has the right to make you feel unhappy. If someone is bullying you, it is important to remember that it is not your fault and there are people who can help you.

Through discussions, the children have been made aware of the strategies below:

- Try not to let the bully know that he/she is making you feel upset and try to ignore them.
- Be assertive – stand up to them, look at them directly in the eye, tell them to stop and mean it.
- Stay in a group, bullies usually pick on individuals.
- Get away as quickly as you can.
- Tell someone you can trust – it can be a teacher, a teaching assistant, a midday supervisor, a parent, a friend, a brother, a sister or a relative.
- If you are scared, ask a friend to go with you when you tell someone.

- When you tell an adult about the bullying give them as many facts as you can (What? Who? Where? When? Why? How?).
- Keep on speaking out until someone listens and helps you.
- Never be afraid to do something about it and quick.
- Don't suffer in silence.
- Don't blame yourself for what is happening.
- Call a helpline (numbers below)

What can you do if you see someone else being bullied? *(The role of the bystander)*
Ignoring bullying is cowardly and unfair to the victim. Staying silent means the bully has won and gives them more power. There are ways you can help without putting yourself in danger.
The children have also discussed this question in class and some of the strategies they suggested are listed below:
- Don't smile or laugh at the situation.
- Don't rush over and take the bully on yourself.
- Don't be made to join in.
- If safe to do so, encourage the bully to stop bullying.
- If you can, let the bully know you do not like his or her behaviour.
- Shout for help.
- Let the victim(s) know that you are going to get help.
- Tell a member of staff as soon as you can.
- Try and befriend the person being bullied.
- Encourage the person to talk to someone and get help.
- Ask someone you trust about what to do.
- Call a helpline for some advice (numbers below)

Bullying of children with Special Educational Needs
Cromford Church of England Primary School is an inclusive school. We provide a secure, accepting, safe and stimulating environment where everyone is valued for who they are.

We have some children who have identified Special Educational Needs. Everyone involved in the school is very aware that these children can be especially vulnerable to bullying and we are therefore particularly vigilant at all times.

High attainers, gifted or talented pupils can also be affected by bullying. Staff will treat this type of bullying as seriously and in the same way as any other type of bullying.

5. REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING

Our school has clear and well publicised systems to report bullying for the whole school community (including staff, parents/carers, children and young people) this includes those who are the victims of bullying or have witnessed bullying behaviour (bystanders)

The following step-by-step procedure will be used for reporting and responding to bullying allegations or incidents.

Reporting concerns about bullying:
All concerns about bullying will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

All pupils are encouraged to report bullying by talking to a member of staff of their choice.

Pupils who are being bullied may not report it. All staff will be alert to signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this policy. Early signs of distress include:
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Deterioration of work

- Feigning illness
- Unusual absences
- Desire to remain with adults
- Isolating themselves from others
- Lacking concentration
- Truanting from school

Pupils who are aware of bullying ('bystanders') can be a powerful force in helping to address it and will be encouraged to do so in a safe way.

It is often parents who report bullying incidents. In recognition of this, we've ensured that:
- Staff receiving phone messages, notes or visitors have been trained in school systems and procedures and are clear about the steps they should take
- Reception and other staff are sensitive to the emotional needs of parents making contact with the school

Parents are encouraged to report concerns about bullying and to support the school in tackling it. Trying to resolve bullying directly with pupils or their families directly can lead to problems escalating.

Strategies for dealing and responding to bullying:
In dealing with bullying, staff at Cromford CofE Primary School follow these fundamental guidelines.

