Porchester Junior School

Cyber Bullying Policy
2024-2025

Reviewed: September 2024
Next Review: September 2025

Porchester Junior school believes that all people in our community have the right to teach and learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. We believe that every individual in school has a duty to report an incident of bullying whether it happens to themselves or to another person. This policy links with our Online Safety Policy

WHAT IS CYBER-BULLYING?

There are many types of cyber-bullying. Although there may be some of which we are unaware, here are the more common.

1. **Text messages** —that are threatening or cause discomfort - also included here is "Bluejacking" (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using "Bluetooth" wireless technology) and sexting.

2. **Picture/video-clips** via mobile phone cameras - images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed.

3. **Mobile phone calls** — silent calls or abusive messages; or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible.

4. **Emails** — threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name.

5. **Chatroom bullying** — menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in web-based Chatroom.

6. **Social Media** — unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online through a variety of software, apps, and within some internet connected, collaborative games.

7. **Bullying via websites** — use of FaceBook, Instagram and other Social Media. These are not allowed in school and pupils and parents should be aware that children under the age of 13 are not allowed an account and, if they have one, must have lied about their age.

At Porchester Junior School, we take this bullying as seriously as all other types of bullying and, therefore, will deal with each situation individually. An episode may result in a simple verbal warning. It might result in a parental discussion. Clearly, more serious cases will result in further sanctions.

Technology allows the user to bully anonymously or from an unknown location, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Cyber-bullying leaves no physical scars so it is, perhaps, less evident to a parent or teacher, but it is highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be very severe. Young people are particularly adept at adapting to new technology, an area that can seem a closed world to adults. For example, the numerous acronyms used by young people online make it difficult for adults to recognise potential threats.

At Porchester Junior School, pupils are taught how to:
- Understand how to use these technologies safely and know about the risks and consequences of misusing them.
- Know what to do if they or someone they know are being cyber bullied.
- Report any problems with cyber bullying. If they do have a problem, they can talk to the school, parents, the police, the mobile network (for phone), use the 'report abuse' button on a website or contact their Internet Service Provider (ISP) to do something about it.

At Porchester Junior School we:
1. Have an Online Safety Policy with agreements on Acceptable Use
2. Provide information for parents on: E-communication standards and practices in schools, what to do if problems arise, what's being taught in the curriculum.

3. Offer support for parents and pupils if cyber bullying occurs by: assessing the harm caused, identifying those involved, taking steps to repair harm and to prevent recurrence

A Code of Conduct for pupils

Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced
- If you feel you are being bullied by email, text or online, do talk to someone you trust.
- Never send any bullying or threatening messages. Anything you write and send could be read by an adult.
- Serious bullying should be reported to the police - for example threats of a physical or sexual nature.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images (some apps will automatically delete sent content after a set amount of time, and so a screengrabs may be needed to save evidence)
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender.
- Change your user name, nick name or security setting. That way the bully won't know who you are. You could change your mobile phone number and only give it out to close friends.
- Contact the service provider (Mobile Phone Company / your Internet provider) to tell them about the bullying. They may be able to track down the bully.
- Use blocking software - you can block instant messages from certain people or use mail filters to block emails from specific email addresses.
- **Don't** reply to bullying or threatening text messages or emails - this could make matters worse. It also lets the bullying people know that they have found a 'live' phone number or email address. They may get bored quite quickly if you ignore them.
- **Don't** give out your personal details online - Watch what you say about where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc.   All these things can help someone who wants to harm you build up a picture about you.
- **Don't** forward abusive texts or emails or images to anyone. You could be breaking the law just by forwarding them. If they are about you, keep them as evidence. If they are about someone else, delete them and don't reply to the sender
- **Don't** ever give out passwords to your mobile or email account.
- **Remember** that sending abusive or threatening messages is against the law.

Text/video messaging

- You can temporarily stop receiving text messages by turning off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number. If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider.
- Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages. Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.
- Don't delete messages from cyber bullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.
- Text harassment is a crime. If the calls are simply annoying, tell a teacher, parent or carer. If they are threatening or malicious and they persist, report them to the police, taking with you all the messages you've received.

Phone calls

- If you get an abusive or silent phone call, don't hang up immediately. Instead, put the phone down and walk away for a few minutes. Then hang up or turn your phone off. Once they realise they can't get you rattled, callers usually get bored and stop bothering you
- Always tell someone else: a teacher, youth worker, parent, or carer. Get them to support you and monitor what's going on
- Don't give out personal details such as your phone number to just anyone. And never leave your phone lying around.
- When you answer your phone, just say 'hello', not your name. If they ask you to confirm your phone number, ask what number they want and then tell them if they've got the right number or not.
- You can use your voicemail to vet your calls. A lot of mobiles display the caller's number. See if you recognise it. If you don't, let it divert to voicemail instead of answering it.
- Don't leave your name on your voicemail greeting. You could get an adult to record your greeting. Their voice might stop the caller ringing again
- Almost all calls nowadays can be traced. If the problem continues, think about changing your phone number. If you receive calls that scare or trouble you, make a note of the times and dates and report them to the police. If your mobile can record calls, take the recording too.

Emails
- Never reply to unpleasant or unwanted emails — the sender wants a response, so don't give them that satisfaction.
- Keep the emails as evidence and tell an adult about them.
- Ask an adult to contact the sender's Internet Service Provider (ISP) by writing abuse@ and then the host, e.g. **abuse@hotmail.com**
- Never reply to someone you don't know, even if there's an option to 'unsubscribe'. Replying simply confirms your email address as a real one.

Web bullying
- If the bullying is on a website tell a teacher or parent, just as you would if the bullying were face-to-face – even if you don't actually know the bully's identity.
- Serious bullying should be reported to the police - for example threats of a physical or sexual nature. Your parent or teacher will help you do this.

On Social Media Site
- You should not be on many social media sites if you are under 13
- Never give out your name, address, phone number, school name or password online.
- It's a good idea to use a nickname. And don't give out photos of yourself.
- Don't accept emails or open files from people you don't know.
- Remember it might not just be people your own age in a chat room.
- Stick to public areas in chat rooms and get out if you feel uncomfortable.
- Tell your parents or carers if you feel uncomfortable or worried about anything that happens.
- Think carefully about what you write; don't leave yourself open to bullying.
- Don't ever give out passwords to your mobile or email account.

Three steps to stay out of harm's way

1. Respect other people - online and off. Don't spread rumours about people or share their secrets, including their phone numbers and passwords
2. If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm – and ignore them.
3. 'Do as you would be done by.' Think how you would feel if you were bullied. You're responsible for your own behaviour – make sure you don't distress other people or cause them to be bullied by someone else.

The law is on your side
The **Protection from Harassment Act**, the **Malicious Communications Act 1988** And Section 43 of the **Telecommunications Act** may be used to combat Cyber bullying. People may be fined or sent to prison for up to six months.