Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan.

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024.

The Board of Management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We, at Loreto Balbriggan are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students, and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that each person in our school is treated with respect and care.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be diminished or devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section A: Development/review of our Bi Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	10th April 2025	Survey and shared document. Half day school closure,
Students	1st -8th April 2025	Online survey
Parents	12th May 2025	Online survey
Board of management	12th June 2025	In person
Wider school community: Station Master – Balbriggan Train Station Gerry Buckley – Manager Super Value Tracey McFadden – McFadden's Uniform Supplies Debbie McFadden – Man O War team manager	May/June 2025	In person
Date policy was approved:12th June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies under four distinct headings that will be used by the school. (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures).

In addition to our strategies to address general bullying behaviours, these prevention strategies include strategies aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate:

In developing preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos where inclusivity permeates the school in a real way.

This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at board of management and staff meetings.

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to, and in dialogue with parents, and thereby build a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will take as much time as is practicable listening to young persons and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement, by the school, young persons and parents, will be used to discern appropriate support for young people in this school and will help inform future prevention strategies.

1.   Culture and Environment

At Loreto Balbriggan, we believe that a strong, positive, and inclusive school culture and environment are fundamental to preventing bullying. All members of staff will model respectful behaviour and treat all students equally.   Positive role models will be promoted in our school. All students will be provided with equal opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability.

We actively cultivate an atmosphere where every student feels safe, respected, and a valued member of our community. Our key strategies in shaping this environment include:

o **Becoming a School of Sanctuary:** Loreto Balbriggan is actively working towards becoming a **School of Sanctuary**. This initiative involves displaying and promoting our **cultural diversity through learning, action, and sharing**. It demonstrates our deep commitment to welcoming and including all, particularly those from refugee and migrant backgrounds, making our environment truly inclusive.

o **Role-Plays in SPHE to Help Call Out Negative Behaviours:** While taught in SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) classes, the practice of **role-plays** empowers students to develop the confidence and skills to recognise and **call out negative behaviours**, including bullying, in their everyday interactions. This fosters a collective responsibility within the student body to maintain a positive peer environment.

o **Fostering Positive Interactions through Strategic Seating Plans:** We use **strategic seating plans** in classrooms and other learning spaces. This isn't just about organisation; it's a deliberate choice to encourage positive interactions, build

rapport among students, and reduce opportunities for negative dynamics to develop, thereby fostering a more harmonious environment.

o **Consistent Enforcement of the Code of Behaviour:** Our **Code of Behaviour** is the cornerstone of our school's expectations. It's consistently applied to everyone, ensuring clarity on acceptable conduct and clear consequences for bullying. This consistency creates a predictable and secure environment where students understand boundaries and feel safe.

o **Proactive Bathroom Management Strategy:** We have a robust **bathroom management strategy** in place. This proactive approach ensures these spaces are safe and monitored, significantly reducing opportunities for bullying or intimidation in less supervised areas.

o **Ensuring Equitable Participation in Trips:** We are mindful of the **cost of trips** and strive to ensure that financial considerations do not create barriers to student participation. By maximising inclusion in school activities, we prevent feelings of exclusion or disadvantage, which can sometimes be precursors to bullying.

o **Promoting a Culture of Acceptance through Support and Exchange:** The presence of **teaching assistants** provides crucial support for all students, including those who may need additional help integrating. Our **student exchange programmes** directly contribute to a culture of acceptance by exposing students to diverse cultures and fostering understanding and empathy across backgrounds.

o **Celebrating Diversity with Languages Connect Day:** Our annual **Languages Connect Day** is a vibrant celebration of the different languages spoken within our school community. This event actively promotes an appreciation for linguistic and cultural diversity, reinforcing an inclusive atmosphere where all backgrounds are valued.

o **Fostering Happiness with the Wall of Smiles:** The **Wall of Smiles** featuring images of current students is a simple yet powerful initiative that fosters an ethos of young people being happy and feeling positive within the school. A positive emotional climate is a strong protective factor against bullying, promoting resilience and well-being.

