

Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin.

POLICY ON ANTI-BULLYING

1. Introduction

The Loreto ethos recognises the dignity and uniqueness of each member of its broad school community - student, teacher, parent and ancillary staff. It acknowledges the right to each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment. In accordance with our ethos we will continue to promote responsibility, respect, tolerance and understanding.

The school community welcomes all new students and staff to the school. Those requiring special welcome include:

- New First Years
- Students who join in mid year
- Students entering first year whose primary school differs from the majority of the year group.
- Students with disabilities.
- New staff members

2. Scope

The policy seeks to address bullying behaviour and harassment.

While this policy addresses issues related to bullying of students (i.e. Situations in which one or more students are victim(s) of bullying), the policy applies to teaching and other staff, parents/guardians and others insofar as measures under the policy related to them. As employers school management must comply with the requirements of the Employment Equality Act 1998 and 2004 and, in this regard, should also have a Dignity in the Workplace Policy.

The policy shall be applicable during:

- School time (including break and lunch times)
- Going to and from school
- School tours and trips
- Extra curricular activities
- Examinations
- Any occasion when the student is in uniform.

3. Rationale

It has been necessary to devise an anti-bullying policy to address incident(s) of bullying which may occur in the school context as cited under heading 2. Staff, students and parents/guardians have identified this issue as a priority. This policy acknowledges the legal and regulatory context and aims to encompass the following legal documents:

The Department of Education & Science Guidelines of Countering Bullying Behaviour in the Post Primary Schools, 1993
Education Welfare Act 2000

Equal Status Acts, 2000 to 2004

Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Post-Primary Schools

Other Relevant Resource Documents and legislation include:

Circular M33/91: *Guidelines towards a positive policy for school behaviour and discipline (including a Suggested Code of Behaviour and Discipline for Post Primary Schools)*

Circular M44/05:

The Education Act, 1998

Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan Code of Behaviour and related policies

4. Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School's Mission Statement

- Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan seeks to enable each student to develop her full potential.
- Provides a safe and secure environment for learning
- Promotes respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.
- Promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- Takes particular care of at risk students and uses its monitoring systems to provide early intervention when/if necessary and responds to the needs, fears and anxieties of individual students in a sensitive manner.

5. Goals/Objectives

1. To create a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
2. To raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour with school management, all staff members, students, parents/guardians
3. To create a school management that acknowledges, accommodates and respects a diversity of students across the *nine grounds* covered by the equality legislation
4. To ensure that the school's S.P.H.E. Programme raises awareness of the factors associated with bullying behaviour and develops appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours
5. To take action in an attempt to prevent incidents of bullying behaviour e.g. - to ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation
6. To develop procedures for reporting and recording incidents of bullying behaviour
7. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviours
8. To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and those involved in bullying behaviour
9. To work, with and through, the various local agencies when relevant in countering all forms of bullying and anti social behaviour

6. Identifying Actions to Prevent Bullying Behaviour

Publishing and Publicising an Anti-Bullying Charter.

- The Anti-Bullying Charter could be included in the school journal, the School Plan and discussed in S.P.H.E. class.

Supervision and Monitoring

- Students are supervised in the corridors and also at lunch times by staff.
- The students' internet sessions are supervised by a teacher. Refer to I.T. Policy & Acceptable Use policy.

7. Involving Parents/Guardians and the Wider Community

- The Anti Bullying Policy will be available from the school office and on the website, www.loretobalbriggan.ie

8. Inclusion in the Curriculum

- SPHE provides students with opportunities to discuss appropriate behaviour.
- New staff will be given a copy of the policy.
- Cross curricular links include C.S.P.E./R.S.E./1st Year Induction Programme.

9. Students are strongly encouraged to report incidents of alleged bullying to one of the following: senior prefect, teacher, form teacher, counsellor, year head, Deputy Principal, Principal or any other person chosen by the student who is in the position to help. Incidents or issues that are not reported cannot be dealt with. The person to whom the report is made will make a formal report to the Year Head.

10. The Year Head/Form Teacher/Deputy Principal will meet separately with both the student who feels she is being bullied and the alleged bully. This meeting will occur in a private and confidential manner.

Thereafter it will be decided to apply the school's Code of Behaviour/Pastoral Care service.

Parents will be contacted by the Head Year to inform them of the situation.

None of the parties involved in the incident has the right to discuss them with friend or other students in such a way to make matters worse for any party involved. Taking a person's good name is in itself a form of bullying.

Appendix

Definitions of Bullying

i. Bullying

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or a group against other individual(s). (Department of Education & Science Guidelines, 1993).

In this school persistent unacceptable behaviour is considered to be bullying behaviour.

ii. Harassment

Harassment, any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine groups named in the equality legislation that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim.

Types of Bullying – Example of Behaviour.

These may be physical, verbal or psychological in nature.

- Harassment and discrimination 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
- Constant negative intimidating comments
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Gestures
- Silent telephone/mobile phone call
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email
- Abusive website comments/Blogs/pictures
- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Name calling

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- Malicious gossip
- Isolation and exclusion
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group
- Taking someone's friends away
- Spreading rumours
- Unwelcome sexual comments or touching
- Harassment.

This list is not exhaustive and simply outlines examples of behaviour.