Anti-Cyber – Bullying Policy

1.   **Introduction**
     This Policy is an expanded expression of the policies contained in the Anti-Bullying Policy of the Abbey C.B.S. That Policy is Appendix 4 of the "Code of Behaviour for Students". It should be read in conjunction with Appendix 5 of the Code, "Policy on Mobile Phone Use". Particular attention should also be paid to Rule 11 of our School Rules, as contained in Appendix 1 of the said "Code of Behaviour for students".

2.   **Goals of this Policy**
     (a)   To promote every student's right to enjoy his learning and leisure free from cyber-bullying, both in the school and while engaged in school-related activities.

     (b)   To offer help, advice and support to the victims of cyber-bullying.

     (c)   To confront perpetrators of cyber-bullying and give them realistic, firm and consistent guidelines to put an end to such behaviour.

3.   **When will this Policy apply ?**

     It will apply throughout the school year, for all school activities, both on the Abbey site and anywhere else where students are under the supervision of staff (trips, tours, sports fixtures etc.). We wish to make it clear that the school may also take action upon any items published, by any means, if those items are seen to bring the Abbey School into disrepute or to cause serious damage to the reputation or well-being of any student or staff member. This is not confined to term-time only. One example from outside school hours which could be seen as part of an inter-pupil bullying issue would be blatant exclusion from an on-line game or making derogatory or insulting comments during such a game.

     Special Features of Cyber-Bullying

     The school will deal with cyber-bullying in the context of our anti-bullying policy. However, Cyber-bullying is different in a number of ways:

     (a)   Location: cyber-bullying can take place anytime and anywhere. It can follow the victim Into their own home and impact on them at night, at weekends and during break and Holiday time. This can deprive victims of traditional "safe havens".

     (b)   Anonymity: the victims may not know who is behind the bullying.
           The audience can be very large and reached rapidly

     (c)   Impact: The actions and negative comments posted by the perpetrator may be known to a very wide audience both in the school and in the wider teenage community.

     (d)   Evidence: Very often it will be possible to print off or take evidence of the Bullying. In this way the school authorities will be in a much stronger position as it, will not be just one person's word against the other's.

     (e)   Motivation: The perpetrator might not understand that his actions are bullying.

Responsibilities of students

Duties of School Employees
1.   Keep password secret and protect access to their accounts

2.   Do not post information publicly that they wouldn't want employers, colleagues, pupils or parents to see.

3.   Do not personally retaliate to any incident. Seek support and advice rather than personally engaging with the perpetrator.

4.   Report any incident to the school authorities in a timely manner.

5.   Retain any evidence of an incident – text, emails, voice mail, web site or instant message. Do not delete texts or emails. Screen prints should be taken of messages or Web pages and care should be taken to record the time, date and address of the site.

Action to follow a Complaint from a student

1.   The incident that they report will be recorded

2.   The school authorities will respond in a timely and appropriate manner

3.   A meeting will be held with the parents of all the students involved

4.   The school will assist an approach to third party agencies in order to request that inappropriate material is removed, where possible

5.   Where appropriate the school will contact the Gardaí

Where the Bully is a student

- The school will contact the parents of the student involved
- The school will work with and try to change the behaviour and attitude of the bully
- The school will deliver an appropriate sanction as outlined in the general Anti-Bullying Policy. Such sanctions may include Suspension and Referral to the Board of Discipline and, potentially, the Board of Management which has the power to exclude a student from the school.

Recording of issues
Records will be kept of all Cyber-Bullying incidents and the corresponding actions by the school. This will help monitor the effectiveness of the school's prevention activities and help ensure the consistency of investigations, support and actions.