



# ANTI-BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING POLICY

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## **1.- RATIONALE.**

We currently live in a changing society that demands that education continually adapts to the social characteristics of the moment and today the problem of bullying is a reality in the educational context. No one should underestimate the fear that a bullied child or teenager may feel. Ignored bullying can have a very negative impact on a child's teaching and learning process, so we must ensure that all members of the school community know the procedures to follow if it happens.

The school plays a significant role with regard to bullying, one of its functions being to put in place all the necessary mechanisms to prevent and eradicate all types of violent behaviour.

Bullying or abusive behaviour will not be accepted or tolerated at Newton College. Therefore, in the face of these behaviours, all members of the educational community must act preventively and proactively.

## **2.- DEFINITIONS.**

### **2. 1.- What is bullying?**

Bullying in a school environment is the effect of repeated actions, sustained over time, with the intention of humiliating and subjecting any person to verbal, psychological or physical intimidation, conducted by an individual or group.

### **2. 2.- What is Cyberbullying?**

Cyberbullying, also known as cyber harassment, cyberstalking or online bullying, is a form of bullying through the use of the means of new information and communication technologies<sup>1</sup> to persecute and bully a person or a group of people. New technologies and social networks are used to threaten, insult, attack, humiliate or slander a person or group of people by posting, commenting on or spreading rumours, images or information without the consent of the person concerned.

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<sup>1</sup> Mobile phones, tablets, computers, consoles or virtual gaming devices, etc.

### **3.- CHARACTERISTICS.**

#### **3.1. Bullying.**

##### **3.1.1.- Identification.**

It is necessary to differentiate bullying from sporadic incidents and attacks in interpersonal conflicts and other violent manifestations. In order to consider behaviour as bullying, four diagnostic criteria must be met, which must occur simultaneously, regardless of the personality of the possible victim.

The criteria are the following:

##### **a) Intent:**

The aggression produced does not constitute an isolated event, it is directed at a specific person with the intention of making them a victim. Although the victim does not provoke the situation, there is an express intention to do harm on the part of the aggressor or aggressors.

##### **b) Repetition:**

Aggression is constant and prolonged in time, with repetition and a combination of physical, verbal or psychological aggression, whether direct or indirect, so that the victim, in addition to suffering continuously, has the expectation of continuing to suffer abuse and being the target of future attacks. Moreover, the social context in which it develops (peer group or school) is usually stable, thereby reducing the possibilities of getting away from it.

##### **c) Imbalance of power:**

The aggression features an inequality of physical, psychological or social power, which generates an imbalance of forces in interpersonal relationships. The defencelessness of the victim, the asymmetry between the parties, with the establishment of an unbalanced abuse of power structure between victim and aggressor or aggressors.

##### **d) Defencelessness and personalization:**

The target of the aggression is usually a single student or a small group of students, who is / are placed in this way in a defenceless situation. The victim perceives the bullying as an extremely gruelling experience, and does not have the necessary resources to overcome it.

### **3.1.2. Types of behaviour.**

Bullying can be carried out through the following types of behaviour and more than one type may be adopted:

- Scorn and ridicule.
- Coercion.
- Physical assaults (hitting, pushing, kicking, spitting, etc.).
- Verbal attacks (insults, use of nicknames, etc).
- Psychological attacks such as spreading false and / or offensive rumours.
- Intimidating and threatening behaviour.
- Behaviour of social exclusion and marginalization.
- Theft, extortion, blackmail and causing damage to personal belongings.

### **3.2.- Characteristics of cyberbullying.**

The spaces where our students mingle is no longer limited mainly to school or other physical spaces, such as nearby parks or sports fields. Currently, technologies have established a new relationship context, cyberspace, whose characteristics and possibilities represent a new context in which a type of bullying can occur - cyberbullying.-.

The main characteristics of this new form of bullying are:

#### **a) There is no specific physical space.**

It can be email, a chat, instant messages, websites, internet video games, a blog, different social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat ...), therefore, it goes beyond the walls of the school, but also extends to any part of the city, or even the world, in a matter of minutes.

#### **b) There is no specific time or moment.**

Virtual space is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, therefore, anyone can use it, access the information that appears there, edit texts, etc. at anytime whatsoever.

#### **c) The information that is shared the virtual space lasts in time.**

That is, if we talk about showing a photograph or having a conversation, everything that is exposed on the network always remains there (for months, years or even decades).

#### **d) It can have a multiplier effect.**

A single act - uploading an image or posting a humiliating comment on the web - can be seen and shared by many other people at the same time. Therefore, it is not necessary for the same person to attack another person several times for the bullying to be repeated.

