



Loreto Abbey Secondary School, Dalkey

Anti Bullying Policy

'Loreto Abbey is a caring, Christian community in which pupils have the opportunity to achieve academic excellence and to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, creatively and physically in a healthy environment.'

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 Abbey Secondary School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour.

The Policy:

This policy applies to the bullying of pupils and should be observed while in school, while travelling to and from school and while attending any school activity including trips, sporting and cultural events. Furthermore, the school reserves the right to apply its bullying policy in respect of bullying that occurs at a location, activity, function or programme that is not school related if in the opinion of the Principal and/or the Board of Management the alleged bullying has created a hostile environment at the school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim at the school and/or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013 and should be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Behaviour, Internet Acceptable Use policy, Substance Use policy Mobile Phone policy, Suspension and Expulsion policy, Student Support policy and SPHE policy.

2. Relationship to our Mission, Vision and Aims:

'Loreto/IBVM education emphasises the importance of the quality of relationships within and beyond the school and other education centres. We seek to develop right relationships as the foundation of our educational endeavours. Those relationships should be responsible, affirming, open, transparent, compassionate, trusting and able to accept and offer challenge.' (The Kolkata Guidelines – p.5)

The Mission Statement of Loreto Abbey has at its core the holistic development and care of the pupil. This policy is an integral part of a positive school ethos where learning and personal development can take place and where good interpersonal relationships can flourish.

3. Commitment to the key principles of best practice:

The Board of Management of Loreto Abbey 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 incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
 - 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 including in particular, homophobic and transphobic 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.
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4. **Definition of Bullying:**

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.

The following types of bullying behaviour are given as examples and are included in our definition of bullying but is not limited to them:

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
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • 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 rumours, 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 calls • Abuse 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
Identify 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)	
Homophobic and Transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. gay, queer, lesbian – used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • 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 and exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<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

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 and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with 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.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the ***Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools***.

5. **Relevant Teachers:**

Whilst a pupil or a parent may bring a concern of bullying to any teacher in the school, the first point of contact concerning an issue of bullying is the Year Head of the alleged victim. The Year Head will be joined in investigating and dealing with bullying by the Deputy Principal or an Assistant Principal appointed by the Principal. The names, phone numbers and email addresses of all Year Heads are available on the website. The Principal may be involved as the investigation progresses.

6. **Education and Prevention Strategies:**

The education and prevention strategies used in Loreto Abbey are as follows:

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of our pupils through curricular and extra-curricular activities. Pupils will be provided with

opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.
- School-wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying to include pupils, parents/guardians and the wider school community. Parents are supported in their role by the organisation of seminars organised by the Parents' Association on safe internet usage, bullying, adolescent development, etc.
- Pupils, parents/guardians are informed of the Anti-Bullying Behaviour policy on admission. This policy is available on the school website and a "student friendly" policy is printed in the student journal. The anti-bullying code is displayed in every classroom and the Student Support Noticeboard contains relevant information. The policy is circulated to new members of staff and training on procedures is given periodically.
- Reference is made to our policy at every assembly and during our morning reflections on the intercom.
- Cross-curricular opportunities are made and allow for the fostering of right relationships. "Friendship Week", "Mind your Mind Week", "Spirit Day" and communal events all contribute to a good relational climate and the inclusive nature of the school.
- We ensure that there is adequate supervision before, during and after school. Our CCTV system supplements the work of supervisors in this regard. Non-teaching staff are all encouraged to report any incidents of perceived bullying behaviour.
- The Cara Programme focuses on easing the transition for incoming 1st Years from Primary to Secondary School. Support students with responsibility for accompanying students in difficulty with bullying are trained and appointed for every year group.
- The encouragement of a culture of telling with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way, pupils will gain confidence in "telling". It is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.
 - Direct approach to a teacher after a class or to a member of the student support staff
 - An approach to a designated student who will accompany the student to a teacher
 - Inform a parent who will contact the Year Head
 - Use the Anti-Bullying hotline on the website
 - Email the Principal or any teacher directly
 - Highlight the difficulty in a confidential questionnaire administered once a term
- Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school, e.g. GLEN www.glen.ie, BeLonGTO www.belongto.org.
- Periodic surveys using Google Docs are conducted and pupils are encouraged to inform the management of the school of concerns through a confidential hotline linked with the website.

