Loreto Secondary School
Anti Bullying Policy

Review Dates

Stakeholder	Date	Draft/review/ratified
Staff	9th May 2023	
Parents		
Student Council	16th May 2023	
BOM	19th September	

Signed _____   Date _____

(Chairperson of BOM)

Due for next review on _____

Loreto Anti Bullying Policy

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 Fermoy 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.

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 positive school culture and climate which-is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- A culture that encourages pupils 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 pupils; and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Definition

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

- 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.

Harassment and sexual harassment
The term bullying encompasses harassment and sexual harassment, defined as follows:

Harassment: *any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds 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. The nine discriminatory grounds are gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Travelling community.*

Sexual harassment: *any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature 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
The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur among pupils:

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils may engage in 'mess' fights, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- **Intimidation**: This 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 bulling behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults

about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempt to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. This can include controlling the person – 'do this or x will happen' – a group ganging up against one person; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the 'silent treatment'.

- **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, those singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically or those that are singled out as high achievers.

- **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 pupil's locker or other property. 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 pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another pupil engaged in bullying behaviour.

- **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 through:
  - text messaging and picture messaging on mobile phones/ hand held devices
  - social media websites
  - email
  - instant messaging
  - in a chat room
  - on gaming websites and other websites

- The most common forms of cyber-bullying are
  - Sending abusive/mean text messages or messages that breach the nine discriminatory grounds
  - Posting abusive/mean messages or comments on online forums/social networking sites
  - Hacking into a person's social networking account
  - Creating false social network accounts/websites
  - Impersonation on social media sites
  - Spreading rumours though mobile phones or online

- **These lists are not exhaustive.**

People to contact

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school are as follows:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Year Heads
- Class Tutors
- Guidance counsellor
- A student who feels that she is being harassed or bullied should speak to her Class Tutor, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal or Principal or to any staff member.
- She may, if she so wishes, ask her parents/guardians to report the situation to one of the above. She may speak to another student and ask for the information to be reported to a staff member on her behalf.

Whole school education and prevention strategies

To build a positive school culture and climate to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour, Loreto Fermoy will:

- Publish the Anti-Bullying Policy on the school website www. loretofermoy.ie
- Include anti-bullying strategies in the school journal
- Provide information about bullying to parents of incoming students, the Parents' Association etc.
- Maintain and further develop an awareness of bullying and its consequences among students through school programmes and initiatives.
- Invite guest speakers to address students/teachers/parents as appropriate and support the LPA in their endeavors to do the same.
- Display key respect and anti-bullying messages throughout the school.
- Tutors and Year Heads may speak to classes and year groups about the unacceptability of bullying and the importance & ease of reporting any incident of bullying observed or suffered.
- Members of school staff will be vigilant for instances of bullying and will bring such incidents to the attention of the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);

Reporting bullying behaviour
- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first and may be asked to write an account of the incident(s). Thereafter, if appropriate all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil 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 should be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;

Follow up and recording

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 parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Pupils.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred
    - All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the Year Head. This will be recorded on the Standard Report of Bullying Forms. **(Appendix 1)**
    - While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher/Year Head, the Year Head must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
    - The Year Head must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

- Informal-determination that bullying has occurred
    - If it is established by the Year Head that bullying has occurred, he/she must 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.
    - All records retained by the Year Head shall be stored in the Deputy Principal's office.
- The relevant teacher/Year Head must use the recording **template at Appendix 2** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
    - In cases 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.
- When the recording template is used, it will be retained by the Year Head in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Records will be kept in the Deputy Principal's office for a period of 5 years after the student leaves the school.

Established intervention strategies
- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress.
    - This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process. Any follow-up will be recorded.
- Restorative interviews
- No Blame Approach in as far as is practicable. However, sanctions may be imposed as appropriate.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- All in school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience.
    - Cairdeas groups in junior classes
    - Youth Leader system
    - Meitheal/Senior Prefect Team
    - Feroige
    - Tutor/Year Head system
    - Pastoral care system
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same.
    - This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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.

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.

Anit Bullying Strategy
A student must always report any behaviour which she finds hurtful. She may tell her Class Tutor or Year Head, one of her subject teachers, a member of the School Chaplaincy Team, the Deputy Principal or Principal. She may prefer to speak to her Class Prefect or Student Council Representative. If she is a Junior pupil, she may wish to speak to a member of her class's Cairdeas Team, or if she is a First Year, she may go to her Youth Leader. Some students who feel uncomfortable with or hurt by the conduct of another pupil may prefer to tell their parents or guardians and ask them to speak to a teacher on their behalf.

The important thing is that hurtful behaviour should be reported so that it can be openly discussed with the perpetrator. Sometimes a student may not be aware that her treatment of other pupils is not acceptable and so it is vital that she is made conscious of the unpleasantness of her words or actions. Sometimes a student may require a severe warning about her future behaviour and may need to be monitored carefully.

No student should ever suffer bullying in silence.

All students should take responsibility for ensuring that no other student is allowed to feel left out or isolated. If you are aware that someone in your class or year is suffering through bullying or exclusion, you must bring this to the attention of a teacher or senior student.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 29th April 2021

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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 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.

Appendix 1

Recording Bullying Behaviour(s)/Concern(s)

Standard Form

Date:

Time:

Location:

Referring Staff Member:

Name(s) and Class(es) of those involved:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Details of incident:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Follow Up:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Signed:_____ **Print Name:** _____

Appendix 2.

Recording Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____**Class**_____

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

_____

_____

_____

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*		**4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))***	
Pupil concerned		**School Grounds**	
Other Pupil		**Classroom**	
Parent		**Corridor**	
Teacher		**Toilets**	
Other		**School Bus**	
		Other	

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

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		**Cyber-bullying**	

Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Graffiti or written slander	
Repeated inappropriate gesture(s)/ comment(s)		Other (specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. **Details of actions taken**

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)   Date
_____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

* Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.