



Oporto British School

To Strive for Success and to Serve *Est. 1894*

CYBERBULLYING POLICY

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behaviour. Given the particular nature of this form of bullying and the fact that the victim and bully do not have to be in close proximity for the bullying to take place, tackling cyberbullying can present particular challenges:

- Its scale and the scope of its impact can be greater;
- the act of bullying can be remote given that its perpetrator and victim are physically separate;
- the cyberbully has a long reach and can easily carry out 'cyberstalking';
- the bullying can be more intense – 24/7;
- defamatory material can be easily published to a wide audience;
- All the above will dictate within school that those found to engage in cyberbullying will be treated with more severity than those who are guilty of more conventional bullying. All pupils and other members of our community must recognize their responsibilities in relation to this problem.

The particular forms of cyberbullying can include any of the following:

- harassment or cyberstalking;
- defamation or vilification (intentional false communication, either written or spoken, that harms a person's reputation);
- impersonation;
- unauthorised publication of private images;
- manipulation;
- peer rejection.

Technology allows the user to bully anonymously or from an unknown location, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Cyberbullying leaves no physical scars so it is less evident to a parent or teacher, but it is nevertheless highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be very severe.

There are many different methods by which cyberbullying takes place. The following list is not exhaustive; the development of information and communications technology is so rapid that new styles of cyberbullying are emerging constantly. Moreover, young people are particularly adept at adapting to new technology.

1. **Text messages:** 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; stealing a victim's phone and using it to harass others, making them believe that 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 a web-based chatroom.
6. **Instant messaging (IM):** unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real time conversations online using services such as Whatsapp, Viber, Snapchat.
7. **Bullying via websites:** use of defamatory blogs, personal websites, online personal 'own web space' and social media such as Facebook or Twitter.

The School's Expectations in Respect of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying, even more so than other forms of bullying, throws up many challenges for schools in a world which is increasingly digital. The School has clear expectations in respect of the use of information and communication technology and, where possible, will tackle incidents of bullying and cyberbullying in order to prevent them escalating and causing serious damage to individuals, the broader school community and the School's reputation. It must be acknowledged that much cyberbullying takes place beyond the confines of the School and over mediums which the School has no control or jurisdiction however Whenever incidents of cyber bullying are reported, the school will intervene and investigate and deal with the alleged incident.

All pupils are expected to adhere to the following expectations.

1. Pupils must not behave in a way or use information and communication technology, both inside and outside school, to engage in any activity that is intended deliberately to upset another person, to bully or defame.
2. Pupils should not participate in activities as 'bystanders' or accessories such as taking part in online polls or discussion groups where individuals are the object of defamation or vilification.
3. Any pupil engaging in bullying or cyberbullying in any of its forms, whether or not the behaviour takes place on the School premises, can expect to be subject to the School's full range of disciplinary sanctions. This may include exclusion from the School.
4. All pupils are expected to collaborate fully in any enquiry the School may need to conduct regarding bullying and/or cyberbullying. This may relate to a pupil's use of ICT both in and out of school where there is reasonable belief that cyberbullying has taken place and that this will assist in bringing an end to such activity.