



Loreto Secondary School Letterkenny

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Anti-Bullying Policy

Mission Statement

Loreto Letterkenny is a Catholic school committed to the development of the whole person. The school endeavours to develop student responsibility for learning in a safe, caring and spiritual environment, where each individual experiences personal success and fulfilment.

1. Introduction

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of Loreto 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.

This policy has also been informed by:

- The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- The Equal Status Acts 1998 to 2008.
- Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013
- Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour 1993

1.1 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies:

Within school, travelling to and from the school grounds, and any location where staff and students represent our school. School events including sports events, school trips - both in Ireland and abroad. All communications between students, staff, and parents.

To whom this policy applies:

- Members of our school community. This includes teaching staff, SNA's, students, parents, guardians, and ancillary staff.
- School visitors.

School-based bullying can be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies through which all members of the school community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with bullying behaviour.

This policy also relates to bullying which occurs outside of school where the bullying has had an impact on students while in school.

Parents and students have a particularly important role and responsibility in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within the school because of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.

Bullying behaviours, such as cyber-bullying which break the law, may be referred to An Garda Síochána.

1.2 Rationale

In line with our Mission Statement and the school's Code of Behaviour, all students in our school have the right to learn in a safe and caring environment free from any type of bullying behaviour or harassment.

We encourage all students to take responsibility for their behaviour. The school fosters a positive atmosphere and the development of mutual respect and healthy relationships. This type of environment will allow each student to develop self-confidence, and experience personal success and fulfillment.

1.3 Aims of the Anti-Bullying Policy

The aims of this Anti-Bullying Policy are to:

- I. Promote mutual respect, courtesy, care, and kindness. This will enable students to recognise the dignity of each person in our school community.
- II. Ensure that all members of the school community are true to the principles promoted by Mary Ward, the founder of Loreto – Truth, Freedom, Justice, Sincerity, and Joy.
- III. Provide a safe and healthy environment for all members of our school community.
- IV. Maintain a positive school culture and climate that helps prevent bullying behaviour.
- V. Raise students' awareness of what constitutes bullying behaviour and the serious impact this behaviour has on those who are bullied.
- VI. Promote a zero-tolerance school approach to any type of bullying behaviour and harassment.
- VII. Work with all members of our school community to affirm that bullying behaviour is not in keeping with the ethos of our school.
- VIII. Encourage students to report incidents of Bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment.
- IX. Put into effect procedures to report, record and investigate incidents of bullying.
- X. Ensure a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and those involved in bullying behaviour.

2. Commitment to Key Principles of Best Practice in Preventing and Tackling Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students. Prevention of bullying is an integral part of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. While it is recognised that home and societal factors play a substantial role both in the cause and in the prevention of bullying, the role of the school in preventative work is also crucial and should not be underestimated. School-based initiatives can reinforce positive parental efforts and aid their attempts to change unacceptable behaviour.

The Board of Management is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- I. **To promote and maintain a positive school culture and climate.**
- II. **To provide and promote effective leadership** including the development of leadership amongst teaching staff and students.
- III. **To encourage and engage student leadership structures to lead anti-bullying initiatives.**
- IV. **A school-wide approach** involving management, teaching staff, special needs assistants,

non-teaching staff, students, and parents. School bus drivers and local shopkeepers can play a positive role in assisting the school in dealing with bullying behaviour by reporting such behaviour to parents and / or the school as appropriate.

- V. **To promote understanding** of what bullying is and its impact on members of our school community.
- VI. **Implementation of education and prevention strategies**, including awareness-raising measures that;
 - a. Foster empathy, respect, and resilience in students
 - b. Address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- VII. **Effective supervision and monitoring** of students:
 - a. All staff members watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
 - b. Involve students, particularly monitors, prefects, and the Student Council in helping to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” in the school.
 - c. Ensure that there is adequate supervision in identified locations and at specific times.
- VIII. **Training for staff** in relation to a shared understanding of the types of bullying, how to investigate, report and record incidents of alleged bullying.
- IX. **Support from management for staff**, as necessary, when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- X. **Consistent recording, investigation and follow up** of bullying behaviour.
- XI. **On-going evaluation** of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

3. *Definition of Bullying*

3.1 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 conduct, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

It is not bullying when:

- Students, approximately the same age and strength, have an occasional disagreement or conflict.
- A member of staff offers fair and constructive criticism of a student’s behaviour or work performance.

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

(i) Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds named in 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.

(ii) Sexual Harassment is 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.

