HULL COLLEGIATE SCHOOL

CYBERBULLYING

Hull Collegiate School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.

Hull Collegiate School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

This document is available to all interested parties on request from the main school office and should be read in conjunction with a range of policies, procedures and other documentation relating to:

- Behaviour and Discipline
- ICT, E-mail and Internet Use
- PSHE schemes of work
- School code of conduct
- SMSC development of pupils

This document is reviewed annually by Mr C Wainman and Mr R Tuck or as events or legislation change requires. The next scheduled date for review is September 2017.

C O N T E N T S

Policy Statement

Cyberbullying is such a widespread phenomenon that the Department for Children, Schools & Families (DCSF) has a Cyberbullying Taskforce. The DCSF offers the following definition of cyberbullying:

"The use of Information & Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile 'phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else"

Examples reported by schools include:

- pupils who set up website pages and invite others to post derogatory comments about a pupil

- pupils who film fights or assaults (so-called "happy slapping") and circulate them via mobile 'phones

- pupils sending insulting and vicious text messages

- pupils posting fake and obscene photographs of the victim on a social networking site

- pupils hacking into social networking sites and removing and circulating material which may be embarrassing or personal.

Cyberbullying can have far greater impact than other forms of bullying because:

- it involves the invasion of personal space

- it gives anonymity (at least initially) to the bully

- it gives the bully the ability to broadcast upsetting messages and images rapidly to a potentially huge audience and to continue to do so repeatedly over a long period of time.

Another unusual factor is the way that other pupils who would not normally take part in bullying behaviour may be drawn in as accessories. This can happen, for example, when an image is circulated on a mobile phone by a bully and recipients extend the circulation further by passing it on to a wider circle.

Prevention of Cyberbullying

Hull Collegiate has developed proactive strategies to prevent cyberbullying and will fully investigate incidents when they happen. The school aims to create a culture where cyberbullying is widely regarded as unacceptable and has a clear acceptable use policy for pupils. However all pupils must realise that:

- the school reserves the right to monitor pupils' use of the internet on a routine basis and to examine mobile phones where there is reason to suspect abuse

- misuse of technology is subject to the school's disciplinary regime

- pupils will be held personally responsible for all material they have placed on a web site and for all material that appears on a web site of which they are the account holder

- misconduct of this kind outside school will be amenable to school discipline if the welfare of other pupils or the culture or reputation of the school are placed at risk

- sanctions may include confiscation of mobile phones or restrictions on the use of the internet.

- pupils should report any incidents of cyberbullying, either witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff to ensure the matter is dealt with immediately

The school's position on cyberbullying will be reinforced within school assemblies, year assemblies, ICT and PSHCE sessions.

Responding to incidents

The school will investigate all allegations of cyberbullying in line with the school's anti-bullying strategy.

The victims of cyberbullying should:

- receive reassurance (with cyberbullying, this can include advice on self-protection measures such as blocking messages from a particular source or cleaning up 'buddy lists')

- be encouraged to preserve evidence in the form of text messages, images and other material.

It is important to note, however, that responding to incidents of cyberbullying creates some unique challenges. These include the potential difficulty of identifying a perpetrator who may be using an internet pseudonym or has appropriated another person's mobile phone for the purposes of sending abusive messages. In many cases, conventional methods of investigation by the school, such as observation by staff or statements from witnesses, may be successful in identifying perpetrators.

However, serious cases may need to be referred to the police for investigation. Pupils should be aware that a number of criminal offences can be committed in the course of cyberbullying. These include:

- harassment

- publishing obscene material

- taking, storing and circulating indecent images of children

- using threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour

- aiding and abetting crimes of violence.

The decision to refer an issue to the Police is a matter of judgement for the school. Schools are strongly advised to make a referral if any of the following factors are present:

- there is evidence that a serious criminal offence has been, or is about to be, committed

- the victim has suffered significant harm or is at risk of significant harm (including self-harm)

- there is evidence or suspicion of adult involvement - schools need to be aware of the possibility that abuse and manipulation of children via the internet may involve adults posing as children, even as other pupils

- there is evidence or suspicion of concerted action by a group of pupils, particularly if more than one school is involved

- any of the children involved are on the Child Protection Register.

The Police will have more resources at their disposal for investigation, but only the most serious cases are likely to be given priority.

This policy applies to all members of our school community including those in our Early Years setting