**e) It makes it easier for violence to be exerted without the person being identified.**

Those who carry out violence can use a false profile, impersonate another person, or even not identify themselves. As a result, it can be more difficult, or even impossible, to know who is committing the violence and to take action.

Taking these elements into account, when we speak of cyberbullying we are faced with a type of bullying that goes beyond school hours, school spaces and that can occur at any time.

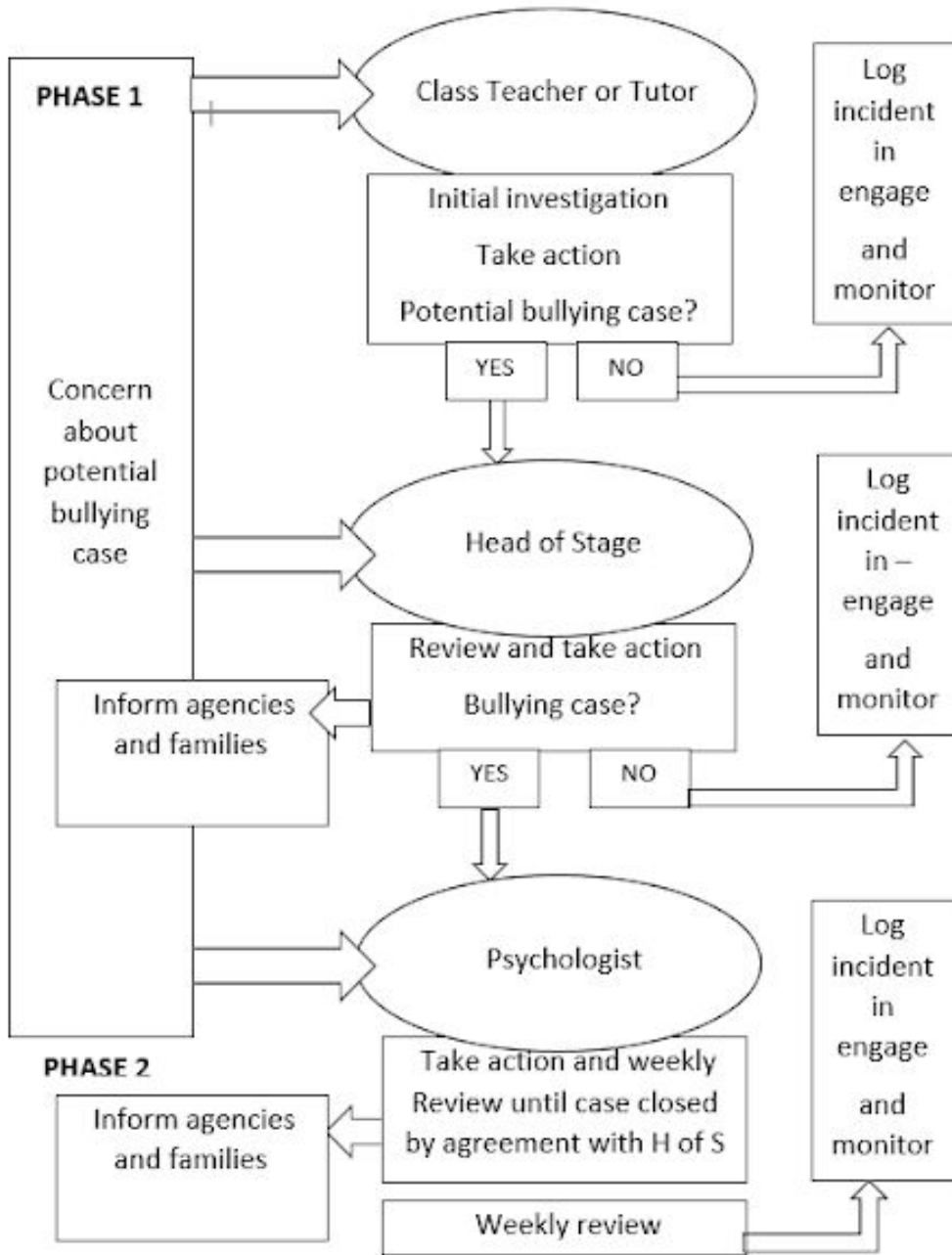
Cyberbullying can be especially harmful because:

- In certain circumstances it can be carried out with relative anonymity.
- It can hurt or humiliate a person in front of a large “audience”.
- The bully is not always aware of the magnitude of the damage they cause, since cyberbullying is rarely practiced face-to-face, allowing the victim to become depersonalized.
- The bullying situation can escalate rapidly as more people are involved.
- It does not stop at the end of the school day and can affect the victim in their own home or private space.