3.3 The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive definition of bullying:

<p>General behaviours which apply to all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harrassment based on any of the 9 grounds of Equality Legislation, ie Sexual Harassment, Homophobic Bullying, Racist Bullying etc. - Physical aggression. - Damage to property. - Name calling. - Slander/defamation - The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating or hurting another person. - Intimidation, including aggressive body language. - Offensive graffiti. - Extortion. - Insulting or offensive gestures. - Isolation or exclusion of individuals. - A combination of any of the above.
<p>It only takes one post on any social media platform that is reposted by others to be defined as cyber bullying and not harassment.</p>	
<p>Cyber</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation. - Harassment: Continually sending vicious, disturbing or mean messages. - Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under a false identity. - Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight. - Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online. - Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images. - Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group. - Cyber-stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for their safety. - Silent or abusive phone calls. - Abusive email. - Abusive communication on social networks, including Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Youtube or any form of information technology. - Abusive website comments / Blogs/ Pictures.
<p>Identity Based Behaviours Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community).</p>	
<p>Homophobic and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation. - Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation.

Transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name calling. - Physical intimidation or attacks. - Threats.
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background. - Exclusion or isolation on the basis of any of the above.
Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Malicious gossip. - Isolation and exclusion. - Ignoring. - Taking someone's friends away. - Hurtful gossip. - Spreading rumours. - Breaking confidence. - Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear. - Creating an intimidating atmosphere.
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching. - Harassment. - Sexting: The sharing of sexual texts, video and photographic content using mobile phones, apps, networking services and other internet technologies
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name calling. - Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs. - Taking advantage of some pupil's vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying. - Taking advantage of some pupil's vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. - Mimicking a person's disability. - Setting others up for ridicule.
<p>All incidents involving creating, storing or sharing of explicit text or images, individually or in group chats, and/or videos of children under the age of 17 years will be reported as an incident to An Garda Síochána and/or TUSLA.</p>	

4. Education and Prevention Strategies

Students who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety and thus become more vulnerable. While they may not talk about what is happening to them their suffering can be indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Bullying may occasionally result in

suicide. It is therefore important to be alert to changes in behaviour as early as intervention is desirable.

4.1 The potential indicators of bullying and harassment on the victim could manifest in the following manners:

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Psychological</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anger ● Anxiety ● Distress ● Frustration ● Depression ● Panic ● Indifference ● Fear ● Attempted suicide ● Shame and feelings of worthlessness ● Loss of trust in friends and their inability to support and protect 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Behavioural</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased irritability and nervousness ● Unexplained changes in mood ● Increased aggressiveness ● May believe that they deserve to be bullied ● Becoming withdrawn ● Excessive tearfulness or sensitivity to criticism ● Substance abuse ● Becoming obsessive ● Nightmares
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Physical Manifestations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chest pains ● Pattern of minor illness ● Insomnia ● Stomach problems ● Eating problems ● Fatigue and lethargy ● Headaches ● Sweats ● Inconsistent explanations for cuts and bruises 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Social, Interpersonal and School Related</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anxiety about travelling to and from school ● mitching ● Late home from school without any plausible explanation ● Fear of using school toilet during breaks ● Fear of being out of sight of adults ● becoming isolated in class ● becoming withdrawn ● reluctance to discuss the problem ● Unwilling to go to school ● Lack of creativity and initiative ● Beginning to bully small/younger students ● Possessions missing or damaged ● Increased and excessive requests for money ● Deterioration in school performance and motivation ● Loss of interest or concentration in school ● Unusual concerns about physical appearance, attributes, mannerisms etc

4.2 The Education and Prevention Strategies that will be used by the school to prevent bullying are outlined below (these include the strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including, in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying).

I. School Community:

- a. Focus on a positive theme for each academic year and ensure that the theme is lived out in the daily activities of students and staff, both inside and outside of the classroom.
- b. All staff will model the behaviour that they expect from students.

II. SPHE/RSE/Friends for Life/Peer Pals/YSI:

Anti-Bullying curricular requirements are met within these classes as they promote positive mental health within our school community. These classes aim to help students to build empathy, respect and resilience and enable students to develop a sense of self-worth. These classes provide initiatives and programmes focused on developing understanding and awareness of bullying and address identity-based bullying. These programmes also promote inclusivity and help students in the transition from primary to secondary school.

III. Technology Classes and Digital Citizenship Programme:

Technology classes foster and encourage student responsibility and safety when using the internet. Students are given the skills to protect themselves from cyber-bullying, and are taught how to manage themselves if they are a victim of cyberbullying.

