

Loreto College Swords Anti-Bullying Policy



To comply with Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary published in September 2013

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Loreto College Swords has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
 - A positive school culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
 - Effective leadership;
 - A school-wide approach;
 - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - Supports for staff;
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. Examples are outlined in the table below.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a **once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum** where that message, image or statement **can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.**

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Examples of bullying behaviours

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| General behaviours which apply to all | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The "look" • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed. |
| Cyber | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages / Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology • Deliberate un-friending with the intention to upset |
| Identity Based Behaviours Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community). | |

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| Homophobic and Transgender | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person or Name calling e.g....used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks or threats |
| Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above |
| Relational | <p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look" |
| Sexual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment |
| Special Educational Needs, Disability or Gifted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule |

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

Reports of bullying may be made to any member of staff who will bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate Year Head, who will become the *relevant teacher*.

When necessary the Deputy Principal will be informed

The Principal reserves the right to intervene if the incident is deemed to be very serious or if the matter is not resolved.

Students may be referred to the Pastoral Care Team who will be available in a supportive role.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

Education and Training on Bullying:

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

- *A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.*
- *The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities, e.g. school outings, team sports etc.*
- *Development and promotion of a code to promote positive classroom behaviour for the school to be displayed publicly in classrooms*
- *The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated Notice Board exists in the staffroom where students are recognised for positive behaviour achievements and for the promotion of friendship. It also recognises students whose work has improved or is of a high standard or is helpful/kind to other school members.*
- *Junior Cycle students are facilitated through the S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal and Health Education) programme which incorporates bullying information and learning.*
- *Whole staff professional development on internet safety to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what internet safety is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.*
- *Senior cycle students are facilitated through the Senior Religious Education programme which incorporates a focus on good relationships and RSE programme.*
- *All students 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.*
- *Cyber Bullying lessons are delivered to inform students of the dangers associated with misuse of social network sites.*
- *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 to offer leadership support.*
- *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 school community is encouraged through the school Awards system and the various Leadership Committees.*
- *Arising from 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.*

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

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 which consists of: Chaplain/Guidance Counsellor/ 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.
- * All auxiliary staff are encouraged to report any incident of bullying behaviour witnessed or reported to them
- * A Report Box is available to students to report incidents if they do not wish to report directly to an adult or teacher
- * A written record will be kept at all stages of the process.

Response to Reported Incidents of Bullying:

Informal-determination that bullying has occurred

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 relevant teacher)
- 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 outside the classroom setting. The seriousness and the impact of the allegations will be assessed.
 - 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.
 - As an initial first step to resolving the issue and to restoring relationships, the relevant teacher (year-head) will outline the allegation to the student(s) accused of bullying and efforts will be made to resolve the problem at this point.
 - Records will be kept of all incidents and of the procedures that were followed.
- If it is established by the Year Head that bullying has occurred, the Year Head must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- 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.

- 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.

Formal Stage 1

- 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 relevant teacher (Year Head) must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
- If there is a serious incident the matter should be reported to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

Formal Stage 2

- Where the Year Head considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred the Principal will need to be informed. He/she will then inform the Board of Management as to the number of these cases at least once a term at meetings of the Board.

The Principal or Deputy Principal reserves the right to become involved in an incident of bullying.

Sanctions

A range of sanctions may be used. Below is a list of options but this is not exhaustive:

- Verbal warning.
 - A contract of good behaviour.
 - Withdrawal of privileges where appropriate.
 - Detention.
 - In-school Suspension.
 - Suspension.
 - School Exclusion.
- In order to appeal a decision, a parent/student may request a review by writing to the Principal or the Board of Management
 - Where parents are not satisfied, the parent has the right to bring the matter to the attention of the Ombudsman for Pupils

7. Follow Up

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows :

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
 - Pastoral care system
 - Tutor/Year head system
 - Care team / Student Support Team

- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on April 8th 2014.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. 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
- Contribution from parents primarily through the Parents' Association.
- 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. Staff will have input into all policy reviews.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Mr Gerry Sinnott
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Mr Peter Macnamara
(Principal)

Date: April 8th

Date: April 8th

Date of next review April 2015

