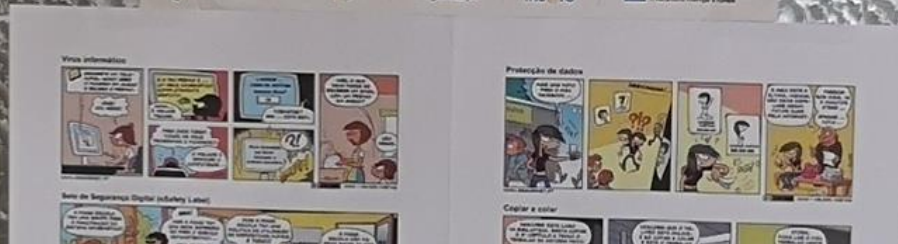




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# Cyberbullying Prevention Policies

## In Schools

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# CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying includes (despite not being limited to) electronic communications aimed at harming, causing fear, embarrassment, humiliation and panic in one or more persons. It includes the use of mobile phones, other computer equipment and the Internet, with the purpose of upsetting and intimidating someone. It may take the form of insults, defamation and identity theft, among other things.

Amongst many others, we can consider the following definitions of Cyberbullying:

- It matches the use of the Internet to intimidate and harass someone, defaming, insulting or attacking, usually anonymously;
- It is the act of harassing someone on the Internet by sending or posting malicious and threatening messages, generally anonymously;
- It is a negative behaviour, usually repetitive, based on cyberspace, which creates and / or maintains an imbalance of power;
- It is the use of mobile phones, electronic messages, electronic mail, chat rooms or social networks, like Twitter, Instagram or Facebook, to harass, threaten, defame or intimidate someone. It can happen through sms, texts and computer applications, or through social networks, either on forums or games, where people can see, participate and share content. It includes sending, publishing or sharing negative, harmful, false or malicious content about someone. It may include the sharing of personal or private information, intended to cause embarrassment or humiliation.

Unlike other forms of bullying, cyberbullying can be a unique event; however, it perpetuates itself, given the perennial nature of electronic publications, which can be seen repeatedly over time by a potentially unlimited audience.

Cyberbullying's preventive, repressive and solving policies in schools should be applied not only to students, but also to teachers and other employees of educational organizations. Plus, these policies should also be extended to families. These measures apply to activities and events that take place during school hours, including breaks, trips to and from school, study visits, and during all extracurricular activities. Similarly, schools should act in what concerns all situations of Cyberbullying that, although being perpetrated outside school/school activities, end up influencing the lives of members within the educational community.



Photo by John Schnobrich

## Prevention and Resolution Measures

The most important steps one can take in the fight against Cyberbullying in school include, among others likely to be adapted to certain specific realities, the following:

- Provide this document or similar (Preventive Policies of Cyberbullying) permanently for public consultation on school's electronic pages;
- Contact Lifelong Learning Organizations / ongoing training institutions, so that Cyberbullying may become part of their training instruction and learning actions;
- Carry out specific actions to explain the meaning of Cyberbullying, addressed to all educational community members, considering all school years;
- Cyberbullying will be the topic - for all levels of education and in all school subjects without exception - of a lesson to be given during one of the school terms. This lesson will be coordinated and planned during the first meeting of the Class Council of each school year;
- In what concerns Citizenship training, in all levels of education and in all school years, the subject of Bullying in general and Cyberbullying in particular will be compulsorily part of the activities to be developed;
- All educational community members must strictly respect the rules regarding the use of computers and computer networks available in all schools of the school group, under penalty of disciplinary action in accordance with the Rules of Procedure;
- At the beginning of each school year, parents and caregivers will be provided up-to-date information on all cluster policies concerning the use of ICTs, as well as some advice on the use of ICT by their pupils;
- During each school year, school will promote, in partnership with the Association of Parents and People in Charge of Education and other local, regional, national or international partners, training, analysis and discussion sessions specifically oriented towards parents and caregivers;
- Teachers will record, report and investigate, in coordination with the School Board, all incidents related to Cyberbullying, which will be sanctioned in accordance with the Rules of Procedure document and other applicable legislation;
- The whole school community will be encouraged to seek and share more information on this issue, encouraging regular consultation, among others, of the European website dedicated to promoting online safety in schools:

<https://www.esafetylevel.eu/>.



Photo by Isabell Winter



## Objectives on the School Cyberbullying Prevention Policy

- Ensure that all students, teachers and school staff, as well as parents and guardians, have, in a timely and always preventive perspective, all information regarding what Cyberbullying is and how it can be effectively and promptly fought;
- Ensure the existence of consensual practices and procedures, known to all educational community members, in order to prevent and solve in a positive way all Cyberbullying incidents;
- Ensure that all Cyberbullying incidents are quickly and effectively answered, in full respect for each and every one, regardless gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, ethnicity or race, in compliance with the inclusive nature of the School's Educational Project and the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic.



Photo by Derick Anies

**The safety of all is a fundamental pillar of democratic societies.**