IV. Student Leadership & Mentoring Programmes (Student Council, Prefect System, Monitors & Peer Mentors):

These groups help to foster mutual respect among students. Students who are successful in gaining a place on any of these programs will typically model respect in their dealings with fellow students.

V. Ladder of Referral:

All students and staff are informed about the ladder of referral in the school

- a. Subject Teacher
- b. Tutor
- c. Year Head
- d. Deputy Principal
- e. Principal

VI. Well-Being / Tutoring:

- a. As part of our pastoral care programme each class is assigned a Class Tutor who, on behalf of the school community, undertakes the role of caring for a class group in order to promote learning at every level of the person.
- b. As part of the tutor's duties they will monitor the use of journals, build a relationship with the student, consult with subject teachers to alleviate any source of difficulty and monitor progress. Tutors regularly liaise with Year Head and Management.
- c. This role is caring, positive and pastoral in nature. Tutors are not expected to deal with discipline issues in general, these can be referred to the Year Head, who in turn uses restorative practice and the Ladder of Referral.
- d. Tutor time encourages a student's regular school participation in academic, social and emotional learning.

e. The Learning to Learn programme is provided in tutorial classes, thereby promoting:

- more connections to others
- increased self-confidence
- a growth mindset
- resilience

VII. Anti-Bullying Workshops:

Workshops are delivered by staff and guest speakers. When possible, the school avails of all opportunities to assign workshops to relevant year groups.

VIII. Anti-Bullying Week/Stand Up Week/Culture Weeks:

Assigned weeks dedicated to inclusivity and the promotion of our Anti-Bullying policy. The expectation is that this is a cross-curricular initiative and involves all students and all teachers. Typically, awareness around the issue of bullying is raised, and the message that “**We Are a Listening School**” is reinforced throughout our school community. We aim to foster students' awareness of what bullying is and that it is not acceptable.

IX. Internet Safety Talks:

Guest speakers are invited to speak with students in all year groups to highlight good internet safety practice. They also provide guidance in using and sourcing appropriate internet sites.

X. Garda Liaison Officer:

On occasion the G.L.O. is invited into the school to give talks on cyber-bullying including its effects and consequences. The focus of these talks is on the legal implications of bullying.

XI. Parents Association:

Parents organise information talks on Anti-Bullying and Internet Safety.

XII. Anti-Bullying Policy:

Our policy is published on our website and includes links to appropriate websites for information on bullying - see appendix 6. Attention is drawn to this section of our website at Parent Information nights. The Anti-Bullying Policy is included on the agenda for start of year staff meetings. Time is allowed in staff and management meetings to discuss any specific aspects of bullying if and when needed or in the course of the Annual Review. The Anti-Bullying Policy is accessible through the Loreto school website and anti-bullying procedures and Record of Bullying Behaviour are printed in the staff roll book.

XIII. Year Head Assemblies:

Our anti-bullying policy is reinforced by the SLT, Year Heads, Tutors, and Subject Teachers throughout the year. At the start of each school year and during the year the Year Head emphasises the need for mutual respect at student assemblies. The attention of students is drawn to the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

XIV. Promoting Self Esteem:

All teachers endeavor to build up the self-esteem of each student in their care. A student with high self-esteem is less likely to be bullied and if bullied will be better equipped to deal appropriately with the issue.

XV. Anti-Bullying Charter:

Discussion and agreement of the Classroom Rules involving teachers and students in the classroom at the beginning of the school year reinforces the importance of mutual respect between all members of our school community. This is encouraged by our whole school Anti-Bullying Charter. See appendix 4.

XVI. Students with Special Education Needs:

It is the responsibility of each teacher to differentiate and to make information on Anti-Bullying accessible to students identified with special educational needs. If a teacher is concerned that a student with a diagnosed SEN needs further help in accessing such information, they must make a referral in writing to the SEN Dept, briefly outlining the areas of difficulty for the students.

5. *The Relevant Teacher for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying*

5.1 Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- I.** It will be made clear to all students that reporting allegations of bullying behaviour will be viewed as responsible behaviour.
- II.** Students who have been subjected to bullying behaviour are often afraid to tell someone. It is important for students to understand that all reports of bullying behaviour will be listened to and investigated in a sensitive, caring and non-judgemental manner.
- III.** A bullying incident may be reported in any of the following ways:
- IV.** The student who is the subject of the bullying behaviour will report it directly to any teacher. The student might want to do this verbally or in writing.
- V.** The student who is the subject of the bullying behaviour may tell another student. In such cases, the student to whom the report has been made should report the matter immediately to a staff member. Students should not get involved in investigating the incident.
- VI.** Any student who has witnessed bullying behaviour will report it to a member of the teaching staff or management.
- VII.** The parent of the student being bullied, or another concerned parent may contact the school.
- VIII.** A teacher may have witnessed the bullying behaviour.
- IX.** Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them.

