

Medway Grid for Learning

Policies and Guidance



Cyber-bullying Guidance

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Introduction

This document is intended to provide general information and guidance related to connecting school LANs to the broadband Grid for Learning network, and running school systems and servers effectively to deliver a reliable, high performance service. It also provides specific policies adherence to which is necessary for the smooth and effective running of the whole network.

1 Background

In order to support schools in their review of anti-bullying policies and acceptable use policies, the following supporting text has been produced. It is expected that each school has a clear and published procedure for dealing with cyber-bullying.

Instant communication using a wide range of technologies is very attractive to children and young people. Access to, and use of, such technologies is fundamental to learning and the exchange of ideas and beliefs, developing each young person's involvement in their own learning.

As the range and availability of these services increase, so must the promotion of good practice and acceptable use policies. The most noticeable increase is in the ease with which anonymous messages may be sent and the publication of materials, comments or messages in a number of arenas, becoming 24/7 and global – a twist to the 'anytime anywhere' promotion of learning. However, it should also be recognised that the benefits of this technology outweigh the risk. There is a shared responsibility in ensuring appropriate use of the services and equipping all individuals with the knowledge and confidence to make known any communication with which they are uncomfortable.

2 Current methods of communication

- email
- mobile phone calls
- SMS
- IM (instant messaging)
- IRC (internet relay chat)
- Web chat
- Message boards
- Web sites
- Guest books

Whatever the form of communication it should be clear to all users how to report any incident of harassment, abuse or bullying. It is unlikely that a single solution for all forms of communication and users will be developed. In this shared responsibility we need to deliver a service that:

- strives to be better and safer for users
- empowers the users to make informed choices
- has clear information, advice and warnings
- encourages those who receive messages that make them uncomfortable to make them known, in the knowledge that effective support will be offered.

[Home office "Good practice models & Guidance for the Internet industry on: chat services, Instant messaging, web based services]

The MGfL works to support schools in the implementation of their anti-cyber bullying policies. Where any user has received an inappropriate email from a medway.org.uk account the procedure outlined below is provided as a support:

User reports the matter to the nominated adult / responsible person (School A)
Nominated IT manager will contact *support@medway.org.uk* with details of incident (School A)
MGfL support will identify location of sender and contact this school (School B) with the details and agree a time schedule for this school to contact the agreed person for (School A)
MGfL will contact School A and confirm the time line
School A and School B to conclude the matter in line with their agreed policies.

This is a matter to be resolved between the schools. MGfL serves to identify users and share the information with the relevant and agreed contacts.

It is recognised that schools will have different agreed rules regarding the use of communication devices, such as mobile phones. It is necessary for each school to have policies that clearly identify acceptable on-line behaviour and that which is unacceptable behaviour, including details of the consequences of such action. It should also be made clear to all users that such incidents may be referred to the appropriate external agencies.

3 Supporting Information

Web links:

<http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/>
<http://www.iwf.org.uk/>
<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
<http://www.chatdanger.com/>
<http://www.nch.org.uk/>
<http://www.childnet-int.org/>
<http://safety.ngfl.gov.uk/>