

Cyberbullying Policy

Delph Side Primary School believes that everyone in the school community has the right to learn and to teach in a supportive and caring environment without fear of being bullied. We are committed to helping all members of the school community to benefit from information and communication technology, whilst understanding its risks, and to equip children with the knowledge and skills to be able to use it safely and responsibly.

Background

This policy is one of a number of other policies which form part of the school's approach to Safeguarding – Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policies.

This policy aligns with the statutory guidance outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025*, which identifies cyberbullying and online abuse as safeguarding concerns requiring proactive prevention and response.

Cyberbullying may constitute child-on-child abuse and will be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Pupils, staff and parents know about Cyberbullying, how it can be combated and its consequences
- We have the knowledge, policies and procedures to prevent and, if necessary, to deal with Cyberbullying in school or within the school community
- Ensure reported incidents of Cyberbullying are dealt with effectively
- Promote respectful digital behaviour
- Monitor and review incidents to inform safeguarding
- Equip pupils to critically evaluate online content

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is the use of digital technology, particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. It can take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others. Bullying is not new, but some features of cyberbullying are different from other forms of bullying. These differences include:

- the invasion of home and personal space
- the audience can be very large and reached rapidly
- people who cyberbully may attempt to remain anonymous
- cyberbullying can take place between peers and between generations, with teachers/staff becoming victims
- some instances can begin unintentionally, e.g. messages intended as jokes, but which have a harmful or upsetting effect.

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Cyberbullying may also involve prejudice-based or discriminatory behaviour, including racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, disability-related or faith-based abuse. Such incidents will be managed in line with the school's safeguarding, behaviour and equality policies.

Categories of cyberbullying

1. **Text message bullying** – involves sending unwelcome texts that are threatening or cause discomfort.
2. **Picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone cameras** – used to make the person being bullied feel threatened or embarrassed, with images usually sent to other people. This may include filming and sharing physical assaults or aggressive behaviour, which is both harmful and illegal.
3. **Phone call bullying via mobile phone** – uses silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes the bullied person's phone is stolen and used to harass others, who then think the phone owner is responsible. As with all mobile phone bullying, the perpetrators often disguise their numbers, sometimes using someone else's phone to avoid being identified.
4. **Email bullying** – uses email to send bullying or threatening messages, often using a pseudonym for anonymity or using someone else's name to pin the blame on them.
5. **Group chat/Chat room bullying** – involves sending menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a group chat or chat room.
6. **Bullying through instant messaging** – is an Internet-based form of bullying where children and young people are sent unpleasant messages as they conduct real-time conversations online through social media, messaging and content-sharing platforms (e.g. Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok and similar services).
7. **Bullying via websites** – includes the use of defamatory blogs (web blogs), personal websites and online personal polling sites. There has also been a significant increase in social networking sites for young people, which can provide new opportunities for cyberbullying.

Prevention of Cyberbullying

The best way to deal with cyberbullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Much of the school's work relating to prevention will not be restricted to cyberbullying but will be part of the school's general approach to the prevention of bullying. It will also be addressed as part of the school's work with pupils on Online Safety.

The Online Safety Lead will oversee the practices and procedures outlined in this policy, monitor its effectiveness, coordinate the school's approach to online safety and cyberbullying, and maintain details of agencies and resources that may assist in preventing and addressing cyberbullying.

Pupils and staff at Delph Side Primary School are expected to comply with the school's Acceptable Use Policy.

Pupils are encouraged to report any cyberbullying concerns immediately to a trusted adult, class teacher, member of the safeguarding team or another member of staff. All reports will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.

Education - Children

- Online Safety forms an integral part of our Computing curriculum through the Project Evolve planning. It aims to improve children's knowledge of the risks of their online lives and to develop skills when using online services.