Implementation of Curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE, CSPE curricula and the RSE Programmes. The SPHE programme makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging, communications, integration, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Relationships and Sexuality Education programme provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which have particular relevance to identity-based bullying.
- Resources from the following programmes are used: Healthy Living, Healthy Times, Healthy Choices, Cool School Programme, Be Safe, Be Webwise, Growing Up, LGBT and The Trust Pack.

7. The 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. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teachers will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher (where possible).
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners, must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

- The Year Head or teacher informed of a concern of bullying will communicate the allegation to the Principal. The Deputy Principal or an Assistant Principal will be appointed by the Principal to join the Year Head in an investigation of the allegation.
- The parents/guardians of all parties involved will be informed by the relevant teachers that an investigation will be initiated and will be forwarded a copy of the Anti Bullying Behaviour policy.
- The parents/guardians and pupils are required to co-operate with the investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationship of the parties of those involved as quickly as possible.
- Teachers take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- All incidents will be investigated outside of the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. The teachers seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.
- All interviews should 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.
- If a group is involved, each member is interviewed individually at first and thereafter, all those involved may be met as a group. At the group meeting, if deemed appropriate, each member is asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's

statement. It may also be appropriate or helpful sometimes to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.

- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- Where it has been determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it is made clear how she is in breach of the school's Anti Bullying Behaviour policy and efforts are made to try and get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- On conclusion of the investigation, the teachers inform all parties including parents of their findings. The Principal receives the report and decides on a disciplinary sanction if necessary. The imposition of disciplinary sanctions is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parents and the school.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved are arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable.
- In cases where the relevant teachers, using their professional judgement, consider that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after they have determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teachers on the 'Form for recording bullying behaviour' (Appendix 3) and the Principal must be informed immediately. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teachers must, as part of their 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; and has any feedback been received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal.
- 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. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the Principal will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

8. Procedures for recording bullying behaviour:

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal – pre-determination that bullying has occurred – Appendix 1

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teachers.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teachers, the relevant teachers must keep a written record of the reports.
- The relevant teachers must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated as appropriate.

Informal – determination that bullying has occurred – Appendix 2

- If it is established by the relevant teachers 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. (See Appendix 2).

- All records will be kept in a closed file in the Principal's Office.

Formal – Appendix 3

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) behaviours deemed as serious by the relevant teacher must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal.

9. Supports for pupils affected by bullying:

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

- A support structure for pupils who have experienced bullying is in place in Loreto Abbey. Such pupils 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. We use restorative practice, mediation or reconciliation where appropriate. We maintain open communications between school, parents and outside agencies. We work together to resolve the situation and protect the victim.
- A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour is also part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities are developed to increase feelings of self-worth. Therefore we recognise that it is important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. 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.

10. Referral of serious cases to the HSE:

In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* (Children First) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that 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".

Serious instances of bullying behaviour are, in accordance with the Children First and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

11. 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.

12. 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.


13. Dissemination:


This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

14. Review:

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 (Appendix 4). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Loreto Education Trust and the Department of Education and Skills.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Loreto Abbey Secondary School, Dalkey, on March 24th 2014 and reviewed annually from October 2016, the most recent review being 05th September 2023.

Signed:  **Date:** 05th September 2023
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed:  **Date:** 05th September 2023
(Principal)



Loreto Abbey Secondary School, Dalkey

**NOTIFICATION REGARDING THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT'S ANNUAL REVIEW OF
THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

To: The Parents Association / Student Council

The Board of Management of Loreto Abbey Secondary School, Dalkey, 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 05th September 2023.
- 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*.

Elis Humphreys

Signed _____ Date: 05th September 2023
Chairperson, Board of Management

Robert Jones

Signed _____ Date: 05th September 2023
Principal