



Cyber-Bullying Policy

This Policy was approved by:

The Board of Trustees: January 2024

Date for Review: January 2026

Fred Longworth High School embraces the advantages of modern technology in terms of the educational benefits it brings. Technology is a major part of modern society and many young people use and access technology in their social time. However, the school is mindful of the potential for bullying to occur through this use of technology. Central to the school's anti-bullying policy is the belief that 'all students have a right not to be bullied' and that 'bullying is always unacceptable'. Under powers given to schools we are able to monitor cyber-bullying and deal with this as part of our anti-bullying policy, whenever this takes place.

Definition of Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeated over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself.

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic means:

- By text message or calls on a mobile phone
- The use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation (e.g. sending offensive or threatening pictures or images)
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating materials on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, gaming and social networking sites
- Hijacking/cloning email accounts
- Making threatening, abusive and defamatory or humiliating remarks in a chat room or via gaming sites
- Abusing other students through any gaming, social media platform, website or application including Tik Tok, Snapchat, Instagram and Minecraft.

Cyber-Bullying and the Law

There is no legal definition of cyber-bullying within UK law. However there are a number of existing laws that can be applied to cases of cyber-bullying and online harassment, namely:

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003
- The Defamation Act 2013 which came into force on 1st January 2014
- The Online Safety Act 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

Fred Longworth High School is mindful of these laws and we take cyber bullying very seriously.

Policy

Fred Longworth High School educates its students both in the proper use of telecommunications and about the serious consequences of cyber-bullying and will, through assemblies and PSHE lessons, continue to inform and educate its students in these fast changing areas.

Fred Longworth High School trains its staff to respond effectively to reports of cyber-bullying or harassment and has systems in place to respond to it. Fred Longworth High School endeavors to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems such as Sophos and Net Support. We will undertake an annual audit of filtering and monitoring systems and our cyber-security protocols. Where appropriate and responsible, Fred Longworth High School audits ICT communications and regularly reviews the security arrangements in place.

Whilst education and guidance remain at the heart of what we do, Fred Longworth High School reserves

the right to take action against those who take part in cyber-bullying.

- All bullying is damaging but cyber-bullying and harassment can be invasive of privacy at all times. These acts may also be criminal acts.
- Fred Longworth High School supports victims and, when necessary, will work with the Police to detect those involved in criminal acts.
- Fred Longworth High School will use, as appropriate, the full range of sanctions to correct, punish or remove students who bully fellow students or harass staff in this way, both in or out of school. This will be in line with our Anti-bullying policy/Mobile phone policy.
- Fred Longworth High School will use its power of confiscation where necessary to prevent students from committing crimes or misusing equipment.
- All members of the School community are aware they have a duty to bring to the attention of the Head of Year any example of cyber-bullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.

Guidance for staff investigating issue

Staff are made aware of online safety issues through staff training. If you suspect or are told about a cyber-bullying incident, the protocol outlined below should be followed:

Mobile Phones

- Ask the student to show you the specific information/images on their mobile phone if appropriate.
- Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image, to include the date, time and names.
- Make a note of a spoken message and again record date, times and names.
- Tell the student/parent to save the message/image.

Computers

- If this in school ask the student to get up on-screen the material in question.
- Ask the student 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 student, taking the offending material, to see the Head of Year/Pastoral Deputy Head.
- Normal procedures to interview students and to take statements will then be followed particularly if a child protection issue is presented.

Guidance for students

If you believe you or someone else is the victim of cyber-bullying, you must speak to a trusted adult as soon as possible. This person could be your Form Tutor, Head of Year or Pastoral Deputy Head.

- Do not answer abusive messages but log and report them.
- Do not delete anything until it has been shown to your Head of Year or Pastoral Deputy Head. (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 someone you do not know.
- Stay in public areas in chat rooms.

Guidance for parents

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

1. Parents should also explain to their sons or daughters the legal issues relating to cyber-bullying.
2. 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.
3. Parents should contact the Head of Year as soon as possible if this takes place in term time and by informing the Head of Year it may prevent the issue from escalating in school. A meeting can then be arranged if necessary with the Head of Year, which may involve other relevant members of staff. If the Head of Year is absent, parents should contact the Pastoral Deputy Head.
4. If the incident falls in the holidays Fred Longworth High School reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school, which spills over into the school. At the same time, parents should involve The Police if it is appropriate to do so. If an incident of cyber-bullying occurs outside of term time the school should be made aware once term commences. If it is an extremely serious matter, parents may contact the Pastoral Deputy (DSL) via email and he will respond if he is available to do so.
5. Parents should be aware of the legal guidelines and recommended age restrictions for social media sites. Parents should look at how they monitor their child's use of social media/mobile phones. Outside of school hours, parents are ultimately responsible for their children's' mobile phone use/online behaviour; our role in school is to support and educate. Parents should deal with their child if they are involved in cyber-bullying, working with the school to ensure that it is not repeated.
6. Heads of Year will report serious issues of cyber-bullying to the Pastoral Deputy, who may decide to use an appropriate sanction (see anti-bullying policy).

Online Safety at home

Several sites offer helpful advice to parents, particularly with respect to how they can best monitor their child's use of the computer at home to keep their children safe. Important and useful information can be found on the following sites:

1. Bullying.co.uk
2. Thinkuknow.co.uk
3. DfE 'Advice for parents and carers on cyber-bullying'
4. FLHS website – Online Safety

Acceptable use of ICT Policy

The school has an acceptable use of ICT policy, which is signed by students, parents and staff. This is displayed in ICT rooms and is monitored as per the school's online safety policy.

Getting offensive content taken down

Where online content is upsetting and inappropriate, and the person or people responsible for posting is known, the quickest way to get material taken down is likely to be to ensure that the person who posted it understands why the material is unacceptable and to request that they remove it. If the person responsible has not been identified, or will not take material down, the Online Safety Lead/Pastoral Deputy will need to contact the host (for example, the social networking site) to make a report to get the content taken down. At times the school may ask parents to contact the provider. The material posted may breach the service provider's terms and conditions of use and can then

be removed. Parents will need to be informed and, in some situations, parents may need to contact the provider.

Policy Review

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Management Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Mobile Phone Policy and Online Safety Policy. It will be reviewed every year and discussed at SLT and Trustee Board meetings.

The SLT leads for this policy are the Pastoral Deputy and the Director of Inclusion.