Gaelscoil na Móna's Cyberbullying Policy

Introduction
The internet and other digital technologies such as mobile phones can be positive and powerful ways for children to socialise with their peers and can contribute to their social and personal development. However misuse of these technologies can have devastating and long lasting consequences for both the perpetrator. and victims.

Aims
- To ensure children and staff are not the subject of cyber bullying
- To help prevent children taking part in cyberbullying
- To ensure that children, parents and staff know how to respond to incidents of cyberbullying

Definition
Cyberbullying is the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), particularly the internet and mobile phones deliberately to upset someone else.

Understanding Cyberbullying

24/7 and the invasion of home/ personal space.
Cyberbullying can take place at any time and can intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe or personal.

The audience can be very large and reached rapidly.
The difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages means the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than for other forms of bullying. Electronically forwarded content is hard to control, and the worry of content resurfacing can make it difficult for targets to move on.

People who cyberbully may attempt to remain anonymous.
This can be extremely distressing for those being bullied. The person cyberbullying may never be in the same physical space as their target.

The profile of the bully and target.
Cyberbullying can take place both between peers and across generations; teachers have also been targets. Age or size are not important. Bystanders can also become accessories to the bullying; for example, by passing on a humiliating image.

Some instances of cyberbullying are known to be unintentional.
It can be the result of not thinking (something sent as a joke may be deeply upsetting or offensive to the recipient) or a lack of awareness of the consequences – for example saying something negative online about another pupil, or friend that they don't expect to be forwarded or viewed outside their immediate group.

Many cyberbullying incidents can themselves act as evidence.
This is one of the reasons why it's important to know how to respond.

Examples of cyberbullying

- threats/intimidation
- repeatedly sending unwanted texts, emails, instant messages
- derogatory comments
- exclusion
- invasion of privacy, including distribution/publication of personal information/images/videos
- distribution/publication of edited images/videos (using Photoshop etc)
- unauthorised distribution/publication of personal information or images/videos

Investigating

Preserve the evidence

- Victims should retain any text or emails sent to their device (phone or computer). These should be kept on the actual device or service (saved to own phone, emails saved instead of forwarded, social networking messages saved on that site if possible etc, recording conversations on instant messaging services (IM) such as MSN, if possible)

- A screen shot of web pages may be taken (Ctrl + Prnt Scrn and paste onto new Word Document)

- Record the UR (Address in the address bar)Schools should advise pupils and staff to try to keep a record of the abuse, particularly the date and time, the content of the message(s), and where possible a sender's ID (e.g. username, email, mobile phone number) or the web address of the profile/content. For example, taking an accurate copy or recording of the whole webpage address will help the service provider to locate the relevant content.

Keeping the evidence will help in any investigation into the cyberbullying by the service provider, but it can also be useful in showing what has happened to those who may need to know, including parents, teachers and the police.

Images/Videos

Police may be contacted in these cases:

- If images are involved in the cyberbullying it is important to ascertain if these might be illegal or raise child protection concerns. Indecent or sexual images of children (defined as people under the age of 18) are illegal to produce, circulate or possess. These include images that children have taken of themselves or their friends, e.g. using a mobile phone.
- Images or videos which record a crime, e.g. assault on a child

If images/videos do not constitute a crime or child protection issue, steps will be taken to contain the incident.

Identify the bully
Although the technology seemingly allows anonymity, there are ways to find out information about where bullying originated. However, it is important to be aware that this may not necessarily lead to an identifiable individual. For instance, if another person's phone or school-network account has been used, locating where the information was originally sent from will not, by itself, determine who the bully is. There have been cases of people using another individual's phone, or hacking into their IM or school email account to send nasty messages.

Steps
- Interview witnesses e.g. children who left comments on websites
- Identify the number of a mobile phone by cross referencing with either school records or with other children's phonebooks (consensually). If a withheld number was used AND police are involved the number may be identifiable via the service provider.
- examine all preserved evidence.
- If a potential criminal offence has been committed, police may have to investigate.

Investigating allegations against staff

Some messages might allege abuse against a teacher or other member of staff. Online allegations should be handled in the same way as other allegations against staff.

Helping the victim
The victims of cyberbullying should be treated in the manner outlined in the school's Child Protection Policy. S/he should be re-familiarised with the Seven Point Anti-Cyberbullying Code.

Working with the bully
Steps will be taken to help a child who has cyberbullied to:
- change their attitude
- change their behaviour
- access any necessary support.

Sanctions
In imposing sanctions, consideration will be given to:
- the impact on the victim
- how widespread were the effects (text or posting on a public website etc)
- the motivation of the bully – was the incident intentional, retaliatory etc

Sanctions may include:
- withdrawal/limitation of internet privileges
- withdrawal/limitation of permission to bring a mobile phone or other device to school
- other sanctions in line with the school's Anti-bullying Policy

Prevention

Taking due regard of the age of the children, pupils will be trained in:
- the Seven Point Anti-Cyberbullying Code
- the Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies Policy (AUP)
- the ICT Code of Practice

Parents will be asked to read, discuss with their child and sign the ICT Code of Practice.

Parents will be given a copy of the Seven Point Anti-Cyberbullying Code to discuss with their child.

Parental and Carer Advice on Cyberbullying will be provided by the school.

Links with other policies

This policy will be implemented in relation to:
- Gaelscoil na Móna's Child Protection Policy
- Gaelscoil na Móna's Anti-Bullying Policy
- Gaelscoil na Móna's Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies Policy

Useful numbers/links

O2: ncb@o2.com or 08705214000.

Vodafone: 191 from a Vodafone phone or 08700700191 for Pay Monthly customers and 08700776655 for Pay as you Go.

3: Call 333 from a 3 phone or 08707330333.

Orange: Call 450 on an Orange phone or 07973100450

for Pay as you Go, or 150 or 07973100150 for Pay Monthly.

T-Mobile: Call 150 on a T-Mobile phone or 08454125000.

www.youtube.com/t/terms

http://uk.myspace.com

http://pic3.piczo.com/public/piczo2/piczoAbuse.jsp

http://support.msn.com/default.aspx?mkt=en-gb

http://www.facebook.com/help/?safety

Monitoring and Evaluation - biennially		
Reviewed by	Amendments	Date

References

http://www.digizen.org/resources/cyberbullying/full-guidance.aspx
(last accessed 09/10/10)

http://publications.education.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/Cyberbullying-leaflet.pdf
(last accessed 09/10/10)

http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/cyberbullying/
(last accessed 09/10/10)