5.2 Recording the Details

The teacher to whom the report is made must record the details carefully using the record of bullying behaviour template (see appendix 1) and follow the procedures outlined in Section 6. A template of the record of bullying behaviour is located in the Teacher Roll Book and the Loreto Hub. The teacher will then use the ladder of referral and pass the initial report on to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal for investigation procedures.

6. *The School's Procedures for Investigation, Follow-up and Recording of Bullying Behaviour and the Established Intervention Strategies used by the School for Dealing with Cases of Bullying*

All reported, disclosed, observed or suspected incidents of alleged bullying behaviour will be investigated fully.

6.1 Staff Guidelines for detecting, reporting and dealing with incidents of Bullying

When investigating incidents of bullying, the following principles should be borne in mind:

6.1.1 Detection:

It is advised that staff and the whole school community:

- I. Watch for early indicators of bullying as identified in Section 4.
- II. Encourage and promote a listening classroom.

6.1.2 Recording and Reporting:

- I. 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.
- II. It should be communicated to students that the Ladder of Referral will be implemented for each instance of potential bullying.
- III. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the Relevant Teacher. Therefore, students will gain confidence when communicating bullying concerns. Fostering this confidence factor is of vital importance.
- IV. The Relevant Teacher should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by students, staff or parents.
- V. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- VI. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- VII. 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.
- VIII. 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.

6.2 Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

- I. The Relevant Teacher will meet the student/s outside of the teaching environment, in accordance with the school's policy, ensuring that the teacher and not the student is visible through the class panel in the classroom door or office.
- II. The Relevant Teacher must keep appropriate and accurate written records of the details presented at each interview / meeting. These records will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- III. Depending on the level of bullying behaviour and the responses from those concerned the Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head may be involved at any of the following stages.

6.2.1 Stage 1: Ascertain the facts by interviewing all involved

Year Head / Deputy Principal :

Interviewing the student who has been subjected to the alleged bullying behaviour:

- I. Thank the student/s for attending the meeting and explain the importance of sharing all relevant details in relation to the alleged incident.
- II. The student/s may be invited to record a detailed written report of the alleged incident which can be done in advance of the meeting.
- III. The Relevant teacher should use the template provided in the school roll book for recording bullying behaviour.
- IV. Listen carefully to the story. Remain calm and unemotional and do not make any judgement or comment about the alleged bully /bullies.
- V. Document specific details in relation to the **What, Where, When, Who and Why** of the incident. Restorative approaches should also be used. See appendix 7

Interviewing the student/s accused of the alleged bullying behaviour:

- i. Thank the student for attending the meeting. Explain that a report has been received about an incident with another student. It is best not to reveal the source of the report. Explain that it is important that the story is told in relation to the alleged bullying behaviour.
- ii. Where a group is involved in bullying behaviour, each student shall be interviewed individually. In order to assist with the investigative process, students may be asked to give a written account of the incident(s). It is best that the members of the group do not have an opportunity to communicate with each other between interviews.
- iii. Following individual interviews the relevant students will meet in a group setting wherein each of the students will be asked to repeat their accounts in order to ensure that the group is clear about all of the statements made with regard to the alleged incident(s).
- iv. Each member of a group will be supported through any potential peer pressure resulting from these interviews.
- v. The Relevant Teacher should use the template for Recording Bullying Behaviour (Appendix 1).
- vi. Listen carefully to the story. Remain calm and unemotional and do not make any judgement or comment about the people involved on either side.
- vii. Look for answers to the questions of **What, Where, When, Who and Why** and Restorative approach questions are also used. - See appendix 7

- viii. In some cases, it may be necessary to interview bystanders or to talk to the teachers of the students involved. CCTV could be reviewed in order to assist with evidence gathering. See Loreto Letterkenny CCTV Policy.
- ix. Having gathered all relevant information, the Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and decide on steps to resolve the situation.
- x. Students involved in the investigation, in any capacity, should be advised not to discuss the matter with friends or other students as this could make matters worse for those involved.
- xi. Where the Relevant Teacher has determined that the student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her that she is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and that her parents / guardians will be informed. Efforts should also be made to encourage her to engage in a restorative approach and view her actions from the perspective of the student being bullied.

