# Guidance on bullying, harassment or discrimination by electronic means

1. Bullying or harassment via electronic means (for example via email, social networking sites, messaging platforms, online forums, online broadcasts and mobile phones) is not acceptable and is covered by the *Dignity and Respect at Work and Study Policy* as well as the *DCU Social Media Policy.*

Thus, all members of the DCU community should refer to the *Dignity and Respect at Work and Study Policy* and the *DCU Social Media Policy* for guidance.

1. The *Dignity and Respect at Work and Study Policy* applies to all areas of the University’s operations and programmes. It applies to conduct which takes place:

* on any University campus;
* at any other university or other place (including abroad) where employees or students are representing the University or are engaged in a University connected activity;
* any virtual setting in relation to any University related activity including, but not limited to; zoom meetings, Microsoft teams, etc.
* at events such as social functions, conferences, sporting events, field trips or work assignments which are related to the University or are a University connected activity;
* in person, in writing, on the telephone, by email or online, including social media and instant messenger services, in relation to any University related activity.

1. Cyberbullying\* is defined as an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using mobile phones or the internet, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.[[1]](#footnote-0)

Cyberbullying can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms and mobile phones. It is repeated behaviour, aimed at scaring, angering or shaming those who are targeted.[[2]](#footnote-1)

The following are some common, but not exhaustive, examples of cyberbullying:.

* spreading lies about or posting embarrassing photos of someone on social media
* sending hurtful messages or threats via messaging platforms
* impersonating someone and sending inappropriate messages to others on their behalf.

1. The taking or sharing of intimate images without consent, otherwise known as image-based sexual abuse, is a criminal offence in Ireland under the new *Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020*.

Please refer to DCU’s Sexual Misconduct Policy for more information about harassment related to image based abuse.

1. It is important that you save any evidence of bullying/ harassment that has taken place. For example, you could take screen-shots of offending posts or images and save any emails.

You could also consider the following (where appropriate):

* Blocking or banning the user from contacting you
* Ensuring any personal contact details available on the web are made private, or only accessible to people you trust.
* Reporting the incident.

1. [The National Anti-Bullying Centre at DCU](https://antibullyingcentre.ie/bullying/cyberbullying/)

   \*Some of the aspects of cyberbullying may fall under the remit of the DCU Social Media Policy [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. [*How to stop bulling*, UNICEF](https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-to-stop-cyberbullying)  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)