- All staff are to be vigilant for signs of bullying
- All staff must never ignore suspected bullying
- If pupils are being bullied, or know someone who is, they are encouraged to tell us straightaway.
- If a parent suspects that a child is being bullied they are encouraged to inform the school as soon as possible.
- If bullying is suspected or reported, it will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been made aware of it.
- Staff will make sure the victim (s) is and feels safe
- Appropriate advice will be given to help the victim(s).
- Staff will listen and speak to all children involved about the incident separately.
- The problem will be identified and possible solutions suggested.
- Staff will attempt to adopt a problem solving approach which will move children on from them having to justify their behaviour.
- Appropriate action will be taken quickly to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying.
- Staff will reinforce to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place and appropriate sanctions applied (see section further down).
- If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
- An attempt will be made, and support given, to help the bully (bullies) understand and change his/her/their behaviour.
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff on the standard Incident Report Sheet. All reports will be kept in a file in the school office.
- In serious cases parents will be informed and will be invited to come into school for a meeting to discuss the problem.
- After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- Bullying incidents will be discussed regularly at staff meetings.
- School will keep accurate records of incidents and how the school has responded, to assist with proceedings.
- All teachers and support staff who work with the children involved will be kept informed
- Parents and other relevant adults will be kept informed. When dealing with serious incidents, involvement of parents at an early stage is essential.
- The Headteacher will present termly reports on serious bullying incidents, if they have occurred to the Governors. Where appropriate the Anti-bully Governor will be involved.

- If necessary and appropriate, the Child Protection Officer in school, Social Services or police will be consulted.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by being provided with:
- an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice.
- reassurance that the bullying will be addressed
- offering continuous support
- daily supervisory monitoring if it is felt that this would help
- opportunities taken to restore self-esteem and confidence
- use of 'keep an eye on' system so all staff are aware
- the use of specialist interventions and/ or referrals to other agencies, e.g. educational psychology, where appropriate.

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:
- discussing what happened with an experienced member of staff/ SENCO
- discovering why the pupil became involved
- establishing agreement of the wrong doing and need to change
- informing parents to work together to help change the attitude of the pupil
- the use of specialist interventions and/ or referrals to other agencies where appropriate

The following sanctions may be used:
- Apologise to the victim(s) verbally or in writing
- Lose privileges
- Lose playtimes (stay with class teacher, write lines or do extra work)
- Exclusion from certain areas of the school premises
- Stand outside the Headteacher's office
- Report to the Headteacher
- Spend playtimes and lunchtimes with an adult
- Parents will be invited in to school
- Official warnings to cease offending
- Go on a self-improvement report
- Be removed from class and work in isolation
- Be withdrawn from participation in school visit, clubs and events not essential to the curriculum.
- Suspension, increasing in length if offences are repeated
- Permanent exclusion
- Police involvement (e.g. if a crime has been committed)

Parents
- Most concerns about bullying will be resolved through discussion between home and school. However, where a parent feels their concerns have not been resolved, they are encouraged to use the formal complaints procedure.
- Where a pupil is involved in bullying others outside school, e.g. in the street or through the use of the internet at home, parents will be asked to work with the school in addressing their child's behaviour, for example, restricting/ monitoring their use of the internet or mobile phone.
- Referral of the family to external support agencies will be made where appropriate.

6. RECORDING BULLYING AND EVALUATING THE POLICY

Bullying incidents will be recorded by the member of staff who deals with the incident and this will be notified to and held by the Anti-bullying coordinator.

A sample recording form is attached (Appendix 1).

The information we hold will be used to ensure individual incidents are followed up. It will also be used to identify trends and inform preventative work in school and development of the policy.

This information will be presented to the governors in an anonymous format as part of the annual report.

This policy will be reviewed and updated every year. The policy review will be linked to the School Improvement Plan, working towards a more inclusive and harmonious ethos across the school community.

6. CYBER BULLYING

The experience of being cyber bullied can be very painful for those who are the targets. Adults need to help children and young people prepare for the hazards of using technology while promoting learning and social opportunities. Some forms of cyber bullying are different from other forms:
- Through various media children can be cyber bullied 24 hours a day.
- People who cyber bully may attempt to remain anonymous.
- Anyone of any age can cyber bully.
- Some instances of cyber bullying may be unintentional – such as a text sent as a joke or an email to the wrong recipient.

Prevention
We recognize that the best way to deal with cyber bullying is to prevent it from happening in the first place. By embedding good, safe ICT practice into all our teaching and learning, incidents can be avoided. Our community's principals of e-safety are based on those in Appendix 1 "Parent and Carer Social Networking Guidance at Home and in School' (Derbyshire County Council).
    We recognize we have a shared responsibility to prevent incidents of cyber bullying but the Headteacher has the responsibility for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of anti-cyber bullying strategies.

