

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-
 - o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - o 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-
 - o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - o 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.

Cyberbullying is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, email, instant messaging, apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. As cyberbullying use technology to perpetrate bullying behavior and does not require face-to-face contact, it can occur at any time, day or night.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, may not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate within the school's Code of Behaviour.

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.

Privacy

Circulating, publishing or distributing (including on the internet) material associated with school activities, including but not limited to, material in relation to staff and students, where such circulation undermines, humiliates or causes damage to another person is considered a breach of school discipline and may result in disciplinary action. As part of such disciplinary action, the Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or students, where it considers the actions to warrant such sanctions.

Actions, which impede the work of the school or damage the spirit of trust, respect and co-operation, which we seek to create, are subject to sanctions as the need arises.

At all times the school reserves the right to question any student in relation to any incident. It also reserves the right to view and confiscate if necessary, the contents of a student's locker, bags, and/or to view any items carried by students on their person. This is in the interest of the welfare and health & safety of the entire school community. In the event that it is necessary to execute the right to view/confiscate items, parents/guardians are made aware of the necessity and the situation. This list should not be regarded as exhaustive and the mere fact that a particular matter is not specified in this code will not exonerate a student from blame should there be an infringement of another person's rights. (Ref: the school Code Of Behaviour)

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 or Principal will be informed.

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:

- *The value of respect underpins the ideal of good behaviour as set out in our Code of Behaviour. In Loreto College Swords we emphasise: “respect for ourselves and the wider community”.*
- *Our Code of Behaviour sets out our expectations for good behaviour. Students have a duty to communicate concerns about student behaviour.*
- *The privacy statement contained within our Code of Behaviour aims to protect students and staff from material, which undermines, humiliates or causes damage to another person.*
- *The self-esteem of all our pupils is fostered and enhanced through both curricular and extracurricular activities, e.g. school outings, team sports etc.*
- *We promote positive classroom behaviour with positive messages displayed publicly in classrooms*
- *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.*
- *Senior cycle students are facilitated through the Senior Religious Education programme which incorporates a focus on good relationships and RSE programme*
- *Internet safety information is provided for all staff to ensure that an awareness develops of what internet safety is, how it affects pupils’ lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.*
- *All students participate in Friendship Week, which takes place on an annual basis. Anti-Bullying lessons are delivered in class during this week and various activities take place.*
- *The DCU anti-bullying FUSE programme is delivered to all 2nd year students.*
- *Cyber Bullying lessons are delivered as part of Friendship Week to inform students of the dangers associated with messaging and online activity.*
- *Stand-up awareness week and Culture Week are celebrated to promote tolerance and understanding.*
- *Cyberbullying: Advice to Students will be included in the school journal, helping students deal with messaging that is upsetting.*
- *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.*
- *The Student Council promote friendship, and work to support the anti-bullying policy.*
- *POPT Week and the wellbeing programme encourage pupils to take care of one another.*
- *Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones outside of lunch times.*
- *Positive reinforcement of behaviour for the good of the school community is encouraged through the school Awards system and the various Leadership Committees and in the Code of behaviour.*

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:

(i) The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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);

(ii) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

(iii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;

(iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

(v) Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;

(vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;

(vii) Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;

(viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

(ix) All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

(x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of **what, where, when, who and why**. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;

(xi) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;

(xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

(xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to **write** down their account of the incident(s);

(xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

(xv) Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

(xvi) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parents and the school;

(xvii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect;

(xviii) In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at **Appendix 3**

(xix) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher 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; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

(xx) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;

(xxi) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour:

(i) The relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of bullying reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;

(ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher 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.

(iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in cases where he/she 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; and

b) where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at Appendix 3 must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying

behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 3 does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

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

- Pupils who have been bullied may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. School supports are provided through:
 - Pastoral care system
 - Tutor/Year head system
 - Care team / Student Support Team
- Any behaviour that escalates beyond that which can be described as bullying will be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour is also part of the school's intervention process. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- If further supports are needed, 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 who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.
- In situations where the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan.
- Where school personnel have concerns about a child the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

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 17th January 2018

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. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. 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, and provided to the Parents' Association. 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)

Date: 17 January 2018

Signed: Mr. Peter Macnamara

(Principal)

Date: 17 January 2018

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

The Board of Management of Loreto College Swords wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 15 November 2022.
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in [Appendix 4](#) of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed Gerry Sinnott _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 15 November 2022

Signed Peter Macnamara _____
Principal

Date 15 November 2022