Seagate Anti-Bullying Policy

Version – 1.1

Date of publication – 1.03.2021

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Seagate Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy applies to all activities run by Seagate Church, and associated attendees irrespective of age.

Definition of bullying

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as:

The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or through cyber space.

Objectives of this policy

- All children, workers, parents and carers should be aware of the anti-bullying policy within the organisation and what they should do if bullying arises
- All workers should have an understanding of what bullying is, be aware of possible signs if it is happening and follow the policy when it is reported
- Children and parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported

Prevention

Strategies can be adopted to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing a set of group rules
- Signing a behaviour contract
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters

Procedures

- Report the bullying incident to children's leaders
- Ensure that details are carefully checked before action is taken
- In all cases of bullying, the incidents should be recorded by the worker
- Consideration should be given to informing the parents/carers of the bully, but this should only be done if workers are satisfied there is no bullying/abuse going on at home that might exacerbate the situation
- If it is thought that an offence has been committed, consideration should be given to contacting the police
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and stopped quickly
- Help should be offered to help the bully address his/her behaviour

Outcomes

- The children's worker involved in dealing with the incident should issue a warning to the child concerned
- An apology should be given by the child who has bullied another
- If possible, those involved will be reconciled
- After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, the situation should be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place
- After the incident(s) have been investigated parents/carers should be informed of the action taken
- All incidents must be recorded in the log book

Cyberbullying

These days bullying doesn't just happen face to face. Cyberbullying – or bullying via digital technologies like mobile phones and computers – is a different threat to children. It can be harder to spot and more difficult to stop than 'traditional' bullying, but understanding the dangers can help keep children safe.

What's different about Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is different to other forms of bullying because:
- it can occur anytime, anywhere – the victim can even receive bullying messages or materials at home
- the audience to the bullying can be large and reached very quickly and easily if messages are passed around or things are posted online
- it can be unintentional – people may not think about the consequences of sending messages or images

Characteristics of Cyberbullying
- Anonymous – cyber abusers can use the internet using pseudonyms
- Accessibility – cyber bullies can approach their victims at any time
- Loss of inhibition – the anonymity of the internet can encourage cyber bullies to commit acts which they might not otherwise do in person.

Ways of Cyberbullying

The most common ways of cyberbullying are through:
- Video chat apps, chat rooms, blogs and forums – although many of these are moderated, people involved in discussions can be sent abusive responses
- text messaging – abusive and threatening texts can be sent to mobile phones
- abusive or prank phone calls – these can be made to a child's mobile phone
- picture and video clip messaging – offensive images can be sent to mobile phones
- email – new addresses can be set up in minutes and used to send offensive messages and images
- social networking and messaging apps (like Omegle,Facebook, Kik Messenger, WhatsApp) – offensive or humiliating messages and images can be posted on these sites
- identity theft – in many cyber environments fake profiles can be set up pretending to be someone else with the aim of bullying others
- instant message services – quicker than email, these allow users to have 'real time' conversations, and offensive messages or content can be sent in this way
- webcams – usually used to view each other when chatting online, children can also be sent abusive images or encouraged to act in an inappropriate way while being filmed
- video chat apps (like ooVoo) – children may find themselves the subject of films being shown (e.g. what is wrongly called 'happy slapping') or be accidentally exposed to pornographic images
- gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds – chatting is possible within many games, and name calling, abusive remarks and picking on particular players can occur

Protecting children from Cyberbullying

As with other types of bullying it's important for you to listen to children and react with sympathy. You should let children know that bullying is always wrong and that seeking help is the right thing to do.

It's important for them to learn to respect and look after their friends online and to think before they post or text. To help keep children safe you can:

- encourage them to talk to you or another adult about anything that is upsetting them
- watch out for them seeming upset after using the internet or their mobile phone
- try to understand the ways in which they are using their digital technologies
- ask them to think about how their actions affect other users
- suggest that they only use moderated chat rooms
- encourage them to show you any abusive or offensive emails or messages they've received and keep a record of them
- help them report any abuse to their internet service provider, the website manager/moderator, the mobile phone company or the police
- tell them never to respond to any abusive messages or calls – this is frequently what the abuser wants
- discuss keeping their passwords safe and avoiding giving their name, email address or mobile phone number to people outside their circle of friends and family
- change email address or telephone number if the abuse continues
- turn on in-built internet safety features and install computer software to ensure that you only receive emails from people you have chosen and to block unwanted images
- tell them about places where they can go for help and support like ChildLine, CEOP's ThinkuKnow and Childnet International, Bullying UK.