6.2.2 Stage 2 If it has been Determined that Bullying Behaviour has Occurred

- I. If it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents / guardians of all students involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions to be taken in accordance with the school's policy.
- II. The parents may be invited / requested to meet the Relevant Teacher and a member of senior management. The student/s may attend the meeting with their parents.
- III. Parents and students are required to cooperate fully with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the students involved within the required timeframe (20 school days after the bullying behaviour is determined by the relevant teacher). After this period, the Education Welfare Officer may be informed.
- IV. Parents/guardians will be given an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can support and reinforce the actions taken by the school and the support that will be provided for their daughters.

6.2.3 Stage 3 Outcome and Repairing the Relationships between the Students

At this stage a number of options will be considered depending on (i) the severity of the bullying and the impact on the victim and (ii) the response of those accused of bullying.

- I. Follow up meetings will be arranged separately with the relevant students involved with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- II. When the students are brought together a restorative approach will be used to help repair the relationships if possible. See Appendix 7.
- III. The student/s responsible for the bullying may receive a sanction. The level of sanction will depend on the severity of the bullying. A record will be put in the student's file.
- IV. It will be made clear to all students and parents involved that in any situation where sanctions are required, that this is a private and discreet matter between each student being disciplined, her parents, and the school.
- V. The Year Head/ Deputy Principal/s will monitor all parties on a regular basis through informal discussions and offer support and to ensure agreements have been kept.
- VI. The Guidance Counsellor/s will meet with all parties to offer support as required.
- VII. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the Relevant Teacher must take the following factors into account:
 - a. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
 - b. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.

- c. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable.
- d. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

VIII. 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 (Appendix 1). After this period, the Education Welfare Officer may be informed.

6.3 Appeals Procedure for Parents

- I. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents may write to the Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny.
- II. In the event that a parent is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

6.4 Procedures for Recording Bullying Behaviour

6.4.1

- I. The Board of Management insists that the procedures for the formal noting and recording of bullying behaviour as documented in this policy will be followed by all staff members investigating reported bullying behaviour.
- II. All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.
- III. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:
 - a. All reports, including anonymous reports, of bullying must be investigated and appropriate action taken.
 - b. The Relevant Teacher will use his/her professional judgement regarding the records to be kept of these reports - the actions taken and any discussions with those involved.
 - c. If the Relevant Teacher establishes 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.

6.4.2

The Relevant Teacher must use the school's template *Record of Bullying Behaviour* (Appendix 1) in order to assist with analysing allegations of bullying behaviour and record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- I. 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 the bullying behaviour occurred. After this period, the Education Welfare Officer may be informed.
- II. Where the school has decided, as part of its Anti-Bullying Policy, that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.
 - a. In each of the circumstances at (i) and (ii) above, the recording template at Appendix 1 must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

- b. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 1 does not in any way preclude the Relevant Teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

7. *The School's Programme of Support for Working with Students Affected by Bullying*

7.1 Support for Students who have been Bullied

- I. Restorative approaches. See appendix 7
- II. Follow-up meetings with Year Head.
- III. Monitoring of the student/s relationships - the relationship between student/s and those responsible for bullying for as long as is necessary.
- IV. Referral to the Guidance Counsellor for counselling to build self-esteem and resilience, develop coping skills, social skills and friendships as necessary.
- V. Support for parents in how to support students in development of self-esteem and resilience.
- VI. Referral to support agencies outside the school e.g. JIGSAW
- VII. Collaboration between school personnel and NEPS psychologist.

7.2 Support for Students involved in Bullying

- I. Restorative approaches. See appendix 7
- II. Follow-up meetings with Year Head / Deputy Principal / Principal.
- III. Monitoring of student/s, and relationships between student/s responsible for bullying, and the victim of the bullying.
- IV. Referral to the Guidance Counsellor as necessary.
- V. Support for parents in how to support students to ensure that no further incidents occur.
- VI. Referral to support agencies outside the school e.g. JIGSAW
- VII. Collaboration between school personnel and NEPS psychologists.
- VIII. Involvement of Juvenile Liaison Officer if appropriate.

7.3 Support for Students who Observe and Report Bullying Behaviour

- I. Support from Class Tutor, Year Head, and Guidance Counsellor as necessary.
- II. Monitoring of student/s, and relationships between student/s and those responsible for bullying, for as long as is necessary.
- III. Support for parents in how to support students.

8. *Supervision and Monitoring of Students*

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.