## **4. ACTION PROTOOL.**

This action protocol is structured in two phases:

Anti- Bullying Policy – Action protocol Flow-chart.



**4.1.- First phase.**

The first phase is structured as follows:



#### 4.1.1.- Reporting.

The first step to be followed by the person/s who are suffering from bullying or cyberbullying, will be to report this situation to the school:

This situation will then be communicated to any of the following members of the school community:

- The class tutor or a teacher in whom there may be more trust.
- The stage psychologist.
- The Management Team.

Any member of the School who has knowledge of a possible situation of bullying or cyberbullying, must inform the corresponding Stage Coordinator.

The silence surrounding bullying situations is caused by fear of retaliation when reporting. Therefore, and in order to facilitate the communication of these situations of presumed bullying, it is important to create and promote effective communication channels to stop this type of behaviour.

#### 4.1.2.- The class teacher

Any bullying situation will initially be reported to the pupil's class tutor.

##### **A) Initial assessment of the situation.**

The aim of this phase is to "size up" the possible bullying situation to avoid scaremongering.

The class tutor will study the facts and collect information on the situation with the utmost confidentiality and guaranteeing the same to any of the students from whom information is requested.

This assessment will be carried out objectively so that what happened is neither minimized nor exaggerated.

Minutes will be drawn up of each and every relevant information and evidence during this protocol by the class tutor.

##### **B) Gathering information.**

The protocol to follow for gathering information will be the following:

- Systematic **observation** of risk areas (playgrounds, corridors, class entrances and exits, class changes, dining room, etc.) to select data on the functioning of students within school, characteristics regarding their interaction, any levels of aggression, situations in which attacks occur, etc.

- **Interviews: the class tutor will conduct the interviews** he/she deems appropriate, trying at any moment, if possible, that the alleged bullied and bullying parties do not coincide.

The following interviews will be necessary:

- Interview with the pupil being allegedly bullied. The student must be guaranteed the confidentiality of their information.
- Interview with non-participating observers. These are members of the school who may know the facts, but do not actively participate in them.
- Interview with the alleged bully or bullies.

The purpose of these meetings are to find the key facts about the incidents. Key facts about the incidents should be written down and, at the end, students should write their names, date and sign.

Parallel to the protocol for gathering information, immediate simultaneous preventive measures may be put into place.

- Surveillance by teachers in those places where the alleged bullying may take place, always bearing in mind the essential confidentiality of the entire process.
- Accompaniment of the student who is allegedly being bullied by several trusted colleagues for as long as it is considered appropriate until the suffering disappears (Support Group). Their job will be to accompany the allegedly bullied student and report any incident that occurs to the teachers.
- Daily monitoring by the trusted teacher designated by the student, due to greater empathy or communicative or emotional closeness.

#### **4.1.3.- Analysis and evaluation of information.**

After the interviews, observation, etc., the class tutor will analyze the information collected and will make an assessment of the situation.

If the class tutor indicates that there are no signs of bullying, the case will be registered on Engage and a monitoring will be carried out.

But if the class tutor finds that there are signs of bullying, the case will be reported to the Head of Stage, who will review the case and make an assessment of the situation.

This assessment will be drawn up in a report which will indicate whether or not there are signs of bullying between students, and where appropriate, the seriousness of the situation and will set out suggestions for intervention or whether it is a matter of conduct that contravenes the School's Rules of Coexistence or the Internal Regulations of the corresponding stage.

At the end of this report, the Head of Stage will give an opinion:

- If the report's opinion concludes that the situation of bullying or cyberbullying is not confirmed, the School will close the investigation subject to the Protocol.
- If the report decision concludes that the situation of bullying or cyberbullying is confirmed, the Head of Stage will interview with the parents or legal guardians of the pupils being allegedly bullied and the bullies. They will be informed of the facts being investigated, the measures adopted, the steps to follow in managing the conflict, depending on the seriousness of the event, and their collaboration will be requested to resolve the matter. These meetings will be held separately.

Moreover, the Head of Stage will inform the Educational Psychology Department. Both the Head of Stage and the stage psychologist will agree on the steps to be followed, and every week the stage psychologist will review the case and inform the families of the situation.

#### **4.2.- Second phase.**

Confirmation of bullying or cyberbullying entails the adoption of several actions in parallel. On the one hand, assess the need to report the situation to other institutions, and on the other, the immediate implementation of educational and disciplinary measures.

To do this, the following steps will be followed in this phase:

##### **4.2.1.- Reporting the situation.**

Once this phase has been reached, the affected families will be contacted to request their collaboration and collect more information. Through individual meetings with each of the affected families, they will be informed of their child's behaviour at the School or on social networks, the specific intervention needs required, the measures that have been implemented and, where appropriate, of the actions that the School will undertake. These actions may consist of submitting the actions carried out by the School, in the first phase of the protocol, to the Department of Education.