Understanding Cyber bullying
The school community is aware of the definition of cyber bullying and the impact cyber bullying has. Staff receive guidance and review the Anti-Bullying and Acceptable Use Policies regularly. Children are taught how to recognize cyber bullying and their responsibilities to use ICT safely. ICT safety is integral to teaching and learning practice in the school.
The school teaches children in particular (and in line with Government Advice - DFE-00655-2014) to:
- Make sure you use the privacy settings.
- Always respect others – be careful what you say online
- Be careful what pictures or videos you upload. Once a picture is shared online it cannot be taken back.
- Only add people you know and trust to friends/followers lists online. When talking to strangers, keep your personal information safe and location hidden
- Treat your password like your toothbrush – keep it to yourself and change it regularly.
- Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly
- Do not retaliate or reply to offending e-mails, text messages or online conversations
- Save the evidence. Always keep a copy of offending e-mails, text messages or a screen grab of online conversations and pass to a parent, a carer or a teacher.
- Make sure you tell an adult you trust, for example, a parent, a carer, a teacher, or the anti-bullying co-ordinator or call a helpline like Childline on 08001111 in confidence.
- Most social media services and other sites have a button you can click on to report bullying. Doing this can prevent a bully from targeting you and others in the future. Many services take bullying seriously and will either warn the individual or eliminate his or her account.
- While you are on your mobile phone make sure you also pay attention to your surroundings

Parents are also taught how to recognize cyber bullying and their responsibilities for supporting safe ICT use (see Appendix 1). The school distributes the Networking Guidance leaflet to all parents when they join the school and regularly reminds them that the information is available in the School Entrance Hall.

Record Keeping and Monitoring Safe Practice
As with other forms of bullying, the Headteacher keeps records of cyber bullying. Incidents of cyber bullying will be followed up using the same procedures as other forms of bullying. However, we recognize to monitor

internet use on a regular basis as a disincentive for bullies misusing school equipment and systems. Regular use checks will be undertaken, concerns logged and Headteacher informed.

8. STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING BULLYING:

We recognise that prevention is better than cure. As part of our on-going commitment to the safety and welfare of our pupils we at Cromford Church of England Primary School have developed the following strategies to promote positive behaviour and discourage bullying behaviour.

- Restorative Approaches
- Anti-Bullying week annually in November.
- PSHE/citizenship
- Specific curriculum input on areas of concern such as Cyberbullying and internet safety
- Student voice
- Parent groups/extended schools
- Parent information events/information
- Staff training and development for all staff
- Counselling and/or Mediation schemes
- Pupils are encouraged to tell us their views about a range of school issues including bullying as part of their developing relationships with adults in school.
- Staff raise awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE education, circle times, collective worship and informal discussion as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.
- Staff know the importance of playground / breaktime activities to reduce opportunities for bullying – these include football, sand or water play, table football or snooker, lunchtime clubs all organised daily.
- Potential 'hot-spots' for bullying on the school site have been identified through Governors Health and Safety Walks and the areas are out of bounds to pupils.
- As a school we participate in national and local initiatives such as anti-bullying week and the work of the Derbyshire Anti-bullying partnership.
- Co-operative skills are promoted through group work activities including ones outside friendship circles.
- Children are taught to develop conflict resolution skills.
- All staff are aware of the Anti-bullying and behaviour policies and adhere to their codes.
- We carry out an annual questionnaire which includes finding out children's views and perceptions of bullying within school.
- As a school we seek to develop links with the wider community that will support inclusive anti-bullying education.

9. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

Behaviour Policy
Safeguarding Policy
Acceptable Use Policy - Cyberbullying and internet safety
Equalities Policy - Race, Sexist, Sexual, Transphobic, Homophobia, SEN and Disability
PSHE and Citizenship Policy
Complaints policy
Confidentiality Policy

References Documents and Related Policy/Guidance:
- Preventing and tackling bullying - Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies - July 2011 DfE-00062-2011
- The Strategic Framework for Preventing & Tackling Bullying
- Derbyshire Strategy for Preventing & Tackling Bullying

Sources of further information, support and help There is a vast amount of information and guidance available about bullying that can provide a wide range of support and help. The following list is just a small selection of the support available that teachers, parents and children have found useful.