o **Building Community through School Uniforms:** The **school uniform** plays a significant role in fostering a strong sense of community and belonging among students. By reducing visual distinctions based on economic status or fashion trends, it minimises potential distractions and promotes a more equitable and unified learning environment.

o **Signalling Diversity with the Welcome Wall:** The **Welcome Wall** prominently displayed on the outside of our main building serves as a powerful visual signal. It immediately communicates that Loreto Balbriggan is a school that celebrates its diversity and welcomes everyone, setting an inclusive tone from the moment one arrives.

o **Celebrating Cultural Diversity with the Yellow Flag:** Our school proudly holds the **Yellow Flag**, which is a testament to our commitment to celebrating the cultural diversity of our student body. This recognition reflects our ongoing efforts to create an environment where all cultures are acknowledged, respected, and celebrated.

Cultural diversity is visually and actively celebrated in our school with permanent artwork representative of all cultures and communities attending our school, Intercultural Day and workshops given by speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

o   We endeavour to provide anti-bullying workshops to junior students.
o   The school management will, subject to available resources, minimise opportunity for bullying to occur by:

1.   Providing adequate supervision of corridors and outside areas at break times.
2.   Ensuring the supervision of classes.
3.   The provision of a study area (library) and extra-curricular activities for students at lunch time.
4.   Monitoring by CCTV where possible.

o   The Primary School Liaison Officer will be made aware of bullying issues in primary school during school visits and on completion of the transfer forms. Prevention measures can be put in place where necessary.
o   Year Heads of incoming first years are available in May to meet with parents regarding pertinent issues.
o   Positive interactions with peers are regularly promoted through assemblies and form classes.

The strategies above are aimed at developing a psychologically safe school for all based on an ethos of cooperation, respect and inclusion for all, where no types of bullying behaviours can take root.

2. Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)

At Loreto Balbriggan, our curriculum and teaching methodologies are purposefully designed to be powerful tools in preventing bullying and fostering a deeply inclusive, respectful, and safe learning environment. There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all in accordance with the ethos of Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan. We believe that what and how we teach directly equips our students with the understanding, skills, and empathy needed to build positive relationships and challenge unkind behaviours. Our key curriculum-based strategies include:

Fostering Positive Relationships and Social-Emotional Skills

o   Universal support will be provided to all students by using supportive teams in class to ensure inclusion. Teamwork skills will be taught, and students will practice and implement them while in these classwork teams. Students will be empowered to use their voice in small teams initially and with a view to growing confidence to use their voice in larger group settings.
o   **Dynamic Seating Plans:** We use **mixing and rotation seating plans** to proactively prevent exclusion and encourage students to interact with a wider range of their peers. This dynamic approach helps build diverse connections and reduces the likelihood of social isolation.

- o **Monitored Interactions:** Teachers and supervising staff **monitor conversations during group work, on trips, and during general supervision**. This allows for early intervention, ensuring that interactions remain positive and respectful.
- o **Awareness of Class Dynamics:** Our teachers are keenly aware of **class dynamics** and regularly **liaise with form teachers** to gain a holistic understanding of student relationships and well-being. This collaborative approach ensures that potential issues are identified and addressed promptly.
- o **Rewarding Positive Behaviour:** We actively **reward positive behaviours** both **verbally and through our merit system**. This includes recognising students for being kind and helpful to others, reinforcing the values of empathy and support within our school community.
- o **Morning Prayer:** The **morning prayer** often includes a **theme of kindness**, embedding this core value into the school's daily rhythm and ethos.

