Cyber Bullying

Contents

1 Policy statement

1.1 Embley 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.

1.2 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.

2 Aims

- To ensure that pupils, staff and parents know about cyber bullying and its consequences.
- To provide a safe and secure environment where all can learn and teach without anxiety.
- To be proactive in reducing the risk of bullying by developing a school ethos in which bullying is unacceptable and pupils are encouraged to report bullying.
- To set out a consistent, reasonable and proportionate school response to any bullying incident.
- To apply appropriate disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying.
- To ensure that all members of staff take all forms of bullying seriously and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place or continuing.
- To make all those connected with the school aware of its opposition to bullying, and make clear each person's responsibilities with regards the prevention of bullying.
- To ensure that ways of preventing bullying are part of a regular programme in PSHE lessons and assemblies.
- To safeguard and support the pupil (day or boarding) who has been bullied.
- To support pupils (day or boarding) and to provide suitable help and guidance for pupils who may bully others.
- To raise awareness of staff through training.
- To create a community in which all treat each other with dignity and respect.
- To use educational elements such as PHSE, assemblies, projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events, current affairs and so on to raise awareness, with discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice.
- To have clear policies communicated to parents, pupils and staff, and creating an environment of good behaviour and respect, with helpful examples set by staff and older pupils and celebrations of success.
- To involve parents and make sure that the pupils are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.
- To ensure that staff at Embley have the knowledge, policies and procedures to prevent and, if necessary, to deal with cyber bullying in school or within our school community;

2.1 This policy applies to all members of our school community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting. Embley is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this Cyber Bullying policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

2.3 Embley seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document. This document is available to all interested parties on our website and on request from the Senior or Prep School offices and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Acceptable Use Policy
E-Safety
Anti-Bullying
PSHE

3 Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying includes sending or posting harmful or upsetting text, images or other messages, using the internet, mobile phones or other communication technology. It can take many forms, but can go even further than face to face bullying by invading home and personal space and can target one or more people. It can take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others. It can include threats and intimidation, harassment, defamation, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation and unauthorised publication of private information or images. It can include messages intended as jokes, but which have a harmful or upsetting effect.

3.1 Prevention of Cyber Bullying

Staff at Embley will understand how to identify signs of cyber bullying and kept updated about the technologies that children commonly use.
It is made clear in staff meetings that staff should not have contact with current pupils on social networking sites (specifically should not be-friend pupils on Facebook). In addition, it is advisable not to have past pupils as friends.
Pupils will be informed about cyber bullying through curricular and pastoral activities: assemblies, workshops, Safer Internet Day, Anti-bullying Week, lessons (Computing and ICT, PSHE), etc.
Pupils and staff are expected to comply with the school's Acceptable Use Policy.
All e-communications used on the school site or as part of school activities off-site are monitored. Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying.

3.2 Procedures

Clear records are kept of all Cyber bullying incidents which are in line with Embley Anti-Bullying Policy.
  • All AUPs will be kept under review as technologies develop
  • Publicise rules and sanctions effectively
  • The IT department will use filtering, firewall, anti-spyware software, anti-virus software and secure connections to safeguard the pupils.

3.3 Response to Cyber Bullying

The responsibilities of the school and of pupils as set out in the Anti-Bullying Policy apply to cyberbullying. Most cases of Cyber bullying will be dealt with through the school's existing Anti-Bullying Policy. However, some features of Cyber bullying differ from other forms of bullying and may prompt a particular response. The key differences are:
  • impact: the scale and scope of Cyber bullying can be greater than other forms of bullying
  • targets and perpetrators: the people involved may have a different profile to traditional bullies and their targets
  • location: the 24/7 and anywhere nature of Cyber bullying
  • anonymity: the person being bullied will not always know who is bullying them
  • motivation: some pupils may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying

- evidence: unlike other forms of bullying, the target of the bullying will have evidence of its occurrence
- it is possible that a member of staff may be a victim and these responses apply to them too.

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 on how cyber bullying can be reported. Confidential records will be kept of all cyber bullying incidents.

4 Support for the person being bullied
- Offer emotional support; reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling
- Advise the person not to retaliate or reply. Instead, keep the evidence and take it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advise the person to consider what information they have in the public domain
- Unless the victim sees it as a punishment, they may be advised to change e.g. mobile phone number
- If hurtful or embarrassing content is being distributed, try to get it removed from the web. If the person who posted it is known, ensure they understand why it is wrong and ask them to remove it. Alternatively, contact the host provider and make a report to get the content taken down.
- In some cases, the person being bullied may be able to block the person bullying from their sites and services.

5 Guidance for staff
If you suspect or are told about a cyber-bullying incident, follow the protocol outlined below:

5.1 Mobile Phones
- Ask the pupil to show you the mobile phone
- Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image, to include the date, time and names
- Make a transcript of a spoken message, again record date, times and names
- Tell the pupil to save the message/image
- Go with the pupil and see the Assistant Head (Pastoral) in the Senior School or the Head of Prep in the Prep School or, in their absence, a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

5.2 Computers
- Ask the pupil to get up on-screen the material in question
- Ask the pupil to save the material
- Print off the offending material straight away
- Make sure you have got all pages in the right order and that there are no omissions
- Accompany the pupil, taking the offending material, to see the Assistant Head (Pastoral) in the Senior School or the Deputy Head of Prep in the Prep School
- Normal procedures to interview pupils and to take statements will then be followed particularly if a child protection issue is presented.

6 Guidance for pupils

If you believe you or someone else is the victim of cyber-bullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible.

- Do not answer abusive messages but log and report them
- Do not delete anything until it has been shown to an adult (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber-bullying)
- Do not give out personal IT details
- Never reply to abusive e-mails
- Never reply to someone you do not know
- Stay in public areas in chat rooms.

7 Guidance for parents

It is vital that parents and the school work together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying. Embley informs parents of the cyber-bullying policy and the procedures in place to deal with cyber-bullying.

- Parents can help by making sure their child understands the school's policy and, above all, how seriously Embley takes incidents of cyber-bullying.
- Parents should also explain to their children legal issues relating to cyber-bullying.
- If parents believe their child is the victim of cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving an offensive text on their or their child's mobile phone) and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything.
- Parents should contact Leah Goodey, Deputy Head Pastoral in the Senior School or Sheina Wright, Head of Prep in the Prep School as soon as possible. A meeting can then be arranged with the Headmaster or Head of Prep School, which may involve other relevant members of staff.
- If the incident falls in the holidays Embley reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school.

8 Document Information

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