9. *Prevention of Harassment*

- I. Loreto Secondary School does not allow students to harass other students. This prohibition also applies to staff or anyone who visits the school including parents, visiting sports teams etc.
- II. 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 harassment of students or staff, and the sexual harassment of students 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.

10. *Adoption of the Anti-Bullying Policy*

This policy was adopted by the Loreto Secondary School Board of Management on 31/3/22

11. *Access to the Anti-Bullying Policy*

11.1 Policy Availability

- I. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, and provided to the Parents' Association.
- II. A student summary of the policy will be available in Student Journal's from August 2022.
- III. A staff summary of policy procedures and recording template will be available in the teacher's roll book.
- IV. The policy will also be available from the school upon request.
- V. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the Loreto Education Trust/ CEIST if requested.

11.2 Related Policies

- I. Code of Behaviour
- II. Child Protection Procedures
- III. Internet Acceptable Usage Policy
- IV. Data Protection Policy
- V. CCTV Policy

12. *Review of the Policy, Its Implementation and Effectiveness*

- I. The effectiveness of this anti-bullying policy will be subject to continuous review in light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered.
- II. Surveys of students, staff and parents will provide important information about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying measures in place and could identify any behavioural trends that would benefit from early intervention.
- III. The implementation and effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy will be put on the agenda for staff meetings.

- IV.** Data gathered on the templates for Recording Bullying Behaviour (Appendix 1) will be collated and analysed regularly with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying particular issues that require attention or any significant trends in behaviour.
- V.** A record of this analysis will be retained and made available to the Board of Management.
- VI.** At least once every term the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:
 - a.** The overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the template for Reporting Bullying Behaviour) since the previous report to the Board.
 - b.** Confirmation that all cases referred to at (i) above have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- VII.** The minutes of the Board of Management will record the above but in doing so will not include any identifying details of the students involved.
- VIII.** This policy, and its implementation, will be reviewed by the Board of Management once every school year. A standardised checklist will be used (Appendix 2) in undertaking the review.
- IX.** The school will put in place an action plan to address any areas of improvement identified by the review.
- X.** 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.
- XI.** A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Loreto Education Trust and to the Department of Education and Skills

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1 Record of Bullying Behaviour

Date on Which Report was Made: Time:

1. Name of Student Being Bullied..... Class:

2. Name(s) and Class(es) of Student(s) Engaged in Alleged Bullying Behaviour

Name(s)	Class(es)

3. Source of Bullying Concern / Report

Tick Relevant Box(es)

Student concerned	
Other student(s)	
Teacher	
Other Staff Member	
Parent	
Other	
Specify:	

4. Location of Incidents

Tick Relevant Box(es)

Classroom	
Corridor	
Lockers	
School grounds	
Toilets	
School Bus Stop	
School Bus	
Other	
Specify:	

5. Name of Person(s) who Reported the Bullying Concern

--

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour Tick Relevant Box(es)

Physical Aggression			Malicious Gossip	
Intimidation			Damage to Property	
Isolation / Exclusion			Extortion	
Cyber-Bullying			Harassment	
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 (Please specify)

8. Brief Description of the Bullying Behaviour and Its Impact on those concerned

<p>Report Passed on to Relevant Teacher _____ for Investigation</p> <p>Signed: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____</p>
--

9. Details of Actions Taken

Signed: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____
 Relevant Teacher

Signed: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____
 Relevant Teacher

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____ **Time:** _____

Relevant Teacher

10. Plan for Follow-Up

11. Date this Template was submitted to Deputy Principal / Principal: _____

Appendix 2 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. 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 Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?	
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 all school staff members 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 students?	
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 (using the Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour) 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: _____

**Appendix 3 Notification regarding the Board of Management's Annual Review of the
Anti-Bullying Policy**

To: Staff, Students + Parents

The Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny, 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 7/6/22 Date

This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 2 of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed:  Date: 7/6/22
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed:  Date: 7/6/22
Principal

Appendix 4 Anti-Bullying Charter**Bullying behaviour is unacceptable in Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.**

As a student of Loreto Secondary School Letterkenny I agree that I will not

- Emotionally or physically hurt another person.
- Threaten or intimidate another person.
- Deliberately exclude or isolate another person.
- Engage in gender bullying.
- Engage in cyberbullying.

I am aware that

- A record of bullying incidents will be kept.
- Procedures will be followed as outlined in our school Anti-Bullying policy.
- Students who experience bullying and those involved in bullying will receive help.
- Students who engage in persistent bullying behaviour may be suspended.

