



## Loreto Secondary School, Bray

### 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, Bray, 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. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students 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 students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment and
    - 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 students and
    - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
  - Effective supervision and monitoring of students
  - 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.
3. 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 included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- 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.

See Appendix 1 of this policy for additional information on different types of bullying .

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

The relevant Year Head and, if necessary, the Principal and/or the Deputy Principal.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) It is school policy to provide awareness about bullying in the following manner:

- The following key policies, among others, provide clarity about the types of behaviour that are not acceptable in the school community: Code of Behaviour & Discipline and Contract, I.T and Internet Usage Policy and Contract, The Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy (please see website [www.loretobray.com](http://www.loretobray.com) for these policies)
- S.P.H.E. programme at Junior cycle
- R.S.E programme at Senior cycle
- To promote tolerance and understanding various school activities/events are organised e.g. Mary Ward Day, Equality Day, Power of Positivity week, Multicultural Day, Peace and Justice activities/events etc.
- Community Gardai are invited to give talks to students on internet safety and the legal requirements surrounding internet activity
- Regular presentations on esafety are provided for students
- The 1<sup>st</sup> year/6<sup>th</sup> year 'buddy system', each 1<sup>st</sup> year student is assigned a 6<sup>th</sup> year buddy to help make their transition into secondary school easier.

- Positive reinforcement of behaviour for the good of the community is encouraged.
  - Students are strongly encouraged to join in extra-curricular activities particularly in 1<sup>st</sup> year to help foster friendship and integration.
  - Outside groups are invited in to school by the Guidance Counsellor, SPHE Co-ordinator and the Pastoral Care team to provide workshops and dramatic activities to illustrate the negative effects of bullying e.g. ‘Sticks and Stones’ (drama presentation).
  - A full-time chaplain is employed part of whose duties is to relate to students in a more informal manner thus encouraging disclosure of bullying incidents.
  - Pastoral Care system: In Loreto, Bray, we endeavour through the pastoral care system to support the welfare of each student. Particular attention is paid to the first year students in recognition of the fact that the transition from primary to post primary may be traumatic for some students. The Pastoral Care team is an integral part of our school’s strategies in dealing with bullying.
  - A class survey may take place to ascertain the nature of the incident(s) that may have taken place.
6. 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:

#### Investigation and Follow-up

- Any investigation of bullying will strive to resolve any issues and to restore, in so far as possible the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame)
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Parents and students are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues.
- Incidents will generally be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. Students not directly involved can also provide very useful information and surveys may be used to acquire this information.
- The investigation will be carried out in an attempt to ascertain the facts of the situation, in as calm a manner as possible.
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. Each member will be asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other’s statements. Each member of the group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the relevant teacher.
- The relevant teacher may ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. Parents will be given an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their students.

- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.
- It will be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parents) that, in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, her parents and the school.
- In an effort to re-establish good relationships follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- In cases where the relevant 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 will be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her 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
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

#### Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has in fact occurred, the relevant teacher will 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.
- The relevant teacher will use the recording template to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
  - a) 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
  - b) where he/she is of the view that the bullying behaviour is so serious in nature that it must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal.
- In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template will be completed in full and retained by the relevant teacher in and a copy provided to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal. (Please note that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case).

#### In cases where a parent / guardian is not satisfied with the outcome:

- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent/guardian is referred to the school's complaints procedures.
  - In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, then that parent/guardian has right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
7. The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows:
- The affected student will be referred to the school's pastoral care team, if she should so wish.
  - Additionally, the affected student will be referred to the school's chaplain, if she should so wish.
  - Follow-up interviews involving the affected student, the relevant Year Head and/or the Principal/Deputy Principal will take place.
  - If deemed useful and appropriate the affected student's parents/guardians may be recommended to seek counselling outside the school for their daughter
  - Regular liaison between the relevant Year Head and the affected student's parents/guardians will take place.

## **8. Supervision and Monitoring of Students**

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.

## **9. 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 students or staff or the harassment of students 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 21<sup>st</sup> Sept 2016.
11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and students on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.
12. 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and students on request) and provided to the Parents'

Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Michael Denny  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Emma Raughter  
(Principal)

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> Sept 2016

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> Sept 2016

Date of next review: Sept 2019

### **Appendix 1: Additional information on different types of bullying:**

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst students:

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students often engage in ‘mess fights’, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the student in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the student or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: “Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore”(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the “silent treatment”.
- **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can

occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

- **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted student not delivering on the demand). A student may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.