Name of organisation	Website
Act Against Bullying	www.actagainstbullying.org
Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	www.ace-ed.org.uk
Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA)	www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
Family Lives	www.familylives.org.uk
Childline	www.childline.org.uk
Kidscape	www.kidscape.org.uk
NSPCC	www.nspcc.org.uk
Coram Children's Legal Centre	www.childrenslegalcentre.com
	www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school
UK Government Website	Cyber-bullying guidance for parents https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/375420/Advice_for_Parents_on_Cyberbullying_131114.pdf

Helplines:
Childline: 0800 1111
http://www.childline.org.uk
Childline is the UK's free helpline for children and young people in trouble or danger. It provides a confidential telephone counselling service for any child with any problem, 24 hours a day, every day.

Family Lives: 0808 800 2222
www.familylives.org.uk
Confidential helpline service providing advice, guidance and support on any aspect of parenting and family life, including bullying.

Coram Children's Legal Centre: 0300 330 5480
http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com
Provide free legal information, advice and representation to children, young people, their families, carers and professionals.

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk
Help, advice, support for parents 24/7

This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis.

The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which includes online bullying, and complies with Section 89 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006. This policy is displayed on the school website and is known to all staff, non-teaching staff and the local community.

The Anti- Bullying Policy has been produced in participation with the whole school community.

There are separate records of bullying incidents & evidence that incidents are analysed for patterns, trends, and hot spots. This includes strategies/models to prevent and intervene.

APPENDIX 1

Bullying Incident Record Form							
CROMFORD CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL							
Academic Year			**Date of Record**				
Incident (Select the option which best fits the situation)							
Type of Incident- Related To: *(Select one option)*	race, religion or culture	special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities	appearance or health conditions or class	sexual orientation	home circumstances (e.g. young carers, looked after children)	gender or gender identity (sexist, sexual or transphobic)	Other *(Please specify within summary of incident field*
Method *(Select all options that apply)*	Verbal		Physical		Cyber bullying		Indirect
Location of Incident:							
Date of Incident :				**Time of Incident :**			
Summary of Incident	Background Information: Nature of Incident: Frequency and Duration of Behaviour: *(Circle as appropriate)* Once or Twice Persistent throughout 2 months Several times each week Persistent for more than a year						

Staff Detail To whom the incident was reported				
Name				**Position**
Pupil Name	**Pupil Involvement** *(Aggressor, Target, Witness, Participant, Bystander,)*	**Gender**	**Year Group**	**Has pupil provided a description of incident?** (*If* **yes***, please attach)*

Actions agreed (specify action agreed by each individual and update outcomes)				
Name *(Pupil, Parent,*	**Action (including support for pupil)**	**Parents Informed**	**Review Date**	**Outcome of review** *(Resolved /Specify if Further*

Staff)		(yes/no)		Intervention Required)

APPENDIX 2

NSPCC Guidance to Online Safety For Young People

Young people may be experts on using the internet, but they still need guidance and protection. To help keep them safe, make sure you continue talking about what they are doing online:

√ Discuss and agree your expectations before you allow them to join a social networking site. Check the minimum age requirements.

√ Talk to them about the dangers of oversharing information about themselves that they might regret — teach them to think before they post.

√ Encourage them to check the policies and privacy settings on any sites and services they use.

√ Remind your child that the same rules apply online as they do at home and at school, e.g. they shouldn't post anything they wouldn't say face-to-face.

√ Find out what the school's policy is on mobile phone use at school.

√ Ask how the school is teaching pupils about online safety issues.

√ Check your child knows how to report and block contacts.

√ Discuss the use of parental controls.

For more help and advice visit
www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety

Or contact the NSPCC helpline on

0808 800 5000 to discuss any concerns

NSPCC
Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.

Cyberbullying & the law

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in UK law, criminal and civil laws can apply in terms of, for example, harassment or threatening behaviour, and particularly relevant for cyberbullying – threatening and menacing communications:

- Protection from Harassment Act 1997, which has both criminal and civil provision
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Section 43 of the Telecommunications Act 1984
- Communications Act 2003
- Public Order Act 1986

If someone is targeted online because of attitudes towards:

- Disability
- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity

then this could be classed as an hate crime.

Terminology

Trolls/Trolling: is a person who sows discord on the Internet by starting arguments or upsetting people.

