**Virgin Mary B.N.S.**

**Anti-Cyber Bullying – Policy**

1. Social Media provide a dynamic and rapidly evolving means of communication. Mobile phones, chat rooms, websites and social networks, such as Facebook, play a significant role in many young people’s lives as they interact with their peers and search for a social identity.
2. Inappropriate use of social media may lead to what is commonly known as cyber bullying.
3. Cyber bullying, like any other form of bullying, is the abuse of one person or group of people. It is an affront to human dignity and will be treated in accordance with the principles and procedures of this Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy, the school’s Code of Behaviour, the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Mobile Phone Policy, the Child Protection Policy, the Internet Acceptable use Policy, the Health and Safety Statement.
4. Due to the instant, public, open and potentially permanent nature of access to material posted on social media and its capacity to multiply exponentially, a single inappropriate and offensive posting may constitute Cyber Bullying.
5. The school has a duty of care toward its pupils and its staff. A safe and respectful environment in school is necessary so that teaching and learning can take place.
6. The school, together with other relevant parties (parents and/or guardians, social media providers, Gardai etc.) has a responsibility (though not the sole one) for the promotion of the responsible use of social media and the prevention of their misuse, with special reference to Cyber Bullying.
7. This Cyber Bullying Policy applies even when a student engages in inappropriate use of social media, when not under the direct supervision of the school; when there is a clear connection with the school and/or a demonstrable impact on its aims, work reputation and/or personnel.

**What is Cyber Bullying?**

* Social Media Technologies are defined as information and communication technologies (ICT), material recorded without consent for the purpose of undermining, or causing damage to, the personal reputation of another person, whether considered a “joke” or not.

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| There are many types of Cyber Bullying. The more common types:1. **Text messages** – can be threatening or cause discomfort. Also included here is “Bluejacking” (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using Bluetooth wireless technology)
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, 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. **Chat room bullying** – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room.
6. **Instant messaging (IM)** – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct rea-time conversations online suing MSM (Microsoft Messenger) Yahoo. Chat or similar tools .
7. **Bullying via websites** – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal ‘own web space’ sits such as You Tube, Facebook, Ask.fm, Bebo (which works by signing on in one’s school, therefore making it easy to find a victim) and Myspace – although there are others.
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**Aim of Policy:**

* To promote a safe, caring, respectful environment for the school community.
* To ensure that pupils are taught the skills and information they need to be able to use I.C.T effectively, safely and responsibly.
* To ensure that pupils, staff and parents understand what Cyber Bullying is and how it can be combated.
* To ensure that practices and procedures are agreed to prevent incidents of Cyber Bullying.
* To ensure that reported incidents of Cyber Bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly.

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**Strategies / Procedures to prevent Cyber Bullying**

* Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management (BoM) to be made aware of issues surrounding Cyber Bullying.
* Pupils and parents will be asked to report all incidents of Cyber Bullying to the school.
* Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies.
* Pupils will learn about Cyber Bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies, friendship week activities and other curriculum projects.
* Parents will be aware of this Policy and the Acceptable Use of ICT Policy and asked to discuss them with their children.
* Pupils, parents and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and school procedure.
* All reports of Cyber Bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal’s office.
* N.C.T.E. Firewall will be regularly monitored and updated by a member of I.S.M.T.
* Pupil’s use of computers / internet will be monitored in the school.
* Use of pupil’s mobile phone is banned during school time as per mobile the Phone Policy.
* Community Gardai will facilitate workshops on Cyber Bullying with senior classes annually.
* Cyber Bullying will be deemed a serious breach of the school’s Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policy, as well as other relevant policies, and will attract serious sanctions, up to and including suspension and expulsion.
* Allegations of Cyber Bullying may also be reported to the Gardai or other outside agencies as appropriate.
* This policy will be reviewed annually.

