



## Anti- Bullying Policy

***An essential part of our school ethos is that every person in the school has a right to work in an environment that is free from all threats or acts of intimidation or violence.***

Bullying may be defined as repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, - conducted by an individual or group against another or others.

It may present itself in any of the following ways e.g.:

- ◇ Mocking, taunting, pointing. Name-calling.
  - ◇ Spreading rumours.
  - ◇ Unkind or insulting comments or text messages.
  - ◇ Making threats
  - ◇ Pushing, tripping, bumping.
  - ◇ Taking or damaging property.
  - ◇ Leaving a person out of a group or activity.
  - ◇ Shouting, roaring, back-answering in class.
- Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny condemns all forms of bullying and commits itself to dealing quickly with all instances of bullying.
  - The Board of Management strongly asserts the right of every member of the school community to work in a safe, caring and non-threatening environment.
  - The school's handling of bullying aims to be sensitive and supportive.
  - As bullies rely and thrive upon silence it is important that all bullying behaviour is reported.

### **Handling a Disclosure**

In handling a disclosure of bullying behaviour, a staff member should:

- Listen sympathetically.
- Reassure the child that bullying does not mean that there is something wrong with her.
- Emphasise that the problem lies with the offender not, not with her.
- Encourage her to talk about how she feels.
- Reassure her that she has a right to be free from intimidation/harassment by bullies.
- Make clear to the child that she is not telling tales but behaving responsibly.
- Try to boost self-esteem through lots of encouragement.
- Not interrogate the subject in a detailed and persistent way as this usually makes her feel worse.
- Not give the impression that the problem is minor or that she has easy solutions. To the child being bullied, the problem usually appears to be of major proportions.





- Not advise extremes of either ignoring or retaliating. Firstly, the subject may suffer physical injury and may be proven physically inferior. The student may injure the offender which may give the offender the opportunity to appear, or to say, he/she was acting in self defence. The fight may provide entertainment for bystanders.

### **Procedure for dealing with cases of bullying:**

- The subject teacher or Class Teacher speaks to the student who is allegedly being bullied. He/she may also speak to the alleged offender, on a no blame basis, explaining the hurt that is being caused. If a satisfactory solution is arrived at, no further action is taken.
- If further action is required, the Form Teacher or Deputy Principal interviews the student who is allegedly being bullied. If more than one student is involved, each is interviewed separately. Written statements are taken.
- The Form Teacher or Deputy Principal interviews any other student or teacher who might have information on the alleged bullying.
  - If bullying has taken place, the student responsible is informed that her behaviour is unacceptable. She is warned as to her future conduct.
  - A brief account of the incident is recorded in the complaints book in the file of the offender.
  - Parents should be informed, their assistance sought and they should be invited into school.
  - If the bullying is of a more serious nature, e.g. if physical violence is used, the offender may be suspended, in line with Board of Management policy.
  - In all cases of proven bullying, the first priority is to protect and support the victim. Her self esteem/self confidence may have suffered and she may still be fearful of becoming involved in similar incidents. She may be hurt, angry and confused. It would be helpful to:
    - ◇ Encourage the victim to talk to as many people as possible -friends, parents, teachers.
    - ◇ Offer the support of a counsellor or other staff member whom the student trusts.
    - ◇ Encourage the child to make friends and stay with friends. Friends are a good protection against bullying.
    - ◇ Encourage the child to become assertive gradually. Teach her to stand her ground and to look the offender in the eye. Eye contact and positive body language (head up and shoulders back) are important aspects of being assertive. Teach the child a positive assertive response and get her to practice it.
  - The teachers of the victim are informed so that they will be aware of the reasons behind any possible drop in performance or concentration.
  - It is also extremely important to help the offender to change her ways, because anyone who actively engages in bullying has a problem which needs to be addressed.





- Intervention should be offered to the student involved in bullying behaviour to enable her to make necessary attitudinal and behavioural changes.
- It would be useful to find out why the student is involved in bullying behaviour.
- The first step is to get the offender to realise that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and is causing distress.
- All cases of bullying will be reported to the Principal.

### **Sanctions**

Sanctions deemed fair and appropriate may be applied with a view to rehabilitating the offender. Such sanctions might include

- A verbal warning.
- An apology to the victim of the bullying behaviour.
- Detention or withdrawal of privileges.
- A written assurance that the bullying will not be repeated.
- Exclusion from certain school activities for a certain period of time.
- Being escorted to or from school by a parent (e.g. where bullying occurs on the way to or from school)
- A written account of the bullying incident and the student's plans to put things right with the subject.
- In severe cases or where the offender continues to re-offend the Board of Management will become directly involved and the offending student may be suspended for an appropriate period of time. In extreme cases the student may be expelled.

It is important not to humiliate or set out to make an example of the offender.

### **Positive Action**

Bullying will be dealt with in a pro-active manner involving a whole school approach. Accordingly, the school will:

- Liaise with source national schools to track any history of bullying.
- Ensure that the teaching staff is kept fully informed of bullying cases, policies and programmes.
- Inform students on a regular basis, (e.g. assemblies, meetings with class teacher), that bullying is regarded as an unacceptable form of behaviour in the school.
- Develop an awareness of bullying and its consequences among the student body through SPHE, CSPE, Religion classes and through the Students' Council.
- Encourage all staff members to be vigilant in ensuring that students can learn and develop in a happy, secure school environment.
- Display the Anti Bullying Charter in each classroom

The Anti Bullying Policy was sanctioned by the Board of Management on 16 January 2007 and is to be reviewed during the 2008 - 2009 school year.





### Anti-Bullying Charter

▪ <b>Right</b>	I have a right to be safe in school
▪ <b>Responsibility</b>	I have a responsibility to make our school a safe and secure place for others

<b>Rights</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
I have a right to be:	I have the responsibility to ensure that:
▪ Physically safe	▪ Others are physically safe
▪ Expect my property to be safe in school	▪ The property of others is safe
▪ Free from all forms of verbal bullying	▪ Others are free from verbal bullying
▪ Free from extortion	▪ Others are free from extortion
▪ Free from emotional bullying	▪ Others are free from emotional bullying
▪ Free from any hurtful remarks regarding person, ethnicity, religion and culture	▪ Others are free from any hurtful remarks regarding person, ethnicity, religion and culture.

