

Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan.



Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Secondary School, Balbriggan 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. This policy aims to assist our goals at Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan. The school aims to create a safe and caring environment for all our students as outlined in our school mission statement.
3. 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. A positive school culture and climate which –
 - i. Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - ii. Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - iii. Promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
 - b. Effective leadership;
 - c. A school-wide approach;
 - d. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
 - e. Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that
 - i. Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - ii. Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - f. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - g. Supports for staff;
 - h. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - i. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
4. All members of the school community are subject to this policy. Bullying behaviour such as cyber bullying which breaks the law may be referred to the Gardai. The policy will be applicable during
 - a. School time (including break/lunch times)
 - b. Going to and from school
 - c. School tours/trips
 - d. Extra-curricular activities
 - e. Any occasion when the student is in uniform
 - f. The school reserves the right to apply its Anti-Bullying policy in respect of bullying that occurs at any location, activity, function or programme, if in the opinion of the school management the alleged bully has created a hostile environment at school for the victim. If the rights of the victim of the bully have materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school, the school also reserves the right to apply its anti-bullying policy.

5. In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, bullying is defined as *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 included in the definition of bullying:

- a. Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying.
- b. Cyber-bullying and
- c. Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

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.

6. It is of the utmost importance that students tell, in a timely manner, if they are being bullied in school or if they know if another student is being bullied. The student may report bullying to any teacher or adult in the school community. Investigation of reports of alleged bullying are undertaken within our Pastoral Care programme, i.e., Form Teacher, Year Head, Deputy Principal as deemed appropriate in the context of the alleged bullying and the school's Code of Behaviour.
7. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobia and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:
- a. There is space within the teaching of all subjects across the curriculum to foster an attitude of respect for all in accordance with the ethos of Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan.
 - b. Feeder schools' liaison Officer will gain any knowledge of bullying in sixth class in order to put preventative measures in place if they are so needed.
 - c. Delivery of the Motus programme which promotes positive peer relationships is rolled out for 1st years.
 - d. Positive interactions with peers are regularly promoted through assemblies and form class.
 - e. Anti-bullying captains (JEDIS) and senior prefects are appointed to emphasise the importance of the school view of an anti-bullying culture.
 - f. These captains are make visible to the student body
 - g. The Twinning Programme will emphasise the importance of our anti bullying ethos and the central role of the student charter
 - h. We endeavour to provide anti bullying workshops and guest speakers to junior students.
 - i. The Anti-Bullying policy operates in conjunction with the Internet Acceptable Use Policy and the Code of Behaviour.
 - j. The Anti Bullying policy is rooted in the school's recognition of and acceptance of diversity. This and the importance of inclusion is an integral part of curricular programmes, particularly CPSE, SPHE & RE and the Wellbeing programme which is delivered during form class.
 - k. We aim to facilitate a culture whereby students, teachers and parents/guardians are aware of their roles/responsibilities where bullying is concerned. There is advice for students in Appendix 1 of this policy and for parents in Appendix 2.

