

# Birkdale High School



Birkdale  
High School

Aspire - Thrive - Succeed

## Cyber Bullying Policy

February 2019-21



## **Birkdale High School Cyber Bullying Policy**

<i>Date of Policy:</i>	<i>February 2019</i>
<i>Members of staff responsible:</i>	<i>Assistant Headteacher (Mr Pryor)</i>
<i>Review date:</i>	<i>February 2021</i>

*Access to technology should be seen as a privilege not a right and the abuse of these privileges brings consequences.*

Birkdale High School embraces the advantages of modern technology in terms of the educational benefits it brings, however the school is mindful of the potential for bullying to occur. Central to the School's Cyber anti-bullying policy is the belief that 'all pupils have a right not to be bullied' and that 'bullying is always unacceptable'. The School recognises that it must 'take note of bullying perpetrated outside School which spills over into the School'. Under powers granted by the EIA 2006, the Head is able to police cyber-bullying or any bullying aspects carried out by pupils even at home.

### **What is cyber bullying?**

Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself.

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones

The use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation

Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites

Using e-mail to message others

Hijacking/cloning e-mail accounts

Making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in chat rooms, to include Facebook, Youtube and other such social media sites.

Cyber-bullying is generally criminal in character. The law applies to cyberspace.

It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites. Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.

The Protection from Harassment Bill March 2014 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

Birkdale High School educates its pupils both in the proper use of telecommunications and about the serious consequences of cyber-bullying and will, through PSHCE and in ICT lessons and assemblies, continue to inform and educate its pupils in these fast changing areas. The school uses external agencies such as Catch 22 to guide and support Edlounge use.

Birkdale High School trains its staff to respond effectively to reports of cyber-bullying or harassment and has systems in place to respond to it. Birkdale High 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. Where appropriate and responsible, Birkdale High audits ICT communications and regularly reviews the security arrangements in place.

Whilst education and guidance remain at the heart of what we do, Birkdale High reserves the right to take action against those who take part in cyber-bullying.

All bullying is damaging but cyber-bullying and harassment can be invasive of privacy at all times. These acts may also be criminal acts.

Birkdale High supports victims and, when necessary, will work with the Police to detect those involved in criminal acts.

Birkdale High 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 in or out of school.

Birkdale High will use its power of confiscation where necessary to prevent pupils from committing crimes or misusing equipment.

All members of the School community are aware they have a duty to bring to the attention of the pastoral team any example of cyber-bullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.

### **GUIDANCE FOR STAFF**

If you suspect or are told about a cyber-bullying incident, follow the protocol outlined below:

#### **Mobile Phones**

Ask the pupil to show you the mobile phone

Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image, to include the date, time and names

Make a transcript of a spoken message, again record date, times and names

Tell the pupil to save the message/image

Take the information to the Head of Year, or in their absence, a member of the Senior Leadership Team

If bullying is related to the sending/receiving of inappropriate images, this must be referred to the safeguarding team.

#### **Computers**

Ask the pupil to get up on-screen the material in question

Ask the pupil to save the material

Print off the offending material straight away

Make sure you have got all pages in the right order and that there are no omissions

Take the offending material, to see the Head of Year

Normal procedures to interview pupils and to take statements will then be followed particularly if a child protection issue is presented.

## **GUIDANCE FOR PUPILS**

If you believe you or someone else is the victim of cyber-bullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible. This person could be a parent/guardian, your form tutor, your Head of Year or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Do not answer abusive messages but log and report them

Do not delete anything until it has been shown to your parents/guardian, Form Teacher, Head of Year, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber-bullying)

Do not give out personal IT details

Never reply to abusive e-mails

Never reply to someone you do not know

Stay in public areas in chat rooms

## **Monitoring of Internet Use**

Birkdale High School monitors usage of its internet, online content, online services and email services without prior notification or authorisation from users.

Users of Birkdale High 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.

## **Breaches of this Policy**

Any breach of this policy that leads to a breach of confidentiality, defamation or damage to the reputation of Birkdale High School or any illegal acts or acts that render Birkdale High School liable to third parties may result in legal action, disciplinary action or sanctions in line with the published school policies for staff and pupils.

## **GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS**

It is vital that parents and the school work together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying. Birkdale High School informs parents of the cyber-bullying policy and the procedures in place to deal with cyber-bullying.

Parents can help by making sure their child understands the school's policy and, above all, how seriously Birkdale High School takes incidents of cyber-bullying.

Parents should also explain to their sons' legal issues relating to cyber-bullying.

If parents believe their child is the victim of cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving an offensive text on their or their child's mobile phone) and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything.

Parents should contact the Head of Year or a member of the Senior Leadership Team as soon as possible. A meeting can then be arranged which may involve other relevant members of staff.

If the incident falls in the holidays Birkdale High School reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school.

## **E-SAFETY AT HOME**

Several sites offer helpful advice to parents, particularly with respect to how they can best monitor their child's use of the computer at home. Important and useful information can be found on our school website.