

Loreto College, Swords
Anti -Bullying Policy (as incorporated into the Code of Behaviour)

Ethos: This policy is written in a spirit of caring for students based on the inspiration of Mary Ward the foundress of the Loreto Order. Her vision was grounded in the values of sincerity in communication, personal integrity, freedom of spirit, a discriminating attitude to truth and a cheerful disposition. In this spirit, Loreto College Swords maintains a proud tradition of “the interaction of students and committed staff, religious and lay, who have reflected on their society in the light of Gospel values and transmitted the resulting vision and challenge to the student body.”

Mission Statement in relation to Bullying: Our school, Loreto College, Swords is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in all areas of education. Our aim is to generate and maintain an inclusive climate of learning within which every student is enabled to develop and fulfil her own unique potential. We aspire to fulfil this commitment by fostering an atmosphere of respect, understanding and encouragement between all who teach, work and learn in the school, so that the development and contribution of every person can be acknowledged and can work together to benefit personal growth and the common good.

Scope of policy: This policy applies to the whole school community in their relationships with students – students, teachers, management, board of management, parents, office and all non-teaching staff.

Rationale:

1. The Policy is based on our Loreto ethos and desire to cultivate a caring school community.
2. Equality legislation prohibits discrimination on nine grounds: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and traveller status.
3. The Trustees have a statutory obligation to ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the principles and values of the religious and educational philosophy of the school.
4. Involving and encouraging all members of the school community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on bullying promotes partnership, ownership and implementation of a living policy.
5. The Department of Education and Science requires schools to have a written policy on bullying.

Definition of Bullying: Bullying consists of repeated inappropriate behaviour whether by word, physical action or otherwise, directly or indirectly applied, by one or more persons against another person or persons which undermines the individual person’s right to personal dignity. Note: This is not to be confused with the good-natured banter that goes on as part of the normal social interchange between students or the normal professional classroom management by teachers.

Examples of behaviour deemed to be inappropriate include:

- *Humiliation; including name-calling, reference to academic ability.*
- *Intimidation; including aggressive use of body language.*
- *Verbal abuse; including aggressive or obscene language.*
- *Physical abuse or threatened physical abuse.*
- *Offensive joke; whether spoken or by email, text messaging etc.*
- *Victimisation; including very personal remarks.*
- *Exclusion, isolation or any form of discrimination.*
- *Intrusion through interfering with personal possessions or locker.*
- *Threats, including demands for money.*
- *An attack by rumour, gossip, innuendo or ridicule on any individual's reputation.*
- *Any act or incitement to others to behave inappropriately.*

Any of the above, whether spoken, written or in cyber-space will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Statement on Bullying:

- *Every person in the school is entitled to respect and to be free from bullying.*
- *The school will work proactively, as far as it can, to ensure that bullying does not take place.*
- *Appropriate action will be taken in relation to reported incidents.*
- *Reporting incidents of bullying is responsible behaviour. All false/mischievous accusations will be treated as misbehaviour and dealt with according to the school Code of Behaviour.*
- *A record will be kept of all reported incidents of bullying.*
- *The matter will be dealt with seriously.*

The school has a support system for both those who bully and those who experience bullying.

Procedures for Noting and Reporting Incidents of Bullying:

- * *Students should report any incident of bullying to a teacher or a member of the pastoral care team. The Pastoral Care Team consists of: Chaplain/Guidance Counsellors/Class Teacher / Form Tutor / Year Head/Deputy Principal / Principal*
- * *Parents/guardians should contact the Year Head regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents.*
- * *A written record will be kept at all stages of the process.*

Response to Reported Incidents of Bullying:

Incidents of bullying behaviour, which are drawn to the attention of a teacher, will be dealt with in the following manner:

- *The teacher speaks to the student who is reporting, keeps a record and passes it to the Year Head*
- *The Year Head will interview all of the students involved in a bullying incident. In the absence of the Year Head, the Deputy Principal or Principal will be involved.*
 - *Those who are bullying and those who are being bullied will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem.*

- *Those who are bullying and those who are being bullied will be invited to write down any relevant details and an “Incident Report Form” will be completed. Any written statements from those involved in the incident will be attached to the Report Form.*
- *All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students involved.*
- *Records will be kept of all incidents and of the procedures that were followed.*
- *The Class Tutor(s) will be kept informed of all incidents and have access to relevant written records.*
- *The Year Head will monitor progress of students involved in a bullying incident at follow-up meetings.*
- *Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given by the Year Head to the bully to stop the inappropriate behaviour, pointing out how she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and trying to get her to see the situation from the victim’s point of view. If deemed appropriate, parents/guardians may be contacted. The incident will no longer be considered if there is no recurrence within that academic term.*
- *If the behaviour persists, the Year Head will inform the parents/guardians of those being bullied and those who are bullying. Thus, they will be given the opportunity of discussing the matter and be in a position to help and support their children. Appropriate sanctions will be imposed. The incident will no longer be considered if there is no recurrence within that academic year.*
- *If there is a serious incident the matter should be reported to the Deputy Principal or Principal, parents will be informed and consulted and appropriate sanctions applied.*
- *Where the incident is deemed to be very serious (e.g. gross misbehaviour or serious physical assault), the Deputy Principal or Principal should be informed immediately and he/she will inform the Board of Management, if deemed necessary.*
- *The Principal or Deputy Principal reserve the right to become involved in an incident of bullying.*
- *Both those who bully and those who are being bullied may be referred to in-school counselling or recommended to attend an outside agency if appropriate.*
- *In order to appeal a decision, a parent/student may request a review by writing to the Principal or the Board of Management.*
- *Appropriate sanctions may include:*
 - *Verbal warning.*
 - *A contract of good behaviour.*
 - *Withdrawal of privileges where appropriate.*

- Detention.
- In-school Suspension.
- Suspension.
- School Exclusion.

Records will be kept of all incidents and of the procedures that were followed.

Education on Bullying: *It is school policy to provide education on bullying in the following manner:*

- *Junior cycle students are facilitated through the S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal and Health Education) programme which incorporates bullying information and learning.*
- *Senior cycle students are facilitated through the Senior Religious Education programme which incorporates a focus on good relationships.*
- *Everyone is encouraged to participate in Friendship Week, which take place on an annual basis. Anti-Bullying lessons are delivered in class during this week and various activities take place.*
- *A 'Big Sister' system is in place, where 6th year students are paired with 1st year students at the start of the new academic year; training is provided for the 6th years on how to be a good 'big sister'. This pairing continues for one year.*
- *New students, who join the school at other times, are allocated a companion – ideally, this is another student from within the same year group.*
- *Positive reinforcement of behaviour for the good of the community is encouraged through the school Awards system and the various Leadership Committees.*

Consultation *in devising and reviewing this policy takes place with the education partners through:*

- *Discussion and agreement with students through the 6th & 5th year Leadership Committees, the Student Council and Class Representatives - the school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility amongst all its members.*
- *Contribution from parents primarily through the Parents' Association - the school recognises the right of parents to share in the task of equipping the student with life-skills and also recognises the need to keep parents informed on procedures.*
- *Input from staff as agreed at Staff Meetings - the school recognises that staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.*
- *In-service training and consultation with the Dublin Cool Schools' Project as developed within the North Eastern Health Service Executive Child Psychiatry Service - the school recognises the role of other agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.*

*The policy is subject to review at the discretion of the Board of Management.
This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 5 February 2008.*