When conflictive acts (vandalism, physical attacks, fights, thefts, etc.) go beyond the resources and competencies of the educational system, or when the competent organs of the School feel that they cannot address the problem appropriately, external help will be requested and the competent services will be duly notified, that depending on the situation could involve: Social Services, the Prosecutor's Office for Minors or the National Police.

When the conflicting acts could constitute a crime, they will be reported to the National Police directly.

#### **4.2.2.- Intervention.**

An action plan will be defined that will reflect the measures to be applied in the affected classroom or classrooms and measures with the students in conflict, which guarantee the individualized treatment of both the victim and the bully and the “spectator” students. All this without prejudice to the fact that the corrective measures contained in the current School Internal Rules, are applied to the bully or bullies.

During the intervention, the simultaneous preventive measures set out in the first phase will be maintained parallel to it, to protect the victim and / or prevent attacks. The Assessment Team will carry out a daily follow-up for two or three weeks of the student suffering from bullying and of those who are involved.

##### **4.2.2.1.- School measures.**

###### **A) Individual measures.**

*The main **actions to be taken with the bullied person/s** will be:*

- Advice on self-protection behaviour, assertiveness and help for the recovery of self-esteem.
- Proposal to participate in specific social skills courses or programmes within or outside school hours with family authorization.
- Specific surveillance of the relationship between the bully and the bullied person.
- Change of group, if the Educational Psychology Department deems it necessary.
- Other measures that the School may consider necessary at its discretion and have not been described above.

*The main **actions to be taken with the bully or bullies:***

Among others that the School may decide, and depending on the seriousness of the events, the following would be carried out:

- Work with each of the people concerned in the process of repairing the damage and requesting and accepting forgiveness, asking each party if they agree to start this process:
  - Request an apology orally and/or in writing.
  - Proposal of solutions, preparation of written commitments and review of them over a period of several weeks.
  - Carrying out other compensatory tasks for the victim of bullying, for the group or for the center.
  - Participation in a mediation process.
  - Carrying out tasks related to improving coexistence in School.
  - Involvement in socio-educational tasks.

- Provision of assistance in the search for alternatives to solve the difficulties:
  - Anxiety and anger management.
  - Managing emotions
  - Self-control
  - Social skills and conflict resolution
  - Change of group, if the Educational Psychology Department deems it necessary.
  - Other measures that the School may consider necessary at its discretion and have not been described above.
- Private reprimand of the tutor.
- Private reprimand by Stage Coordination or School Management.

*The main **actions to be taken with families:***

- Elaboration of agreements with the families so that they understand that we try to help each of the students involved, with the aim of alleviating the suffering and striving that such situations are not repeated.
- Guidance on how to help their children, whether they are victims or perpetrators.
- Request family collaboration for the surveillance and control of their sons and daughters and establish guidelines to coordinate communication on the socio-educational process.
- Information on possible external support and follow-up (referral to external psychological intervention services, participation in specific social skills courses or programmes, etc.).

**B) Collective measures.**

**Main actions to be taken with student peer observers:**

- Awareness campaigns may be carried out during class tutorial time:
- Watching videos or films with a follow-up discussion or commented reading of stories.
- Preparation of an anti-bullying decalogue.
- Establishment of written commitments not to incur this type of conduct.
- Peer support and/or mediation programme.
- Identify false beliefs about bullying and contrast with appropriate ideas.
- Dissemination of their rights and responsibilities.
- Review and possible organization of break times and patios.

**Main actions to be taken with teaching staff:**

- Inform all the teachers about the measures that should be taken immediately when a situation of alleged bullying is known.
- Explain the tasks to be carried out in the follow-up of these situations.
- Guidance on detection and intervention indicators.

Actions taken by School Leadership Team

- Termly review of number and nature of cases,
- Take necessary actions to reduce causes and triggers

#### **4.2.2.2.-Disciplinary measures.**

The procedure established in the Internal Regulations for each of the stages will be followed.

If the attitudes towards bullying do not cease, the initiation of a disciplinary file will be assessed individually, with its subsequent transfer to the Department of Education.

#### **4.2.3.- Completion and closure of the protocol.**

The evolution of the case will be monitored and analyzed and deadlines will be set to review the situation.

The process ends when the effectiveness of the measures adopted is verified.

#### **4.2.4 - Useful Links**

Anti-bullying Alliance UK

<http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

Family-based website article with tips for spotting potential bullying behaviour.

<https://www.verywellfamily.com/top-ways-to-spot-a-bully-460517>