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- The resources included are aimed at stimulating classroom discussions about certain situations that may arise when online and to get the children to think critically about their online lives.
- It follows the UKCCIS Education for a Connected World-Framework which aims to “describe the Digital knowledge and skills that children and young people should have the opportunity to develop at different ages and stages of their lives. It highlights what a child should know in terms of current online technology, its influence on behaviour and development, and what skills they need to be able to navigate it.
- Opportunities for learning about Online Safety are part of our PSHE (Jigsaw) curriculum.
- Delph Side takes part in the annual Safer Internet Day each February, that focuses on Online Safety, and staff are provided with a list of suitable sites, resources and activities for their year groups.
- Children are made aware of the risks associated with AI-generated content, including deepfakes, impersonation, and false or misleading information. These topics are discussed as part of Online Safety and digital literacy education to help pupils critically evaluate online content.
- The school will respond appropriately to incidents involving AI-generated images, audio or video intended to harass, intimidate, impersonate, humiliate or otherwise cause harm to another person. Such incidents will be managed in line with the school's safeguarding, behaviour and anti-bullying procedures.
- As part of the Online Safety teaching children are made aware of the impact of cyberbullying and how to seek help if they are affected by these issues, e.g. talking to a trusted adult in school or parent/carer.
- Pupils are taught to recognise and critically evaluate misinformation, disinformation, and harmful online content, which are now recognised as safeguarding risks under KCSIE 2025.
- As part of their Online Safety teaching and PSHE children develop an understanding of the importance of the Acceptable Use Policy and are encouraged to adopt safe and responsible use of digital technology both within and outside school.

Digital Wellbeing

Delph Side Primary promotes digital wellbeing by encouraging healthy online habits, respectful communication, and balance between screen time and offline activities. Pupils are supported in developing resilience to online pressures and understanding the emotional impact of digital interactions.

Staff

- All staff will be given the School Online Safety Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Artificial Intelligence Policy and Cyberbullying Policies.
- Staff will be provided with Online Safety information at induction and asked to sign the Acceptable Use Policy.
- Staff will complete Online Safety during the year, using Knowsley CLC resources, which will keep them abreast with the latest technologies and Online Safety concerns.
- Online Safety forms part of our annual Whole School Safeguarding training.
- If staff encounter any safeguarding concerns or potential cyberbullying issues, they must report these immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead. This includes any inappropriate content, pupil disclosures, or signs of distress linked to online activity. All concerns should be logged on CPOMS under the appropriate category.
- Updates will be provided to staff as and when needed.
- For guidance on the use of AI tools in teaching and planning, please refer to the school's Artificial Intelligence Policy and Online Safety Policy.

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Parents

The school offers opportunities for parents/carers and the wider community to be informed about online safety, including cyberbullying through:

- Reference to relevant websites and app guides on our Online Safety page on our website.
- Regular promotion of Online Safety through the school's Facebook and Instagram accounts, #WakeUpWednesday posts, Seesaw communications, and monthly Online Safety newsletters. Where appropriate, additional guidance, videos and resources are shared with parents and carers.
- Resources, app guides and links shared via Seesaw when necessary and Online Safety concerns may have arisen in class e.g. with the use of WhatsApp
- Online Safety teaching is evidenced on Seesaw so parents are kept up to date with what is being taught in class.
- All communication between staff and pupils must take place via Seesaw, the school's approved platform. This ensures transparency, safeguarding, and appropriate boundaries. Staff must not use personal messaging apps, emails, or social media to contact pupils.

Practices and Procedures

The responsibilities of the school and of pupils as set out in the Anti-Bullying Policy apply also to this policy.

- Positive use of digital technology will be promoted and the Acceptable Use Policy will be kept under review as technologies develop.
- CPD and INSET may be used to help staff develop their own practices and support pupils in safe and responsible use of digital technology.
- The school will encourage safe use of digital technology, emphasising, for example, the importance of password security and the need to log out of accounts.
- Expectations regarding respectful online behaviour apply to all school-related online activities, including educational platforms, remote learning opportunities and digital communication associated with school.
- The school will promote the message that asking for help is the right thing to do and all members of the school community will be informed how Cyberbullying can be reported.
- Confidential records of all Cyberbullying incidents are kept on CPOMS.