Education for Understanding and Inclusion

- o Curriculum programmes including CSPE/SPHE/Wellbeing have significant roles in informing students about anti-bullying.
- o **Discussing the Code of Behaviour and Relationships:** Our curriculum incorporates explicit discussions about the **Code of Behaviour and the nature of respectful relationships** between students and staff, ensuring clarity on expectations and responsibilities.
- o **Diverse Literature and Texts:** We incorporate **literature and texts from different subjects** that explore themes of diversity, empathy, and social justice, broadening students' perspectives and fostering understanding. This is further supported by displays in the school library.
- o **Inclusive Religion Curriculum:** Our **Religion curriculum is inclusive**, teaching about **world religions** and promoting interfaith understanding and respect for all beliefs. We also offer guidelines for those students who do not wish to avail of religion class. See Non Participation in Religious Education policy.
- o **Geography: Understanding Diversity and Challenges:** In Geography, students **learn about different cultures, discrimination, and migration**, fostering a deeper understanding of global citizenship and empathy for varied human experiences.
- o **History: Learning from the Past for the Future:** The History curriculum focuses on **learning about the past to inform the future**, drawing links with contemporary global events to cultivate critical thinking about social justice and human rights.
- o **Learning Different Languages:** Offering and promoting the **learning of different languages** directly contributes to cultural appreciation and breaks down barriers between diverse groups within the school.
- o **Participation in Erasmus+:** Our participation in the **Erasmus+ programme** provides immersive learning experiences that enhance intercultural understanding, collaboration, and a global perspective among students.
- o Our school will mark "Stand Up" Week to reflect on the personal and social dimensions of sexual orientation and gender identity, in keeping with our school ethos.
- o Use of visiting speakers and workshops to explore issues concerning bullying. Garda Liaison officer deliver the "Be in Control" talks to juniors.

Developing Essential Life Skills and Digital Citizenship

- o **Digital Literacy and Online Safety:** Through **digital literacy** education, students learn how to **be safe online**, identify **online dangers**, and develop strong

- **cybersafety** practices, directly addressing the growing challenge of cyberbullying. Whole school community will be involved in "Internet Safety Day", raising awareness for students on appropriate online behaviour and parents on internet safety.
- **TY Restorative Practice Modules:** Our Transition Year (TY) programme includes **dedicated restorative practice modules**. These modules equip students with conflict resolution skills, fostering understanding and repairing harm rather than simply punishing wrongdoing.
- **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programme:** The **RSE programme** provides crucial education on healthy relationships, consent, and respectful communication, which are foundational in preventing bullying.
- **Wellbeing Embedded in All Departments: Wellbeing is embedded in every department plan**, ensuring that social-emotional learning and student well-being are not standalone topics but are integrated across all subjects and aspects of school life.
- **Life Skills and Wellbeing modules:** These teach practical skills for navigating social situations, managing emotions, and communicating effectively, all of which are vital for building positive peer relationships. (offered when feasible within the timetable for transition years)
- **JPIC Module:** Explores areas of injustice in society and implores students to use their voice to speak up against injustice.
- **SPHE: Fuse Programme and Communication:** The **SPHE curriculum**, including the **Fuse programme**, specifically addresses **appropriate communication with others**, conflict resolution, and social responsibility, providing explicit tools for positive interaction and anti-bullying.

3. Policy & Planning

Loreto Balbriggan's commitment to preventing bullying is firmly embedded within our comprehensive policy and planning frameworks. These structures ensure a consistent, whole-school approach to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all members of our school community. Our key policy and planning initiatives include:

- **School Self-Evaluation (SSE):** Our ongoing **School Self-Evaluation (SSE)** process critically examines and refines all aspects of school life, including our well-being strategies. This continuous review ensures that our policies and practices remain effective and responsive to the needs of our students.

Curriculum Planning and Implementation:

- **SPHE Plan:** A detailed **SPHE Plan** outlines the curriculum's role in developing social-emotional skills, fostering positive relationships, and educating students on respectful and kind behaviour and bullying prevention.
- **Subject Department Plans:** Anti-bullying themes, values, and skills are integrated into **Subject Department Plans** across the curriculum, ensuring a cohesive approach to promoting respect and addressing discrimination in all areas of learning. In addition, wellbeing and its promotion should also be incorporated into plans.

Dedicated Support Structures and Teams:

- **Wellbeing Co-ordinator:** The presence of a dedicated **Wellbeing Co-ordinator** ensures a central point of contact and strategic oversight for all initiatives related to student well-being, including bullying prevention and response.

