# Redesdale Primary School

# Cyber-Bullying Policy

| Policy reviewed: | September 2023 |
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| Policy review date: | September 2024 |

# REDESDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

# CYBER-BULLYING POLICY

At Redesdale Primary School, we believe 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.

**What is Cyber-Bullying?**

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The ways in which adults and young people communicate online is changing rapidly - and therefore the types of cyber-bullying are also changing rapidly.

At present, this is a list of common platforms where cyber-bullying could take place:

1. Text messages – that are threatening or cause discomfort.
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. E-mails – threatening or bullying e-mails, 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 web-based chat room.
6. Instant messaging (IM) – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using Snapchat, WhatsApp, Xbox live, Facebook Messenger, oovoo – although there are many others.
7. Bullying via 'social networking' websites – such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube – again there are many others.

**Cyber-Bullying Policy**

  **a. Children**

  At Redesdale Primary School, we take this type of bullying as seriously as all other types of bullying and, therefore, will deal with each situation individually and in line with the school's **Positive Relationships Policy & Procedures.**

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, carer or teacher, but it is highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be very severe.

At Redesdale Primary School, pupils are taught through their Computing, PSHE and RSE lessons 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.

## b. Children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

Pupils with SEND, particularly those with social and communication difficulties (such as Autistic Spectrum Condition), can be particularly vulnerable to online bullying.

Children and young people on the autistic spectrum can find social networking, forums, emailing, instant messaging, texting and online gaming an easier way to socialise than face-to-face communication and this makes them particularly vulnerable.

All children may be bullied via the internet or mobile phones, however children and young people with autism may not be able to recognise cyber-bullying as easily due to their lack of social understanding.

For more information on cyber-bullying please visit
http://www.childnet.com/resources/cyberbullying-guidance-for-schools

Further information is available through the National Autistic Society
www.autism.org.uk

## c. Parents

Redesdale Primary School has:

- Information for parents on E-communication standards and practices in school on the school website (**Online Safety & Acceptable Usage Policy**).

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

- Links to cyber-bullying advice on the school website.

### d. School Staff

All staff are made aware of our '**Online & Acceptable Usage Policy**' which is available on the school Shared Staff Drive.

The aim of **RPS Online Safety & Acceptable Usage Policy** is to ensure that members of staff are fully aware of their professional responsibility when using information and communication technologies.

Due to the ever-changing nature of information and communication technologies, the policy does not provide an exhaustive list for staff to adhere to and so staff are reminded that the use of any technologies should be consistent with the school's ethos, other appropriate policies and the law.

Our staff have the right to teach in a safe environment, without exception. Staff can access www.childnet.com for support and advice on cyber-bullying and a range of other online safety topics.

If staff members are subject to cyber-bullying, they are advised to:

- Save evidence of the abuse; take screen shots of messages or web pages and record the time and date.
- Report the incident to the Headteacher.

Redesdale Primary School takes these incidents extremely seriously and, when cases of cyber-bullying are reported, the Headteacher will respond to the incident appropriately, with the involvement of governors if necessary.

- Where the perpetrator is known to be a current pupil or colleague, the majority of cases will be dealt with through the school's **Positive Relationships Policy & Procedures (pupils) and Disciplinary Policy & Procedure (colleagues).**
- Where the perpetrator is a parent or member of the school community, the Headteacher will invite the person to a meeting to address the concerns, and if they have a reasonable complaint, will make sure they know how to raise this appropriately.
- The Headteacher will also request that the person removes any offending comments.
- If the person refuses, it will be an organisational decision about what to do next – either the school or the person who the comments were written about can report the matter to the social networking site (if it breaches their terms) or seek guidance from the local authority, legal advisers, or support from other agencies for example, the UK Safer Internet Centre.
- If the comments are threatening or abusive, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, the school may consider contacting the local police.
- The school acknowledges that online harassment is a crime.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents but not limited to:

- RPS Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- RPS Anti-Bullying Policy
- RPS Positive Relationships Policy & Procedures

- RPS Online Safety & Acceptable Usage Policy
- RPS Remote Learning Policy & Plan
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)
- DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)
- RPS Social Networking Policy
- RPS Staff Handbook (Code of Conduct)
- DfE Cyberbullying: Headteachers and School Staff Guidance
- DfE Advice for Parents and Carers on Cyberbullying

## <u>Monitoring and Review</u>

This policy is monitored by the Headteacher and Governing Body and will be reviewed annually or earlier if necessary.