Sexting: is the exchange of self-generated sexually explicit images, through mobile picture messages or webcams over the internet. This could be a precursor to sexual exploitation. Click here for more information.

Cyber stalking: is when someone harasses a target using electronic communication, such as e-mail or instant messaging (IM), or messages posted to a Web site or a discussion group.

Fraped: is a combination of the words 'Facebook' and 'Rape'. The act of changing someone's Facebook profile, usually changing a status or information with the aim to embarrass.

PREVENTING AND TACKLING **BULLYING** IN DERBYSHIRE

Parent & Carer Social Networking Guidance at Home and in School

This leaflet offers some insight to parents & carers around the dangers of social networking and the appropriate use of social media.

DERBYSHIRE County Council
Improving life for local people

Social networking & young people

Young peoples use of the internet has increased dramatically in recent years, with 96% of 9-16 year olds using the internet daily. Young people use the internet for a wide variety of purposes, from completing school work, communicating with friends and peers to watching video clips and playing games.

Social networking sites have played a huge role in changing the way young people interact with other people online and they use social media as a platform to learn, share their views, or to demonstrate their creativity.

However being online can make them vulnerable to many risks and it exposes them to experiences which they may find upsetting. These risks could be:

- Bullying online (cyberbullying)
- Sharing too much information
- Vulnerability to predatory adults
- Sharing photos or video that they later regret
- Exposure to age inappropriate material
- Risk of identity theft or being 'fraped'

In a recent survey carried out by the NSPCC they found that 28% of 11-16 year olds had experienced upsetting encounters on social networking sites:

- 37% Being targeted by trolls
- 22% Excluded from social group/friendship
- 18% Aggressive or violent language
- 14% Pressured into looking a certain way
- 12% Cyberstalking
- 12% Received unwanted sexual messages
- 10% Racism
- 7% Homophobia
- 3% Encouraged to self harm

What role does your child play online?

If your child has been actively socialising online, it is probable that he or she has been involved in cyberbullying in one or more of the following roles:

Bullies. "Put-downers" who harass and demean others, especially those they think are different or inferior, or "get-backers," who have been bullied by others and are using the Internet to retaliate or vent their anger.

Targets. The targets of the cyberbully, who in some cases may be the bullies at school and in other cases, the targets.

Harmful Bystanders. Those who encourage and support the bully or watch the bullying from the side-lines, but do nothing to intervene or help the target.

Helpful Bystanders. Those who seek to stop the bullying, protest against it, provide support to the target, or tell an adult.

What can you do to prevent your child being a cyberbully?

Help your child develop self-awareness, empathy, and effective decision making by asking these questions:

- Am I being kind and showing respect for others and myself?
- How would I feel if someone did the same thing to me, my family or to my best friend?
- What would a trusted adult, someone who is important in my life, think?
- Is this action in violation of any agreements, rules, school policies or laws?
- How would I feel if others found out it was me?
- How does this action reflect on me?

Warn against online retaliation. Some teens who engage in cyberbullying are retaliating against teens who are bullying them face-to-face. Help your child understand that retaliating is not smart because when targets lose their cool, it allows the bullies to justify their behaviour.

Social media and the school

As a student your child should follow these guiding principles:

- If they identify themselves as a pupil of their school, they should act responsibly at all times and uphold the reputation of the school. Even if they do not identify themselves, be aware that their conduct online could still result in disciplinary action if it impacts on the school reputation.

- In no circumstances should students post anything offensive, sensitive, disrespectful or inappropriate about the school, its employees, its pupils, parents, Governors and former staff and pupils, on any school-sanctioned social media or any personal sites.

- Students should always pause and give careful thought before posting and replying to comments. Responses should not be rushed but dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner to avoid mistakes.

- Students need to be aware that whatever behaviour is deemed to be inappropriate or illegal offline will also be deemed inappropriate and illegal online.

- Remember that everything they post online is public, even with the strictest privacy settings. Once something is online, it can be copied, reposted and redistributed. Presume that everything they post online will be permanent and will be shared.

- Users of the school email and internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the school's ICT system.

- Students should only use official school sites for communicating with staff by social media.

- Students are strongly encouraged to report to a trusted adult any worries they have about cyberbullying or improper conduct. The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with children and families where there are reports of cyberbullying or misuse of social media during out of school hours.