- **Student Support Team:** Our **Student Support Team** provides a coordinated approach to identifying and addressing student needs, offering early intervention and support for those impacted by or involved in bullying. The Student Support Team will use their knowledge to guide the whole school community on prevention of bullying.
- **Student Referral Team:** The **Student Referral Team** ensures that students requiring specific interventions or external support are appropriately identified and linked with necessary services. Targeted support will be provided to students, identified as potentially vulnerable, to ensure prevention, identification and resolution of bullying.
- **Year Head Team:** The **Year Head Team** provides crucial pastoral care and oversight for specific year groups, enabling a proactive approach to monitoring student relationships and addressing potential bullying issues within their cohort. Assembly content throughout the year will focus on kindness amongst peers.
- **Form Teachers: Form Teachers** serve as a primary point of contact and support for students, playing a vital role in building positive relationships, monitoring student well-being, and identifying early signs of bullying. The form class is also an important vehicle for fostering a sense of belonging and class identity formation.
- **SEN Team:** Our **SEN (Special Educational Needs) Team** ensures that students with diverse learning needs receive appropriate support and that their vulnerability to bullying is specifically addressed through tailored planning.
- **Student Leadership Team and Student Council:** These teams empower students to take ownership of school culture, including anti-bullying initiatives, and provide a powerful student voice in policy development and implementation. They may examine practical ways by which the student body can reduce incidents of bullying and promote the student friendly anti bullying policy and the student charter. They also advocate for the use of gender inclusive terms.
- The **Primary School Liaison Officer** will be made aware of bullying issues in primary school during school visits and on completion of the transfer forms. Prevention measures can be put in place where necessary.

Core Policies and Procedures:

- **Code of Behaviour (incorporating Anti-Bullying & AUP):** Our comprehensive **Code of Behaviour** clearly outlines expectations for conduct, with explicit sections on **Anti-Bullying** procedures and an **Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)** for digital technologies, ensuring a clear framework for all.
- The school ensures that students are using Apps and websites that are **GDPR compliant**.
- **Child Protection Policy:** Our robust **Child Protection Policy** provides the overarching framework for safeguarding all students, ensuring that any concerns related to bullying are addressed within a protective and legally compliant context.

Staff Training and Development:

- **Restorative Practice CPD:** Ongoing **Restorative Practice Continuing Professional Development (CPD)** for staff ensures that our approach to conflict resolution and addressing harm is rooted in restorative principles, focusing on repairing relationships and fostering understanding.

Transition and Mentorship Programmes:

- ○ **First Year Induction:** A comprehensive **First Year Induction** programme is in place to help new students settle into the school environment, build connections, and learn about the school's ethos and anti-bullying policies from the outset.
- ○ **TY Induction:** The **TY (Transition Year) Induction** ensures that students entering this key year are aware of their responsibilities, opportunities, and the school's expectations regarding behaviour and peer interactions.
- ○ **TY Develop Me Workshops:** Dedicated **TY Develop Me workshops** specifically target the development of key life skills, interpersonal communication, and self-awareness, preparing students to contribute positively to the school community and address bullying effectively.
- o **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE):** The structured **RSE programme** provides vital education on healthy relationships, communication, consent, and personal boundaries, forming a crucial preventative measure against bullying and harassment.

4. Relationships & Partnerships

At Loreto Balbriggan, we recognise that preventing bullying is a shared responsibility that extends beyond the classroom. Strong relationships and collaborative partnerships, both within our school community and with external organisations, are fundamental to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all students. Our key strategies in this area include:

Fostering Positive Peer Relationships:

