

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, 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 stream
- Students entering first year whose primary school differs from the majority of the year.
- Students with disabilities.

2. Definition

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or a group against others.

3. Types of Bullying

- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Abusive communication, verbal, written, text message, telephone calls, including notes or any other form of electronic communication.
- Isolation
- Persistent name calling
- `Slagging`
- Bullying of school personnel
- Bullying by school personnel
- Writing Graffiti about another student
- Interfering with or causing damage to a student's locker, projects or property

4. Indications of bullying

The following symptoms may suggest that a student is being bullied:

- Unwillingness to go to school
- Deterioration in education performance
- Pattern of physical illness
- Visible signs of anxiety
- Unexplained mood changes
- Possessions missing or damaged
- Unexplained bruising or cuts
- Increased requests for money

5. Strategies

It is everyone's responsibility to report a bullying incident - students, staff, bus drivers etc. Students are urged to report incidents of bullying on their own behalf and on behalf of fellow students to any member of staff, their parents/guardians or any responsible adult. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be noted by the relevant Form Teacher, noted and investigated. This will encourage students to gain confidence in reporting incidents. An "Anti-Bullying Reporting Box" will be placed in the social area downstairs.

Adults should be aware that bullying may be a learned behaviour. Bullying may be reinforced through sarcasm, making demeaning comments about a person's appearance, background or intelligence.

Victims of bullying need their self esteem raised through activities that improve their confidence and social skills. Bullies need help to realise that confrontation and demeaning behaviour diminishes them as people and they need also to develop their social skills. Parents will be encouraged to support their children in acquiring these skills. Counselling will be considered and will be provided if deemed appropriate.

A student leadership position will be filled in order to further raise awareness about bullying.

6. Action to be taken

The Form Teacher/Year Head will investigate the situation and will speak to both the alleged bully and victim.

Communication with parents may also ensue.

The school's Code of Behaviour and Pastoral approach will guide further actions/progress.

The Year Head/Form Teacher will continue to monitor the situation.

7. This policy was drawn up in a collaborative fashion between Board of Management, Staff, Parents Association and students. The review of this policy will take place every two years with the next review in **February 2009**.
8. This policy was approved by the Board of Management on **28th February 2007**.