Student: _____

Parent: _____

Appendix 5 Advice for Students Experiencing Cyberbullying

Staying Safe on the Internet

The internet opens up a whole world of information to users and is a great tool for students at all levels. It does not come without its risks and all young people should know how to protect themselves on the internet.

1. Never give out personal information about yourself i.e. name, address, age, phone number, school, or where you like to hang out.
 2. Don't believe everything you read. Chat rooms can be a lot of fun, but remember that you do not know for sure if the person you are talking to is 16 or 46. Be safe, be vigilant, and always be on your guard.
 3. If you get a message which is upsetting – uses bad language or inappropriate pictures – do not respond to it. Show it to an adult immediately.
 4. Never open a suspicious email.
 5. Always make sure that the computer you work on has up to date anti-virus software.
-

While social networking sites such as Facebook allow young people to connect with each other and engage with society in ways that were previously unimaginable, it has led to a new form of bullying – Cyberbullying.

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying carried out using the internet, mobile phone, or other technological devices.

It can take the form of sending nasty, mean, or threatening messages, emails, photos, or video clips; silent phone calls; putting up nasty posts or pictures on a message board, website, or chat room; pretending to be someone else in a chat room or message board or text message and saying hurtful things; or accessing someone's accounts to make trouble for them.

What to do if this happens.

1. **Don't Reply** to messages that harass or annoy you.
 2. **Keep the Message.** You don't have to read it but keep it. Keep a record that outlines, where possible, the details, dates, and times of any form of bullying that you experience.
 3. **Tell Someone** you trust. Talking to your parents, friends, a teacher, youth leader, or someone you trust is usually the first step in dealing with any issue.
 4. **Block the Sender.** You don't need to put up with someone harassing you. If you are getting messages that upset you on any social networking platform you can block that person simply by clicking the block button. On some mobile phones you can restrict communications to an approved list of contacts.
 5. **Report Problems** to people who can do something about it – to the website/mobile phone operator. Serious issues should be reported to An Garda Síochána.
-

Appendix 6 Advice for Parents Regarding Bullying

1. Talk about bullying at home, and seek to ensure that your daughter understands that it is wrong to bully, or to be seen to support the bullying of another person.
2. Prepare your daughter for a time when they might be the target for bullying behaviour. As part of this, explore some of the reasons why someone may bully others.
3. Highlight to your daughter that silence perpetuates bullying and therefore, the importance of letting a trusted adult know when your daughter has witnessed bullying.
4. Building empathy in your daughter plays a key role in the prevention of bullying.
5. A child's resilience and their sense of self-worth are closely aligned. Fostering resilience in your daughter will help them to deal well with negative situations.
6. Supporting your daughter in the development of strong friendships will also make them less vulnerable to bullying and rejection.
7. Encourage your daughter to participate in extracurricular activities, sporting or otherwise, that have the capacity to provide opportunities for personal achievement, confidence building, the promotion of self-esteem and self-discipline.
8. Help your daughter to master the skills of mediation and conflict resolution.
9. Encourage your daughter to be an upstander, to help someone when they are down and unable to help themselves.
10. One of the most significant things that any parent can do in terms of countering bullying, is to become acquainted with the signs and symptoms that can emerge in children or young people if they are being bullied or if they are bullying others. This will support identification of a bullying problem and, therefore, lead to early intervention. Some possible indicators that your daughter is being bullied would include: unexplained bruises and cuts; unexplained damage to clothing; signs of anxiety and distress; changes in mood or behaviour; deterioration in academic performance; a reluctance to go to school; additional requests for money or stealing money; damage to or loss of personal belongings; negative reactions, such as getting upset, when online, coming offline or viewing text messages.
11. Parents can play a huge role in preventing cyber-bullying. Although parents are often seen as 'digital immigrants' and their children as 'digital natives', it is important that parents emphasise the importance of online responsibilities to their child, as it is in this area that the child's knowledge may be less extensive. Appropriate online behaviour is the same as appropriate behaviour in the 'real world'.
12. Parents are encouraged to challenge the culture of 'continuous access' to technology by setting a time in the evening when technology is turned off. Technology provides many advantages to us all, but parents should limit the amount of control such devices take on our lives. Curtailing the use of phones at bedtime can help to reduce the risk of victimisation or impulsive decisions.
13. Teach your daughter to be respectful and responsible online. Children should be made aware of the consequences of cyber-bullying for all involved and to stop and think before they post online or send texts that may be deemed abusive or threatening. Explain that the things they do on their social media devices can have long-term consequences, both legal and psychological.
14. If your daughter is a victim of cyber-bullying, it is important to remind her that it is not her fault. Many students internalise what is being said about them and this can lead to long-term problems. Encourage open communication in a safe home environment.
15. Although it is understandable that you may be reluctant to invade your daughter's private space, you should remember that this issue needs to take second place to the need to protect your daughter. Research indicates that parental guidance of Internet use increases the probability that adolescents will react to support victims of cyber-bullying. It is also important for you to use parental controls on your home computer.
16. Parents are encouraged to avail of opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills in this area e.g. attend school talks, avail of online anti-bullying courses. Irish mobile phone operators offer parents a "dual access" where both child and parent have access to the records held on the account. Parents should contact their operator to obtain more details