- ○ **Well Being Captains** design and implement wellbeing initiatives for junior year groups. The Well Being Wall is a space for the promotion of Well Being based on Mental Health Ireland's Ways to Well Being
- ○ **Extra-Curricular Clubs:** Our wide range of **Extra-Curricular Clubs** provides diverse opportunities for students to connect with peers who share similar interests, build friendships, develop social skills, and foster a strong sense of belonging outside of academic settings.
- ○ **TY Adventure Trip & TY Musical:** The **TY Adventure Trip** and **TY Musical** are significant events that build strong bonds, collaboration, and a sense of shared achievement among Transition Year students, reinforcing positive peer relationships.
- ○ **Retreats:** School **Retreats** offer valuable opportunities for students to connect on a deeper level, reflect on their relationships, and foster empathy and understanding within their class or year group.
- ○ **Class/Year Group Trips:** Organised **Class/Year Group Trips** provide informal settings for students to interact, build friendships, and strengthen their sense of community, thereby reducing isolation and potential for bullying.
- ○ **LIFT Programme:** Participation in the **LIFT (Leadership in Fantastic Teams) Programme** specifically develops leadership skills and fosters positive relationships among students, empowering them to become leaders of kindness and inclusion within their peer groups.

Engaging the Wider Community and External Expertise:

- ○ **Stand Up Awareness Week:** Our active participation in **Stand Up Awareness Week** reinforces our commitment to tackling homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying, engaging the whole school community in a significant national campaign for LGBTQ+ inclusion.

- **Community Links:** Strong **Community Links** allow us to collaborate with local organisations and resources, extending our support network and providing external perspectives on fostering positive youth development and anti-bullying initiatives.
- **Fundraising:** Collaborative **Fundraising** activities not only support school initiatives but also unite students, staff, parents, and the wider community towards shared goals, strengthening collective responsibility and a sense of belonging.
- **Rumbek Day:** Our annual **Rumbek Day** connects students with global issues and fosters empathy by raising awareness and funds for educational projects in South Sudan, broadening their understanding of compassion and social justice.
- **Guest Speakers:** Inviting **Guest Speakers** with expertise on topics such as mental health, online safety, diversity, and resilience provides students with valuable insights and external perspectives on preventing and addressing bullying.

Collaborative Support Services:

- **Student Support Team (SST):** The **Student Support Team (SST)** is a collaborative internal partnership between key school personnel, working together to identify, assess, and address the holistic needs of students, including those experiencing or involved in bullying.
- **Chaplaincy Service:** Our **Chaplaincy Service** provides pastoral care and spiritual guidance, offering a confidential and supportive space for students to discuss concerns, including relationship issues and bullying.
- **Guidance Department:** The **Guidance Department** provides invaluable support for students' personal, social, and educational development, offering counselling, mediation, and advice on navigating peer relationships and addressing bullying.
- **Parents Association:** Our active **Parents Association** is a vital partnership, providing a forum for communication, collaboration, and shared responsibility in creating a safe and supportive school environment for all students.
- **Homework Club:** The **Homework Club** provides a structured and supportive environment where students can receive academic help and build positive relationships with peers and supervising staff, reducing isolation and fostering a sense of belonging.

Strategies to Prevent Specific Types of Bullying Behaviour
Loreto Balbriggan employs a multifaceted approach to prevent all forms of bullying, ensuring a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for every student. The strategies outlined below contribute to the prevention of various bullying behaviours, with specific emphasis on:

1. Preventing Online Bullying Behaviour (Cyberbullying)

- **Digital Literacy and Online Safety:** Through dedicated **digital literacy education**, students learn how to **be safe online**, identify **online dangers**, and develop strong **cyber Safety practices**. This directly addresses the growing challenge of cyberbullying by equipping students with essential knowledge and skills for responsible online engagement. The **whole school community will be involved in "Internet Safety Day"**, raising awareness for students on appropriate online behaviour and parents on internet safety.
- **Code of Behaviour (AUP):** Our comprehensive **Code of Behaviour** includes an explicit **Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)** for digital technologies, clearly outlining expected online conduct and the consequences for cyberbullying.

