



Newton International Academy, Barwa

Digital Citizenship and Online Safety Policy

*An International Community of
Learners, Striving for Excellence and
Celebrating Success*



NEWTON
INTERNATIONAL
ACADEMY | **BARWA**

Vision

An international community of learners striving for excellence and celebrating success

Mission

We aim to provide the highest quality of education possible for our students of all abilities. In doing so, we aim to positively encourage each student to achieve academic excellence, enjoy creative diversity, develop critical thinking skills, and become lifelong learners and responsible citizens. To achieve this, we will provide a diverse education in a safe, supportive environment that promotes self-discipline and motivation. We will provide and maintain a calm, trusting, and caring atmosphere where teaching and learning are meaningful and developed. We will work in partnership with our staff, students, parents, and the wider community to achieve our vision.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all members of the Newton International Academy community are equipped with the knowledge and skills to navigate the digital world safely and responsibly. This policy seeks to promote digital citizenship, enhance online safety, and prevent cyberbullying, thereby fostering a secure and supportive learning environment.

Rationale

In today's digital age, students are increasingly exposed to online risks, including cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and online exploitation. It is essential to educate students about safe online practises and responsible digital behaviour. This policy is designed to raise awareness, establish clear procedures for online safety, and promote a culture of respect and empathy in both physical and virtual interactions.

Newton Group Values:



Key Principles of Digital Citizenship

- 1. Respect:** Students are expected to treat others with respect online, just as they would in person. This includes refraining from engaging in cyberbullying and understanding the impact of their words and actions.
 - 2. Responsibility:** Students must take responsibility for their online behaviour and understand the consequences of their actions, including the importance of reporting any incidents of bullying or inappropriate behaviour.
 - 3. Safety:** Students should be aware of the potential risks associated with online activities and know how to protect themselves and their personal information.
 - 4. Empathy:** Encouraging students to consider the feelings of others and the impact of their online actions fosters a supportive and caring community.
- Integration of Digital Citizenship Across the Curriculum

Curriculum Design: Digital citizenship concepts will be integrated into various subjects, ensuring that all students receive a comprehensive understanding of online safety and responsible digital behaviour including completion of homework and coursework. Examples include:

- PSHE and ICT: Discussions on online safety, the impact of cyberbullying, and the importance of respectful communication.
- Humanities and Coursework subjects: Ethical considerations of digital content, including copyright issues and the implications of misinformation.
- Science: Responsible research practises, including evaluating sources for reliability and credibility.

Online Safety Guidelines

To promote online safety, the following guidelines will be implemented:

- **Acceptable Use of technology Policy:** All students, staff, and visitors must adhere to the school's Acceptable Use of technology Policy, which outlines appropriate behaviours when using digital technology.
- **Training and Awareness:** Regular training sessions on digital citizenship and online safety will be conducted for students, staff, and parents. Topics will include:
 - Understanding and identifying cyberbullying.
 - Password security and online privacy.
 - Recognising phishing attempts and online scams.
 - Safe social media practises.



- **Reporting Procedures:** Clear procedures for reporting cyberbullying and online safety concerns will be established. Students will be encouraged to report any incidents to trusted adults or designated staff members.

-

Crisis Management Protocols

- **Immediate Action:** In the event of a serious incident related to online safety or cyberbullying, the following steps will be taken:
 1. Ensure the safety and wellbeing of the affected student(s).
 2. Document the incident thoroughly, including dates, times, and involved parties.
 3. Notify the designated safeguarding lead immediately.
- **Communication with Parents:** Parents will be informed of the incident and the actions taken, ensuring transparency and collaboration in addressing the situation.
- **Involvement of External Agencies:** If necessary, external agencies such as law enforcement or child protection services will be contacted for further support and guidance.

Advice to Pupils on Cyberbullying

For Victims of Cyberbullying:

- **Remember:** Bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and usually replaced with a more constructive pattern of behaviour.
- **Report It:** Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent.
- **Avoid Retaliation:** Don't retaliate or respond angrily; this may encourage the bully to continue.
- **Protect Your Information:** Don't share personal details online, such as your address or school name.
- **Keep Evidence:** Save any bullying emails, messages, or images as evidence.
- **Document Incidents:** Note the time, date, and details about the sender of bullying messages or images.

Text/Video Messaging:

- **Turn Off Messages:** You can temporarily stop receiving messages by turning off incoming messages.
- **Change Your Number:** If the bullying persists, consider changing your phone number.
- **Report Abuse:** Don't reply to abusive messages; report them to your mobile service provider.



- **Keep Evidence:** Don't delete messages from cyberbullies; keep them as evidence.
- **Legal Action:** If the messages are threatening, report them to the police with all evidence.

Phone Calls:

- **Stay Calm:** If you receive an abusive call, don't hang up immediately; walk away for a moment before hanging up.
- **Inform Someone:** Always tell someone else, such as a teacher or parent.
- **Emails:**
- **Do Not Reply:** Never reply to unpleasant or unwanted emails.
- **Report It:** Keep such emails as evidence and inform an adult.
-

Web Bullying:

- **Report It:** If bullying occurs on a website, inform a teacher or parent, just as you would for face-to-face bullying.

Chat Rooms and Instant Messaging:

- **Stay Anonymous:** Use a nickname and don't share personal information.
- **Avoid Strangers:** Don't accept messages from people you don't know.
- **Seek Help:** Tell your parents or a teacher if you feel uncomfortable.

The Law:

Know Your Rights: Cyberbullying may be criminal. It is unlawful to send defamatory information online.

Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.

- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- If we become aware of any incidents of cyber-bullying, we will need to consider each case individually as to any criminal act that may have been committed. The school will pass on information to the police if it feels that it is appropriate or is required to do so.
- Qatar has its own national laws with regards to data protection and behaviours that are seen to be menacing or threatening, Police may be informed and become involved with serious incidents if need be.



- **Report Serious Incidents:** If incidents of cyberbullying occur, the school will assess each case individually and may involve the police if necessary.

Cultural and Contextual Sensitivity

- **Culturally Relevant Materials:** Ensure that the policy and related educational materials are culturally sensitive and relevant to the diverse backgrounds of the student population. This includes:
 - Addressing specific online risks that may be more prevalent in certain cultural contexts, such as issues related to privacy, data protection, and online harassment.
 - Incorporating perspectives and examples that reflect the diverse experiences of students from various nationalities.

Continuous Professional Development for Staff

- **Ongoing Training:** Staff will receive continuous professional development related to digital citizenship and online safety. This will include:
 - Regular workshops on current trends, risks, and best practises in online education.
 - Updates on new technologies and their implications for student safety and wellbeing.
 - Opportunities for staff to share experiences and strategies for effectively teaching digital citizenship concepts.

Implementation and Review

- **Implementation:** The Digital Citizenship and Online Safety Policy will be implemented through the collaboration of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), IT support, and the designated safeguarding lead. Regular training and awareness activities will be coordinated to ensure that all staff and students are informed of their responsibilities.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The policy will be reviewed annually to assess its effectiveness and make necessary adjustments based on feedback from students, parents, and staff. Success indicators will include reductions in reported cyberbullying incidents and increased awareness of online safety among students.

Conclusion

Newton International Academy Barwa is committed to fostering a culture of digital citizenship and online safety. By implementing this policy, we aim to empower our students to navigate the digital world responsibly and safely, ensuring that every student can learn and thrive without the threat of bullying or online risks.

