

Our Lady of Lourdes Secondary School

Rosbercon

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 Our Lady of Lourdes Secondary School 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 of Our Lady of Lourdes Secondary School recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have, 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 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);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 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.

It is important to distinguish between teasing and bullying (taken from the Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander by Barbara Coloroso- page 37)

“Teasing is a fun thing you do with friends-with people you care about. Taunting is a choice to bully someone for whom you have contempt”.

Teasing:

- a) Allows the teaser and the person involved to swap roles with ease.
- b) Not intended to hurt the other person.
- c) Maintains the basic dignity of everyone involved.
- d) Pokes fun in a light-hearted, clever and benign way.

- e) Is meant to get both parties to laugh.
 - f) Is only a small part of the activities shared by individuals who have something in common.
 - g) Is innocent in motive.
 - h) Is discontinued when the person teased becomes upset or objects to the teasing.
4. It is of the utmost importance that students tell if they are being bullied in school or if they know if another student is being bullied. The student may report bullying to any teacher or adult in the school community. Investigation of reports of alleged bullying are undertaken within our Pastoral Care programme, i.e., Class Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal as deemed appropriate in the context of the alleged bullying and the school's Code of Behaviour.
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobia and trans-phobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:
- a) There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all in accordance with the ethos of Our Lady of Lourdes Secondary School, Rosbercon. CSPE/SPHE have significant roles in informing students about the Anti-bullying Policy.
 - b) Incoming First Years are briefed on the Anti-Bullying ethos of the school
 - c) All year groups are informed about anti-bullying during assembly.
 - d) Meitheal Leaders and Senior Prefects are appointed to emphasise the importance of the school view of an anti bullying culture.
 - e) Further awareness for stakeholders will be carried out with the effective communication and circulation of this policy.
 - f) The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Tran-sexual (L.G.B.T.) issues will be highlighted throughout the year in the school, supported by work in the SPHE classes and Religion classes.
 - g) We aim to facilitate a culture whereby students, teachers and parents are aware of their roles/responsibilities where bullying is concerned.
6. **The schools procedures for investigating, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour are as follows :**
- a) 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);

- b) 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;
- c) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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;
- d) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNA's) bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- e) Parents 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;
- f) Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- g) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- h) All interviews will 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;
- i) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, so that the conflict can be resolved in a non-aggressive manner;
- j) If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, 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;
- k) Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- l) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- m) 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 (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;

- n) 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 efforts will be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- o) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;
- p) Follow up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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.
- q) 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 must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template.
- r) 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; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- s) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

7. **Procedures for recording bullying behaviour are as follows:**

- A. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will 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;
- B. If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has 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.
- C. The relevant teacher must use the recording template to record the bullying behaviour:

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

8. **Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy**

- A. The effectiveness of the school's anti bullying policy will be subject to continuous review. The school will make provision for periodic examination of the prevention and intervention strategies in place.
- B. The template (Appendix 1) for recording and reporting bullying to the school Principal or Deputy Principal will be a valuable and readily accessible source of data in relation to bullying behaviour in the school. Data gathered from these reports must be regularly (at least once in every school year) collated and analysed with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying any particular issues that require attention or any significant trends in behaviour. A record of this analysis must be retained and be made available to the Board of Management. Appropriate responses to any issues identified should be drawn up and implemented.

9. **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.

10. 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 seven

grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

11. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 13th October 2014.
12. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

13. 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 pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Council. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.