- o **Monitored Interactions:** Teachers and supervising staff **monitor conversations** during various school activities, which can help in identifying potential offline precursors or spill-over effects of online issues.
- o **SPHE: Fuse Programme and Communication:** The SPHE curriculum, including the **Fuse programme**, specifically addresses appropriate communication with others, which extends to online interactions and promotes responsible digital citizenship.
- o **Wellbeing Embedded in All Departments:** The focus on **wellbeing embedded in every department plan** includes fostering resilience and emotional intelligence, which are vital for students to cope with and report cyberbullying.
- o **Life Skills and Wellbeing Modules:** These modules teach practical skills for navigating social situations and managing emotions, which can help students respond constructively to online challenges.
- o **TY Develop Me Workshops:** These workshops include content that can help students develop the critical thinking and self-awareness needed to avoid engaging in or being victims of cyberbullying.
- o **Guest Speakers:** Inviting **Guest Speakers** with expertise on topics such as **online safety** provides students with valuable insights and external perspectives on preventing cyberbullying.

2. Preventing Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

- o **"Stand Up" Week:** Our school will actively mark **"Stand Up" Week** to reflect on the personal and social dimensions of sexual orientation and gender identity, in keeping with our school ethos. This explicit participation demonstrates our commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion and directly challenges homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- o **Inclusive Religion Curriculum:** Our **Religion curriculum is inclusive**, teaching about **world religions** and promoting interfaith understanding and respect for all beliefs. This fosters a broader sense of empathy and acceptance, which can mitigate prejudice.
- o **Diverse Literature and Texts:** We incorporate **literature and texts from different subjects** that explore themes of diversity, empathy, and social justice, including those that broaden understanding of identity and relationships.
- o **RSE Programme:** The **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programme** provides crucial education on healthy relationships, consent, and respectful communication, encompassing diverse relationships and identities, which is foundational in preventing homophobic and transphobic harassment.
- o **Role-Plays in SPHE to Help Call Out Negative Behaviours:** These role-plays empower students to recognise and **call out** any discriminatory language or actions, including those that are homophobic or transphobic.
- o **Rewarding Positive Behaviour:** Actively **rewarding positive behaviours** for being kind and helpful to others, particularly in demonstrating acceptance of diversity, reinforces an inclusive environment.
- o **Guest Speakers and Workshops:** The **use of visiting speakers and workshops to explore issues concerning bullying** can include specific focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion and challenging prejudice.
- o **Wellbeing Embedded in All Departments:** A focus on **wellbeing** supports the psychological safety of all students, including those from LGBTQ+ identities, by promoting an environment of acceptance and belonging.
- o **JPIC Module:** This module explores areas of injustice in society and implores students to use their voice to **speak up against injustice**, which includes homophobia and transphobia.

- o **Extra-Curricular Clubs:** By providing diverse opportunities for connection, these clubs help to foster a sense of belonging for all students, reducing isolation that can make students vulnerable to homophobic or transphobic bullying.
- o **LIFT Programme:** The **LIFT Programme** develops leadership skills and promotes positive relationships, empowering students to challenge prejudice and foster an inclusive peer culture.
- o **Student Support Team (SST) & Guidance Department:** These teams provide crucial support for students who may be experiencing difficulties related to their identity or bullying, ensuring they have confidential avenues for help.
- o **Chaplaincy Service:** Offers confidential support and spiritual guidance, which can be invaluable for students navigating identity issues or dealing with related bullying.

3. Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

- o **Celebrating Cultural Diversity (Yellow Flag, Artwork, Intercultural Day, Workshops):** Our school proudly holds the **Yellow Flag**, a testament to our commitment to celebrating the cultural diversity of our student body. **Cultural diversity is visually and actively celebrated** in our school with permanent artwork representative of all cultures and communities, **Intercultural Day**, and **workshops given by speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds**. These initiatives actively promote understanding and challenge racist attitudes.
- o **Becoming a School of Sanctuary:** Loreto Balbriggan is actively working towards becoming a **School of Sanctuary**. This initiative involves displaying and promoting our **cultural diversity through learning, action, and sharing**, demonstrating our deep commitment to welcoming and including all, particularly those from refugee and migrant backgrounds, making our environment truly inclusive.
- o **Signalling Diversity with the Welcome Wall:** The **Welcome Wall** prominently displayed serves as a powerful visual signal that Loreto Balbriggan celebrates its diversity and welcomes everyone, setting an inclusive tone that directly counters racist sentiments.
- o **Promoting a Culture of Acceptance through Support and Exchange:** The presence of **teaching assistants** and our **student exchange programmes** directly contribute to a culture of acceptance by exposing students to diverse cultures and fostering understanding and empathy across backgrounds.
- o **Celebrating Diversity with Languages Connect Day:** This vibrant celebration of the different languages spoken within our school community actively promotes an appreciation for linguistic and cultural diversity, reinforcing an inclusive atmosphere where all backgrounds are valued.
- o **Geography: Understanding Diversity and Challenges:** In Geography, students **learn about different cultures, discrimination, and migration**, fostering a deeper understanding of global citizenship and empathy for varied human experiences, directly challenging racist misconceptions.
- o **History: Learning from the Past for the Future:** The History curriculum focuses on **learning about the past to inform the future**, drawing links with contemporary global events to cultivate critical thinking about social justice, colonialism, and human rights, which helps to dismantle racist narratives.
- o **Diverse Literature and Texts:** We incorporate **literature and texts from different subjects that explore themes of diversity, empathy, and social justice**, including those that highlight experiences of different racial and ethnic groups. This is further supported by **displays in the school library**.

- o **Inclusive Religion Curriculum:** Teaching about **world religions** promotes interfaith understanding and respect for all beliefs, fostering a broader sense of empathy that can mitigate racial prejudice.
- o **Learning Different Languages:** Offering and promoting the **learning of different languages** directly contributes to cultural appreciation and breaks down barriers between diverse groups within the school.
- o **JPIC Module:** This module explores areas of **injustice in society** and implores students to use their voice to **speak up against injustice**, which includes racism.
- o **Rumbek Day:** Our annual **Rumbek Day** connects students with global issues and fosters empathy by raising awareness and funds for educational projects in South Sudan, broadening their understanding of compassion and social justice, which counters xenophobia and racism.
- o **Role-Plays in SPHE to Help Call Out Negative Behaviours:** These role-plays empower students to recognise and **call out** discriminatory language or actions, including those that are racist.
- o **Rewarding Positive Behaviour:** Actively **rewarding positive behaviours** for being kind and helpful to others, particularly in demonstrating acceptance of cultural diversity, reinforces an inclusive environment.
- o **Community Links:** Strong **Community Links** allow us to collaborate with local organisations and resources, extending our support network and providing external perspectives on fostering positive youth development and anti-racism initiatives.

4. Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

- o **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programme:** The **RSE programme** provides crucial education on healthy relationships, consent, and respectful communication, directly challenging sexist attitudes and promoting gender equality.
- o **Consistent Enforcement of the Code of Behaviour:** The **Code of Behaviour** clearly outlines unacceptable conduct, including any form of sexist behaviour, ensuring a clear framework for consequences.
- o **Role-Plays in SPHE to Help Call Out Negative Behaviours:** These role-plays empower students to recognise and **call out** sexist remarks or actions.
- o **Diverse Literature and Texts:** We incorporate **literature and texts from different subjects that explore themes of equality and gender roles**, challenging stereotypes and promoting respectful interactions.
- o **Wellbeing Embedded in All Departments:** A focus on **wellbeing** supports the psychological safety and self-esteem of all students, helping them to navigate and challenge sexist behaviours.
- o **Life Skills and Wellbeing Modules:** These modules teach practical skills for navigating social situations and communicating effectively, which can help students assert themselves and challenge sexist bullying.
- o **JPIC Module:** This module explores areas of injustice in society and implores students to use their voice to **speak up against injustice**, which includes sexism.
- o **Positive Interactions with Peers:** The general promotion of **positive interactions with peers** and the teaching of **teamwork skills** foster an environment of mutual respect regardless of gender.
- o **Extra-Curricular Clubs:** Providing diverse opportunities where gender stereotypes can be challenged and students can interact based on shared interests.
- o **LIFT Programme:** Encourages respectful leadership among all students, promoting an environment where sexist behaviour is challenged.

