

Board of Management

Bunscoil Loreto

GOREY, Co. WEXFORD

Chairperson Board of Management:
V. Rev. William Howell P.P.



School Principal:
Aileen Kennedy

Anti-Bullying Policy

For Adult Bullying see School Safety Statement.

1. Full Compliance

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 Bunscoil Loreto 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. Key Principles of Best Practice

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following **key principles of best practice** in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- (a) A positive school culture and climate which
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- (b) Effective leadership
- (c) A school-wide approach
- (d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- (e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - 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;
- (f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. Definition of Bullying

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.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*. (Appendix 1)

4. Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school

In accordance with the ethos of Bunscoil Loreto, all pupils, teachers and staff have a right to learn and work in an environment of mutual respect, free from bullying and intimidation.

5. Aims of the Policy

- To foster an atmosphere in Bunscoil Loreto which encourages disclosure and discussion of incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, staff, pupils, parents and guardians.
- To develop procedures for investigating, noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.

- To integrate this policy in a school climate that encourages respect, trust and consideration of others.
- To adopt a procedure designed to address adult bullying, sexual harassment or other harassment arising in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment, in a fair and effective manner. (See Appendix 2)

6. Indicators of Bullying Behaviour

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- (i) Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school
- (ii) Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy;
- (iii) Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- (iv) Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches;
- (v) Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- (vi) Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- (vii) Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- (viii) Possessions missing or damaged;
- (ix) Increased requests for money or stealing money;
- (x) Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing; and
- (xi) Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

7. Relevant Teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying

- Anti-Bullying Co-ordinators: Principal and Deputy Principal
- Relevant Teacher: Class teacher will normally act as relevant teacher, however any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

8. Our Education and Prevention Strategies

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

- Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions. Extra-curricular activities such as sport and music are carried out to give pupils opportunities to enhance self-esteem.
- Pupils are supervised during the school day, while on school tours and while partaking in school organised extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- Children are supervised when given access to the internet in line with our Acceptable Use Policy.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- The strategy of “Say no, Get away and Tell” is taught through the Stay Safe Programme as a way to deal with bullying behaviour.
- The school’s anti-bullying policy is available to all members of the school community.
- Pupils are encouraged to report incidents of bullying. It is made clear to pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but behaving responsibly.
- Parents/guardians who suspect that their child is being bullied are encouraged to make an appointment with the relevant teacher through the school office.
- The SPHE including Walk Tall, RSE and Stay Safe Programmes are fully implemented in the school.
- The community Gardai deliver the Garda SPHE Programmes in Bunscoil Loreto. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- The school specifically considers 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.

9. Links to other policies

- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Attendance Policy
- * SPHE Curriculum Policy
- * Mobile Phone Policy
- * Safety Statement

10. Procedures for reporting, investigating and dealing with incidents:

Reporting

- Pupils and parents are encouraged to bring any incidents of bullying behaviour to the attention of the class teacher or 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 must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating

- 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 in a manner which ensures 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
- All reports should be investigated by the relevant teacher in a calm manner- Who? What? Where? Why? When?
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, 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)

Dealing with incidents of Bullying

- In cases where the relevant teacher establishes that bullying has occurred, it is reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- The person alleged of engaging in bullying behaviour will be asked to reflect on his/her behaviour and its consequences for himself/herself and others.
- Parents will be made aware of this behaviour and requested to come and discuss it with teacher/principal, with a view to solving the problem.
- Sanctions (if applicable) will be invoked in line with the School Code of Behaviour.
- Any disciplinary sanctions are a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parents/guardians and the school.

Monitoring and Follow Up

- The situation will continue to be monitored to ensure that the problem has been resolved. This monitoring will include teacher observation and discussion with pupil(s) and parent(s)/guardian(s) involved.
- 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 will be referred to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- Serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the Children First and Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and /or Gardaí as appropriate.
- In line with the Child Protection Policy of Bunscoil Loreto, where school personnel have concerns about a child but are unsure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE.

11. Procedures for Recording Incidents

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 relevant teacher.

- While all reports must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher must inform the Principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1 Determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- All records kept by the relevant teacher will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the classroom.

Formal Stage 2 –Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

- The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record bullying behaviour 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 has occurred.
- This Appendix 3 record will be filed in the principal's office and a copy will be retained by the relevant teacher.
- The Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management, once a term outlining the number of Appendix 3 template reports received since the previous report to the Board and also confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and Department procedures.

12. The School's Programme of Support

- RSE programmes and Stay Safe are taught at all class levels.
- Pupils are given opportunities to become involved in extra-curricular activities to develop positive self-worth.
- 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.
- Rainbows is provided in Bunscoil Loreto.

13. 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.

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.

15. Date this Policy was Adopted

Following presentation to Staff and Parent Association in Bunscoil Loreto, this policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 10/11/2014.

16. Availability of the Policy

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. The hard copy of the policy is always available to staff and parents from the school office.

17. Review of this policy

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, be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request from school office 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.

(Extract from Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools)

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst 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 often engage in ‘mess fights’, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
 - o 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 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 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 pupil’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 pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

Appendix 3 Template for 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))*

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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9. Details of actions taken

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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.

Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be 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 implementation 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 published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' 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 of 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 _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

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

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ 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].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in [Appendix 4](#) of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____