**Reporting procedure and investigation.**

1. Any student or staff member who believes she/he has, or is being, subjected to Cyber Bullying, as well as any person who has reason to believe a student or staff member is being subjected to (or has been subjected to Cyber Bullying) shall immediately report the matter to the Principal/Deputy Principal.
2. The Principal/Deputy Principal shall investigate all reports of such conduct in line with agreed school procedures. Cyber Bullying will be subject to appropriate discipline and sanctions, to be decided by the Board of Management. The seriousness of the violation will determine the sanction to be applied. This may include suspension or expulsion.
3. Some acts of Cyber Bullying may be isolated incidents requiring the School Authorities to respond appropriately to the individual committing the acts. Other acts may be so serious, or part of a larger pattern of Cyber Bullying, that they will require a response from outside agencies such as the Gardai.
4. Sanctions will be decided by the Board of Management and the seriousness of the violation will determine the sanction to be applied. This may range from positive behavioural interventions, up to and including suspension or expulsion. It is further noted that Cyber Bullying using school technologies is in violation of the school’s Acceptable Internet Use Policy.
5. Intervention techniques to prevent Cyber Bullying and to support and protect victims any include appropriate strategies and activities, as determined from time to time by the Board of Management and Principal.

**Ratified by the Board of Management on:**

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**Signed:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(Chairperson)**

**To be reviewed on:**

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**Information for parents and pupils**

**Cyber Bullying – Courtesy of eSafety**

“Cyber—bullying” involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others”.

**What to do if it happens;**

1. Don’t respond and don’t reply.
2. Save a copy of whatever has made you feel uncomfortable.
3. Tell someone immediately.

**Digital Fingerprint**

Once something is posted online, be prepared to have it there forever. If you wouldn’t post it on a billboard in the city centre you shouldn’t post it online. Be responsible about what you put on the internet now as it can have serious consequences in the future.

**Social Network Sites**

“In order to be eligible to sign up to Facebook, users must be thirteen (13) years of age or older” – facebook.com

Remember that you don’t know who your friend’s friends are, and you don’t’ know what they will do with your picture or your phone number if you give it out by mistake. Once your picture is out there, it’s out there forever and you won’t be able to get it back. Be aware that information on your profile could potentially be viewed by anyone. Use your Privacy Settings. Adjust your account setting so only approved friends can instant message you. This means that people you don’t want to see your profile cant.!

**Tips for Safe Surfing**

1. Don’t give out personal information online. This includes full name, address, phone number or primary email address or passwords
2. Never agree to meet someone that you only know form online.
3. Don’t share things with people that you don’t know in real life.
4. If something or someone makes you feel uncomfortable online, save a copy of it and tell someone immediately.
5. Don’t add anyone to your friend or contact list that you don’t know in person.

**What are the basics?**

* Do not keep online activities a secret from parents/ guardians.
* You’re out in public – when online
* Privacy features – giving you control.
* Just because you can post anything doesn’t mean you should.
* The fact is you just shouldn’t ever meet people in person who you only know from the Internet.
* If you do, make sure you tell your parents, do so in a public place and bring along at least one friend.
* Never, ever, agree to meet someone alone.

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**Online Code-of-Conduct-Contract**

* Talk with your parents to learn the rules of Internet use, which includes where you can go, what you can do, when you go online and how long you can be online (minutes or……hours)
* Never give out personal information such as your home address, telephone number, your parents’ work address or telephone number, credit card numbers, or the name and location of your school without my parents’ permission.
* Always tell your parents immediately if you see or receive anything on the Internet that makes you feel uncomfortable or threatened; this includes Email messages, Web sites, or even anything in the regular mail from Internet friends.
* Never agree to meet anyone in person that you have met online, without your parents’ permission.
* Never give out your Internet passwords to anyone (even your best friends) other than your parents.
* Be respectful online and do not do anything that could hurt or anger other people or that is against the law.
* Never download, install, or copy anything from disks or the Internet without proper permission.
* Never do anything on the Internet that costs money without your parents’ permission.

**Useful Websites**

[www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie) [www.childnet.int.org](http://www.childnet.int.org)

[www.antibullying.net](http://www.antibullying.net) [www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart)

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying)

[www.childline.ie/index.php/suppport/bullying/1395](http://www.childline.ie/index.php/suppport/bullying/1395)

[www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com) <http://ie.reachout.com>

[www.kidpower.org](http://www.kidpower.org) [www.sticksandstone.ie](http://www.sticksandstone.ie)

[www.abc.tcd.ie](http://www.abc.tcd.ie)

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