5. Preventing Sexual Harassment

o **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programme:** The **RSE programme** is fundamental in preventing sexual harassment by providing crucial education on healthy relationships, **consent**, personal boundaries, and respectful communication. It explicitly addresses what constitutes inappropriate behaviour.

o **Code of Behaviour (Anti-Bullying & AUP):** Our **Code of Behaviour** explicitly addresses bullying, including sexual harassment, and the **AUP** covers inappropriate online behaviour. This provides clear guidelines and consequences.

o **Role-Plays in SPHE to Help Call Out Negative Behaviours:** These role-plays are invaluable in empowering students to identify and **call out** any form of inappropriate or harassing behaviour, and to understand bystander intervention.

o **Wellbeing Embedded in All Departments:** A comprehensive focus on **wellbeing** supports students' emotional intelligence, self-respect, and and their understanding of their rights and boundaries.

o **Life Skills and Wellbeing Modules:** These modules equip students with the practical skills for effective and appropriate communication, setting boundaries, and understanding respectful interactions.

o **Monitored Interactions:** Teachers and supervising staff **monitor conversations** during group work, on trips, and during general supervision, allowing for early detection of potentially harmful interactions.

o **Supervision:** Providing **adequate supervision of corridors and outside areas at break times**, **ensuring the supervision of classes**, and **monitoring by CCTV where possible** (where permitted by policy) minimize opportunities for sexual harassment to occur in less visible areas.

o **Discussions on Code of Behaviour and Relationships:** Explicit discussions about the **Code of Behaviour and the nature of respectful relationships** between students are essential in setting clear boundaries regarding physical and verbal interactions.

o **Student Support Team (SST) & Guidance Department:** These teams are crucial for providing targeted support to students who may be vulnerable or who report incidents, ensuring that concerns about sexual harassment are identified and addressed with appropriate interventions. The **Student Support Team (SST)** is a collaborative internal partnership working to identify and address the holistic needs of students.

o **Chaplaincy Service:** Our **Chaplaincy Service** offers a confidential and supportive space for students to discuss sensitive concerns related to relationships and inappropriate behaviour.

o **Guest Speakers:** Inviting **Guest Speakers** with expertise on topics such as consent, healthy relationships, and respectful boundaries provides students with valuable insights and external perspectives on preventing sexual harassment.

All of the above strategies are evolved and changed as the need arises.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

> o The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:

> The relevant teacher in collaboration with the form teacher/ year head/ Senior Management team.

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures and Appendix C):

> The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour.
> Schools should work in partnership with their patron, board of management, staff, students and their parents to develop and implement their Bí Cineálta policy.
> This appendix is intended as a guide to addressing bullying behaviour. It is based on the information contained in Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address
> Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.
>
> **Approach**
> The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame.
> When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:
> ☐ ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured.
> ☐ seek to ensure the privacy of those involved.
> ☐ conduct all conversations with sensitivity.
> ☐ consider the age and ability of the students involved.
> ☐ listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how.
> > ☐ best to address the situation
> > ☐ take action in a timely manner
> > ☐ inform parents of those involved
>
> **Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred**
> Bullying is defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves

an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.
To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the following questions:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions above is **Yes**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

Note: One Off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single
hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

If the answer to any of these questions is **No**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour
When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?
☐ if a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first.
☐ thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group.
☐ at the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.
☐ each student should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting.
☐ it may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the

incident(s)

Where bullying behaviour has occurred
Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved must be contacted at an early stage:
☐ to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour
☐ it is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
☐ a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
☐ this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents

☐ the record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred
☐ The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement.
☐ Important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.
☐ The teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this.
☐ The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded.
☐ Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.
☐ Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.
☐ If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
☐ if it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is
☐ continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school
☐ if a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures
☐ if a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school.

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so, where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parents' request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.
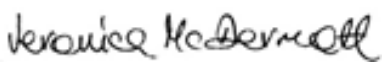
All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: _Veronica McDermott_   Date: 12th June 2025
  (Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _[signature]_   Date: 12th June 2025
(Principal)