Providence English Private School

Cyber Safety Policy

PEPS, in partnership with parents and community, strives to prepare every student to be digitally literate, a lifelong learner, and a productive citizen.

Providence English Private School (PEPS) gives the technological advancement its careful attention for the benefit it has on students' lives, achievement, and career development. However, the school is mindful of the potential for bullying to occur. Central to the School's anti-bullying policy is the belief that 'all pupils have a right not to be bullied' and that 'bullying is always unacceptable'. The School also recognizes that it must 'take note of bullying perpetrated outside School which spills over into the School'. Based on this belief and on the UAE national restrictions set to terminate such types of bullying, the school has set this policy to protect all involved personnel.

Definition:

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

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

- Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones

- The use of mobile phone cameras to cause PEP Stress, fear or humiliation

- Posting threatening, abusive, or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites

- Using e-mail to message others

- Hijacking/cloning e-mail accounts

- Making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in chat rooms, to include Facebook, YouTube and Rate my teacher.

LEGAL ISSUES

Cyber-bullying is generally criminal in character. The law applies to cyberspace.

It is unlawful to spread defamatory information in any media including internet sites.

Cyber-bullying is a very serious concern that could cause irreparable psychological damage, especially to young people in their formative years.

Schools are also being urged to help stop cyber attacks by adopting an internet safety policy.

PEPS educates its pupils both in the proper use of telecommunications and about the serious consequences of cyber-bullying and will, through ICT lessons and assemblies, continue to inform and educate its pupils in these fast changing areas.

PEPS trains its staff to respond effectively to reports of cyber-bullying or harassment and has systems in place to respond to it. It blocks access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems and no pupil is allowed to work on the internet in the Computer Room, or any other location within the school which may from time to time be used for such work, without a member of staff present. Where appropriate and responsible, PEPS audits ICT communications and regularly reviews the security arrangements in place.

Whilst education and guidance remain at the heart of what we do, the 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.

- PEPS supports victims and, when necessary, will work with the Police to detect those involved in criminal acts.

- The school will use, as appropriate, the full range of sanctions to correct, punish or remove pupils who bully fellow pupils or harass staff in this way, both in or out of school.

- PEPS will use its power of confiscation where necessary to prevent pupils 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 principal any example of cyber-bullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.

GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

If you believe you or someone else is the victim of cyber-bullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible. This person could be a parent/guardian, your tutor, or the supervisor.

- Do not answer abusive messages but log and report them

- Do not delete anything until it has been shown to your Form Teacher, parents/guardian or the supervisor (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 ID details

- Never reply to abusive e-mails

- 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 pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying. PEPS informs parents of the cyber-bullying policy and the procedures in place to deal with cyber-bullying.

- Parents can help by making sure their child understands the school's policy and, above all, how seriously the school takes incidents of cyber-bullying

- Parents should also explain to their sons or daughters legal issues relating to cyberbullying (Refer to UAE law regarding digital crimes)

- 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

- Parents should contact the Head of the school as soon as possible. A meeting can then be arranged with the Head, which may involve other relevant members of staff

- If the incident falls in the holidays the school reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school. E-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.

Note: for any technical support and information please contact our IT department it@peps.ae