about this service.

17. MobileMinder is a service for android and smartphones. This service allows parents to monitor all contacts to and from their child's phone. Parents are alerted if text messages containing words linked to cyber- bullying are received or sent. For more details refer to <http://www.mobileminder.com>.
18. For information on online chat lingo (language) see www.netlingo.com.
19. For more information on cyber- bullying/crime see <http://www.internetsafety.ie>.
20. For parental tips and general Internet safety guidance go to www.google.ie/familysafety.



Appendix 7 Restorative Approaches

Our Year Head and Pastoral Care Teams use restorative approaches when students do not meet the behavioural standards established in our code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy. When students break the rules the relevant teacher will encourage the student to take responsibility for their actions and repair the harm done. Restorative approaches consist of several interventions including using affective statements, affective questions, informal conferences, and formal conferences.

Restorative approaches are used to rebuild student relationships by focusing on repairing the harm done to their relationship. This involves bringing parties together with the aim of resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the students involved rather than apportioning blame (although restorative approaches does not preclude the applying of sanctions when and where appropriate).

Our restorative approach makes use of two sets of restorative questions: one for addressing challenging student behaviour, the other for addressing a student who has been harmed by those behaviours. Where two parties have mutually hurt each other, both sets of questions may be drawn on interchangeably. Restorative questions separate student's behaviour from their intrinsic self-worth, allowing them to admit their mistakes, take responsibility for righting their wrongs, and be given an opportunity to change.

The following are examples of restorative questions that can be used when dealing with incidents of a breach of the school code of behaviour or bullying behaviour:

Questions to Student A

1. What happened?
2. What did you think when you realised what had happened?
3. What impact has this incident had on you?
4. How did this impact have on others?
5. What was the hardest thing for you?
6. What needs to happen to make things right?

Questions to Student B

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking then / since?
3. Who could have been affected by what you did, and how?
4. What could you have done differently?
5. What needs to happen now to make things right?



1. **What happened?** - This differs from what did you do and allows students to tell the whole story and feel heard.
2. **What were you thinking then / since?** - This asks students to go back through the mental process they used when making the decision to act outside of the norms. This is a meta-cognitive practice. It allows for reflection on what thoughts and/or emotions may have led to the behaviour.
3. **Who could have been affected by what you did?** - This question asks the student to be accountable for the idea that their behaviour caused harm to someone or something. Students are quick to discover that they have harmed themselves and, oftentimes, see how their behaviour has harmed a teacher or classmate. This builds empathy.
4. **What could you have done differently?** - This asks the student to consider the different approaches they could have taken in the situation. This is a meta-cognitive practice. It allows for reflection on what thoughts and/or emotions may have led to the behaviour and fosters the ability to recognise future alternative approaches.
5. **What needs to happen now to make things right?** - This question asks the student to think about how they can make the situation right rather than simply serving a consequence that is not directly connected to the action. Students may offer to apologize or clean up a mess created. Students get to be a part of deciding what happens rather than having a decision made for them.

The use of restorative approaches to address bullying behaviour encourages the restoring and rebuilding of student relationships. It helps a transgressor to come to an understanding of the effects of their bullying behaviour and encourages them to make positive change and to make amends for the harm caused. Similarly, restorative approaches give the person harmed an opportunity to express their feelings and to indicate their desire for the bullying behaviour to cease. It supports the student harmed to express positive emotions and to request that the bullying behaviour stop, thus empowering them and building self-esteem.

Key Goals of Restorative Approaches:

- Raising student awareness of how their actions caused the problematic situation.
- To encourage student accountability and responsibility through personal reflection. Students react better to reflecting on their mistakes, being accountable and apologizing for their actions when reflective learning is encouraged.
- To reintegrate the harmer (and, if necessary, the harmed) into our school community as valuable, contributing members.
- To foster a listening and caring school climate.

