

Scoil Náisiúnta Ros Eó,  
Ros Eó,  
Co. Bhaile Átha Cliath.  
K56 VK88  
Guthán : 01 843 7095  
Facs: 01 843 7095  
Email: [rushns.ias@eircom.net](mailto:rushns.ias@eircom.net)  
Website:  
[www.rushnationalschool.ie](http://www.rushnationalschool.ie)  
R.C.N: 20119270



Rush National School,  
Rush,  
Co. Dublin.  
K56 VK88  
Tel: 01 843 7095  
Fax: 01 843 7095  
Email: [rushns.ias@eircom.net](mailto:rushns.ias@eircom.net)  
Website:  
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## Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy

Rush National School aims to ensure that children are safe and feel safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination. This school is committed to teaching children the knowledge and skills to be able to use ICT effectively, safely and responsibly.

### Definition of Cyber Bullying

Cyber-bullying is bullying through the internet or mobile phone, often through social networking sites used by young people.

### Aims of Policy

- 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.
- Ensure that reported incidents of cyber bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly.

### Understanding Cyber-Bullying

- Cyber-bullying is the use of ICT (usually a mobile phone and/or the internet) to abuse another person.
- It can take place anywhere and involve many people.
- Anybody can be targeted including pupils and school staff.
- It can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorized publication of private information or images etc.
- While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013**, states:

*2.1.3. In addition, in the context of these procedures placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.*

## What is Cyber-Bullying?

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

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 real-time conversations online using 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’ sites 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.

## Procedures to Prevent Cyber-Bullying:

- Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises.
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies, and other curriculum projects.
- The school will engage a speaker to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for 5th and 6th classes biannually. Classes 1st to 6th will participate in anti-bullying initiatives.
- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies.
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying.
- Pupils and parents will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school.
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal’s office and monitored regularly.
- Procedures in our school Anti-bullying Policy shall apply.
- The Gardaí will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content.
- This policy will be reviewed biannually. Parents and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and any related school procedure.

Principal: Morgan Doran

Deputy Principal: Norma McElligott

- Pupils are obliged to store their turned off mobile devices in a central location each day in school. Devices are to be collected and turned on **only** at the end of each school day.
- Parents and pupils are reminded annually of the terms and conditions related to Facebook, i.e. children should be 13 years or older before they can open an account.
- Classroom use of the computer is closely monitored by the teacher.

## **Information for Pupils**

If you are being bullied by phone or on the Internet:

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent or call an advice line.
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible. Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.
- Don't give out your personal details online – if you are in a chat room, do not say where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you to build up a picture about you.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent or teacher as evidence.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender.
- There is plenty of online advice on how to react to cyber bullying. For example, [ie.reachout.com](http://ie.reachout.com) and [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org) have some useful tips.

## **Text/Video Messaging**

- You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning-off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number.
- If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider about this.
- Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages.
- Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.
- Don't delete messages from cyber bullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.

## **Timeframe, Implementation and Review**

### **Ratification, Communication, Implementation and Review**

A copy of the draft Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy was made available to all members of staff and to the Board of Management. The suggestions/proposals arising were considered by the Policy Committee in finalizing this policy.

- The draft policy was subsequently reviewed and formally ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_.

Subsequent to Board of Management ratification, the policy was made available on the shared teacher drive on the school IT network to all teaching staff members. Parents were made aware of the existence and availability of the policy by means of School Newsletter and this policy is also included on the Rush National School website at [www.rushnationalschool.ie](http://www.rushnationalschool.ie)

- The plan will be implemented by the teachers and SNAs supported by the Board of Management from \_\_\_\_\_.
- It will be reviewed every \_\_\_ years.
- Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix 1

## Explanation of slang terms used when referring to cyber-bullying activity:

1. **Flaming**: Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
2. **Harassment**: Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
3. **Cyber Stalking**: Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety
4. **Denigration**: 'Dissing' someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
5. **Impersonation**: Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes someone look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships
6. **Outing and Trickery**: Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online
7. **Exclusion**: Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a 'buddy list'

This list is not exhaustive and the terms used continue to change

# Appendix 2

## Useful Websites

[www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)

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

[www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com)

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

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

[www.antibullying.net](http://www.antibullying.net)

<http://ie.reachout.com>

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

[www.sticksandstones.ie](http://www.sticksandstones.ie)