8. 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:
 - a. In dealing with a reported issue of alleged bullying the relevant teacher will investigate whether it has occurred. That teacher will work with the pastoral care structures in the school in recording and dealing with this course.
 - b. Each situation whether bullying or not should be recorded on accompanied templates and stored by the relevant teachers.
 - c. If it is decided between all relevant parties that Bullying has occurred, all reports will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
 - d. In cases where it is determined that bullying has occurred the parents of the parties involved will be contacted.
 - e. Where it has been determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour the school's Code of Behaviour will be applied. This will be a private matter between her parents and the school.
 - f. Non-teaching staff should report any incidents of bullying witnessed by or mentioned to them to Principal/Deputy Principals.
 - g. Parents and pupils are required to cooperate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving the issues.
 - h. Teachers will take a calm, unemotional and problem-solving approach to incidents of alleged bullying. Teachers will record all actions between all parties and notes of meetings held.
 - i. Incidents will usually be investigated outside the classroom to ensure the privacy of all concerned.
 - j. If a group is involved each member will be interviewed individually as far as is practicable.
 - k. In cases where the 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.
 - l. Should the relevant teacher establish that bullying has occurred appropriate written records will be kept. The record template (Appendix 3) provided by the Department of Education & Skills must be used when:
 - i. As stated above if the relevant teacher decides in his/her professional judgement with regard to the particular incident(s) has not been adequately addressed.
 - ii. When the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that the bullying behaviour should be recorded and reported to the Deputy Principal.
9. The supports for students affected by bullying are as follows:
 - a. Students who have been involved in bullying incidents will be advised by Form Teacher/Year Head/Deputy Principal of the availability of the Guidance Counsellors/Chaplains.
 - b. Appropriate interventions in bullying cases are discussed by the relevant members of the student support team and the pastoral care team and implemented as appropriate. Such interventions could include counselling, within or outside the school as appropriate/Restorative Practice where appropriate/Assistance and support of form or class teachers as appropriate and where necessary/Interventions to support the perpetrator where appropriate and necessary
 - c. The target of bullying may receive counselling to help her regain her self-esteem where it is affected.
 - d. The student deemed to be the bully may also receive counselling to give her the opportunity to learn other ways of meeting her needs without violating the rights of others.
 - e. All those bullying are encouraged to discuss it with a teacher and if assistance with a Counsellor/Chaplain is required, their availability will be ascertained. A referral will be made if necessary

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management, 23rd April, 2018
13. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (and is otherwise available 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.
14. 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, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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: 

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: 

Principal

Date: 18th October 2021

Appendix 1 – Advice for Students

Advice for Students on Bullying including cyber-Bullying

- It is essential to tell a teacher and your parents of any bullying. It should be done as soon as possible and is the only way it will be stopped.
- Always be aware of your online behaviour and how to protect yourself from cyber bullying.
- Save messages or take a screenshot of abusive messages.
- Keep passwords private.
- Do not put too much personal information about yourself online.
- Do not reply to abusive messages/posts.
- If the bully is a “friend or follower” on Facebook or other social networking site, remove them. You should block unwelcome messages, videos, photos etc.
- Report the issue to the mobile phone or website provider. If sufficiently serious, report the matter to the Gardai.
- If cyber bullying is impacting your school life, tell a teacher straight away.
- Always keep a detailed record of the bullying as evidence for the teacher.

Appendix 2 – Advice for Parents on Bullying

Advice for Parents on Bullying including cyber-Bullying

- Control the use of mobile phones/social media during homework and at bed time. Consider banning phones from the bedroom; their impact on sleep can be ruinous and consequent learning in school very adversely impacted.
- Stress the importance of online responsibility and check your daughter's social media. Social media can encourage punishing social competition with peers that can be very stressful, lead to anxiety, and needs careful handling. Take time to understand the social networking sites your daughter uses.
- Connect with the parents of your daughter's friends and try to adopt agreed approaches to permitted usage of social media/internet and associated devices for the friend group. If this can be managed, the huge pressure to relentlessly engage with social media, the stigma of failing to do so, and the deleterious effects of excessive engagement may be avoided.
- Prepare your daughter for the possibility of bullying, and should it occur, the importance of speaking about it to you in a timely manner.
- Continue to work on your daughter's self-esteem in order to build emotional resilience.
- Be aware of signs and indicators of bullying.
- Encourage your daughter to include others in her social group and be generally inclusive.
- Use trusted websites for advice on keeping your daughter safe i.e., Webwise.ie

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group Name: _____ Class: _____

2. Names and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

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3. Source of bullying concern/report
(tick relevant box(es))

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying

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6. Type of bullying behaviour (tick relevant box(es))

Physical aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious gossip	
Name calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN	Racist	Traveller Community	Other (specify)

8. Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant teacher) Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____