Recording and Reporting

- Incidents relating to Cyberbullying are logged on CPOMS, under the category – Online Safety and Cyberbullying. These are then dealt with by a Designated Safeguarding Lead, in association with the Online Safety Lead.
- These are audited on a regular basis by the Online Safety Lead and reported to Governors in an Online Safety report.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads will be informed of any Cyberbullying incidents involving Child Protection concerns (via CPOMS), which will then be escalated appropriately.
- Any complaint about staff misuse must be referred to the Headteacher.
- Incidents of cyberbullying directed towards staff will be investigated by the Headteacher and managed in accordance with relevant school policies and procedures.
- Parents will be informed of cyberbullying incidents involving their child and any actions taken, where appropriate

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Dealing with Cyberbullying Incidents

The Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team will:

- deal with all incidents of Cyberbullying quickly and effectively, in line with our Behaviour Policy.
- impose sanctions as outlined in the school's Behaviour policy on any pupil identified as cyberbullying
- Where applicable parents and other external agencies may be contacted.
- Where Cyberbullying may involve criminal offences, significant harm or safeguarding concerns, the school will involve the police, children's social care or other appropriate agencies as necessary.

The Local Authority can provide support and assistance in dealing with incidents of Cyberbullying and can be contacted by staff and parents. The police will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content.

Responding to Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying incidents will normally be managed in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and safeguarding procedures where appropriate

A Cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. This also often takes place outside of school. Key differences might be:

- **Impact:** possibly extensive scale and scope
- **Location:** the anytime and anywhere nature of Cyberbullying
- **Anonymity:** the person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is
- **Motivation:** the perpetrator might not realise that his/her actions are bullying
- **Evidence:** the subject of the bullying will have evidence of what happened

Advice will be given about the next steps:

- Make sure that the person knows not to retaliate or return the message.
- Ask the person to think about what information they have in the public domain.
- Help the person to keep relevant evidence for any investigation.
- Check the person understands how to prevent it from happening again e.g. by changing contact details, blocking contacts or leaving a group chat.
- Take action to contain the incident when content has been circulated.
- If you know who the person is, ask them to remove the content.
- Contact the host to make a report to get the content taken down.
- Ask the pupil who they have sent messages onto.
- In the cases of illegal content, contact the police, who can determine what needs to be kept for evidential purposes.

Support for the person being bullied

As with any form of bullying, support for the individual will depend on the circumstances. Examples include:

- Emotional support and reassurance that it was right to report the incident

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- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice on other aspects of the code to prevent re-occurrence
- Advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked from the individual's sites or services
- Actions, where possible and appropriate, to have offending material removed
- Advice to consider changing email addresses and/or mobile phone numbers
- Discuss contacting the police in cases of suspected illegal content

Investigation

Again, the nature of any investigation will depend on the circumstances. It may include, for example,

- Review of evidence and advice to preserve it, for example by saving or printing (e.g. phone messages, texts, emails, website pages)
- Efforts to identify the perpetrator, which may include looking at the media, systems and sites used. Witnesses may have useful information.
- Requesting a pupil to reveal a message or other phone content. Any concerns involving mobile phones or other electronic devices will be managed in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy, safeguarding procedures and relevant DfE guidance.
- Contact with the Internet Watch Foundation, the police or Lancashire Safeguarding Children Partnership if images might be illegal or raise child protection issues.

Working with the perpetrator

Work with the perpetrator and any sanctions will be determined on an individual basis, in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy, with the intention of:

- Helping the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop.
- Holding the perpetrator to account, so they recognise the harm caused and do not repeat the behaviour.
- Helping bullies to recognise the consequences of their actions and facilitating change in their attitude and behaviour.
- Demonstrating that Cyberbullying, as any other form of bullying, is unacceptable and that the school has effective ways of dealing with it.