



Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

In accordance with contemporary 'good practice', the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by Tusla, the Board of Management of Loreto College Junior School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with good practice and the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

This policy applies to the whole school community in their relationships with pupils, teachers, management, Board of Management, parents, office and all ancillary staff.

2. Rationale:

- 2.1 Schools are required to have a written policy on bullying and the prevention of bullying
- 2.2 The Board of Management has an obligation to ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the principles and values of the religious and educational philosophy of the school.
- 2.3 Involving and encouraging all members of the school community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on fostering an anti-bullying climate in Loreto College Junior School promotes partnership, ownership and implementation of a 'living' policy.

3. Links to our Ethos and Mission Statement:

- 3.1 Loreto College Junior School is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in all areas of education. Our aim is to provide an environment where the unique potential of each individual, spiritual, intellectual and physical is recognised and respected. Loreto schools aim to form educational communities where the values of our foundress Mary Ward find expression. These values founded on Gospel Values, of love, freedom, justice, sincerity and joy are nurtured and upheld and they inform the characteristic spirit in all Loreto schools. Young people feel accepted and are allowed to experience appropriate responsibility.
- 3.2 Our Catholic centrality with our specific values, foster a tolerant and inclusive climate within our school which allows pupils to develop in a caring and secure environment. Providing a stimulating education within a moral and supportive community requires a proactive and preventative approach towards bullying. The active essence of our ethos promotes the positive reinforcement of courteous behaviour and requires continual vigilance on our part to prevent behaviour that militates against our Catholic and caring ethos.
- 3.3 The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- (i) **A positive school culture and climate which-**
- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a nonthreatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- (ii) **Effective leadership at all levels of the school.**
- A school-wide approach involving all members of the school community and integrating with the school ethos, all school policies, activities and curricular areas.
 - A shared understanding by the whole school community of what bullying is and its impact on children, adults and families.
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils;
 - Explicitly address the issues of bullying, cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils at all times and in key 'hot-spot' areas.
 - Supports for staff in dealing with areas of conflict.
 - 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.

4. Definition of Bullying

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of behaviour.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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.

4.5 Possible Indications of Bullying Behaviour:

- Anxiety about travelling to/from school
- Unwillingness to go to school
- Deterioration in educational performance
- Pattern of physical illnesses
- Unexplained changes in either mood/behaviour
- Visible signs of anxiety/distress
- Possessions missing
- Increased requests for money
- Unexplained bruising
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling her

5. Education and Prevention Strategies

- All class groups will participate in age appropriate class discussions with their teachers regarding bullying, how to prevent it and how to cope with it should it arise. The purpose of such discussions is to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- The regular use of 'Circle-Time' will be encouraged in classrooms.
- The use of role-play, poster-displays, anti-bullying charters to be explored in class.
- Loreto College Junior School has an excellent pastoral care system in place, and reports of all incidents (wherever they may have been reported) will be filtered through the class teacher, who is the primary person for pastoral care of the student in her class. The 'Chain of Support' within the school involves: Pupil / Class Teacher and SEN Teachers/SNA Staff/ Deputy-Principal / Principal
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- The SPHE curriculum, the 'Stay Safe' programme and the school's RSE programme will all be used to nurture a climate of courtesy in LCJS and provide 'pupil-appropriate' strategies for coping with incidents of bullying or conflict.
- The broad 'extra-curricular' activities in LCJS will provide ample scope for pupils to learn the importance of 'fair play' and respect. Games Coaches will all be directed towards this policy on anti-bullying.
- Proper and pro-active supervision of pupils will take place at all times and in all school scenarios- especially in 'hot spots' like the playground.
- Pro-active, 'Positive Behaviour' will be cultivated and encouraged throughout the school on an ongoing basis.
- Class and school assemblies will be used to remind pupils of positive behaviour and deal with any 'behavioural issues' that might arise within a group.

- The LCJS Amber Flag Committee prepares girls as ‘ Playground Pals/Buddies’- and gives guidance on conflict scenarios using Restorative Practice methods.
- The Amber Flag Committee (representing girls from 1st-6th Class) allows for regular discussion on the social climate of the school and pupils’ issues/relationships therein.
- Pupils are advised in class on online ‘best-practice’ and provided with strategies and ways to deal with negative and personalised online comments and adherence to the school’s Acceptable Usage Policy regarding mobile phones is monitored.
- **Targeted Awareness of Bullying:**
 - Direct discussion to take place with pupils through the SPHE programme pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.
 - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
 - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
 - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour they become aware of.
- **Encourage a culture of telling**, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in ‘telling’. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. Ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - Worry- box in every classroom.
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf

6. Reporting incidents or allegations of bullying:

- Pupils should discuss any incident of bullying with a teacher or another trusted adult within the school system; this is responsible behaviour rather than “telling tales”.
- Parents/guardians should contact the Class Teacher regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents.
- Parents are discouraged from approaching the parent or guardian of an ‘alleged bully’ directly and are encouraged to report ‘incidents’ to the class teacher in the first instance.
- Minor incidents of alleged bullying behaviour should always be addressed by the class teacher with the parties concerned and resolved in a sensitive, yet clear manner. Where the bullying behaviour persists or where an incident is deemed to be of a more serious nature, class-teachers should fill in the Bullying Incident Report Sheet (*see appendix 1*) and (where appropriate) ask the relevant pupils to write down an account of the incident/s.

7. Investigating and Recording Procedures

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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);
- The Class teacher will investigate incidents pertinent to her class group.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- The Class teacher (and where necessary, other appropriate personnel) will interview all of the students involved in an alleged bullying incident.
- The alleged victim and alleged perpetrators of the incident will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem.
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents; Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews will be conducted in a calm, non-aggressive and sensitive manner 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 will seek answers to questions of
 - What happened?
 - What were you thinking at the time?
 - Who has been affected?
 - In what way?
 - What needs to be done to make things right?
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be encouraged to meet as a group if appropriate. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened.
- Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and a verbal warning will be given. Efforts should be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil who was bullied;
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher to be appropriate, 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 and the supports being put in place. The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school in order to prevent an escalation of the matter.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the relevant teacher will
 - complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.
 - Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged where appropriate;
 - Should the unacceptable behaviour cease and not reoccur within the academic year, then that will be the end of the matter.

- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed and if the behavior persists, the parents of those involved and the Principal will be informed and serious sanctions may be imposed by the school. (see below)
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of 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.
- In any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, it will be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that the matter is confidential.
- Where the incident is deemed to be more serious (e.g. gross misbehaviour or physical assault), the Deputy-Principal and/or Principal should be informed immediately. The Board of Management will be informed, if deemed necessary by the Principal.
- The parents of all involved in the bullying may be advised to refer their daughter/s to counselling.
- The Deputy Principal /Principal will monitor progress of all pupils involved in a bullying incident by liaising with the Class Teacher and the parents.
- Records will be kept of all serious incidents and of the procedures that were followed (*See Bullying Incident Report Form, Appendix 1.*)
- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.
- In order to appeal a decision, a parent/student may request a review by writing to the Principal who should then bring it to the attention of the Board of Management if the sanction being considered is suspension or expulsion.
- In the case of a complaint /allegation regarding a staff member, this should be referred immediately to the Principal.
- Where cases, relating to either student or Staff member, remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

8. Sanctions may include:

- A verbal or written apology.
- A period for 'reflection' and home discussion.
- A contract of good behaviour.
- A Daily Report Sheet.
- Detention.
- School community service.
- Withdrawal of privileges.
- Shortened school day.
- Suspension.
- Expulsion.

9. Roles and Responsibilities:

- (I) Management and staff-** are responsible for ensuring that the spirit and the principles of the policy are implemented and that all processes and procedures are followed.
- (II) Parents/Guardians-** have a primary role in influencing their daughter's social behaviour and responses and are essential in deal with bullying: Parents /Guardians are also asked to support and foster the spirit of the policy in their daughter's school life and family-life.
- (III) Pupils** are expected to abide by the rules set out in the school Code of Behaviour and the Anti-bullying policies. They are encouraged to care and look out for each other.

10. Programme of Support:

10.1 School support:

- See above Education and Prevention Strategies
- All Staff, particularly the Class teacher, SEN Teacher and Principal.
- Peer support: class-mates and friends.

10.2 Home support

- See above Education and Prevention Strategies
- Parents /Guardians
- Significant others in the pupil's relationships (brothers/sisters etc.)

10.3 Other support

- Counselling
- National services.

11. Referral of serious cases to Tusla

- ✓ In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* (Children First) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult Tusla Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".
- ✓ Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the Children First and *the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.
- ✓ The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to Tusla, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from Tusla the child and family agency.

12. 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.

13. Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti- bullying policy

- 13.1 The effectiveness of this anti-bullying policy will be subject to continuous review in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered. The school should provide periodic examination of the prevention and intervention strategies in place. Pupils, staff and parents will be provided for e.g. (Circle Time, Staff Meetings, Amber Committee, PA meetings, P/T Meetings, Board Meetings), to provide feed-back on the effectiveness of the anti-bullying measures in place and identify any significant behavioural trends that may benefit from early intervention.
- 13.2 The implementation and effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy be included as an agenda item for Staff Meetings so as to ensure that concerns about the policy or the welfare of individual pupils can be shared and effectively addressed.

14. 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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 9th October 2020

This policy has been made available to school personnel and is available in the office upon request. A copy of this policy will be made available to our Trustees (The Loreto Education Trust), if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year (*See Appendices 2 & 3*). Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and provided to the LCJS Parents' Association.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Date of next review: September 2021

Bullying Incident Report Form

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

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

Pupil Concerned		Playground	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		Dart/Bus	
		Other	

5. Name of person/s who reported the bullying concern

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

Physical Aggression		Cyberbullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN 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/Dean _____

Review of Bullying Incident- Report

Appendix 2

Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation in Loreto College Junior School

The Board of Management of Loreto College Junior School undertakes an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist is used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

Yes/No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board made the policy available to parents and provided a copy to the parent association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	

Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and /or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____

Date _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____

Date _____

Principal

Appendix 3

Notification

Regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: LCJS Parent Association

The Board of Management of Loreto College Junior School wishes to inform you that:

- ✓ The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of (date) September 2021

- ✓ This review was conducted in accordance with the Board of Management checklist as set out in the Department of Education & Skills *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools*.

Signed _____ Date _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____

Principal