



Anti Bullying Policy

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Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale:

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 N.S. 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.

Principles of Best Practice:

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact 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 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
 - 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
 - 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)
- Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

Bullying:

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

“Unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. Bullying is not an isolated incident between children.”

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

1. Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
 2. Cyber-bullying
 3. 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 and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
 - 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.

Bullying Behaviours:

General Behaviours which apply to all types of bullying:

Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. gender, including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community.

- Physical Aggression
- Damage to property
- Name Calling
- Slagging
- Insulting or offensive gestures
- Invasion of personal space
- Production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation

Cyber:

- Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation
- Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another's name
- Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight
- Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online
- Abusive communication on social networks
e.g.: Facebook / Snapchat / Instagram / Twitter / You Tube or on games consoles
- 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 his / her safety.
- Silent telephone / mobile phone call
- Abusive telephone / mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive e-mail
- Abusive website comments / Blogs / Pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

See also Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. Anti Cyber- Bullying Policy

Homophobic and Transgender:

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name Calling e.g. gay, lesbian, queer...used in a derogatory fashion
- Physical intimidation or attack
- Threats

Race, Nationality and Ethnic Background:

- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background
- Exclusion on the basis of any of the above

Relational

- Malicious gossip
- Isolation and exclusion
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group
- Taking someone's friends away
- Bitching
- Spreading rumours
- Breaking confidence
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear

Sexual

- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Harassment

Special Educational Needs / Disability:

- Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs
- Mimicking a person's disability
Setting others up for ridicule
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.
- Name Calling

Anti-Bullying Charter:

- Every pupil in Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. has a right to enjoy her learning and leisure free from intimidation, both in the school and in the school yard.
- Our school community will not tolerate any unkind remarks or actions, even if these were not intended to hurt.
- Pupils should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying.
- Bullying will be taken very seriously.
- We are a 'telling' school, bullying is too important to ignore it.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying:

Physical Indicators:

- Unexplained bruising or cuts etc.
- Loss of / damage to personal property
- Hunger / Thirst / Loss of appetite
- Bedwetting
- Requests for extra money
- Stammering
- Frequent minor illnesses, headaches, tummy aches
- Obsessive behaviour, physical appearance, weight

Emotional / Psychological Indicators:

- Outbursts of anger, temper, irritability at home
- Bullying siblings, parents
- Change in a normally well behaved child
- Changes in mood, appetite, sleep pattern
- Tiredness, neglect of appearance
- Expressions of sadness, worthlessness
- Nightmares, crying at night
- Restless, dangerous, wild, disruptive behaviour
- Cynicism, black moods
- Implied or threats of suicide

School Related Indicators:

- Reluctance to go, wanting to be accompanied
- Returning in bad form
- Changing route
- Avoiding certain days
- Nervousness in class
- Punctuality problems
- Poor concentration
- Deterioration of school work
- Expressions of hopelessness
- Fewer phone calls / friends calling / invitations
- Reluctance to take part in activities
- Abusive phone calls, texts, e-mails

Teachers responsible for Dealing with Bullying

- The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying will normally be the Class Teacher.
- The teacher on duty at break time may be the relevant teacher. However all incidents of alleged bullying should be referred to the Class Teacher.
- The relevant teacher may be the Principal and/or Deputy Principal if the incident is reported to them.
- Any teacher may act as the relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

Sample Education and Prevention Strategies

Parental Controls

- Keeping up to date with the risks and dangers associated with the use of social media and attending information meetings organised by the school.
- Monitoring use of the internet by their children outside of school time
- Ensuring that restrictions set by social network sites are adhered to e.g. Facebook should only be used by children **over** thirteen years of age

School Wide Approach

- Fostering an atmosphere of respect for all members of the school community
- Promoting the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and so highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour
- Addressing the issue of sexual orientation where it arises in Classes Third to Sixth and so avoid homophobic name calling by giving a factual explanation
- Fostering and enhancing the self-esteem of pupils through curricular and extracurricular activities
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours along with supervision of communication within the school. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school

- Involvement of the students in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Friendship Stop, Class initiatives such as Table Day and other student support activities that can help support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- School Rules in place and regularly discussed with children
- Anti-Bullying Code discussed with pupils and all parents to be given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour in Homework Journal
- Positive Verbal Affirmation of Good Behaviour
- Principal's Awards

The school's Code of Conduct and Anti-Bullying Policy are available on the school website. Parents must read the policies and indicate with their signature on the Admissions Booklet that they will endeavour to ensure that their child understands these policies and behaves accordingly.

Implementation of Curricula and Initiatives

- S.P.H.E. & RSE Programme
- Circle Time
- Stay Safe Programme
- Frequent seminars on Cyber bullying for Pupils/Parents & Staff
- Visit from Community Garda
- Walk Tall Programme
- Zippy's Friends
- Friendship Week/Well-being Week
- Individualised Behavioural Plan
- Health Promotion School Initiative
- Friends for Life
- Weaving Wellbeing

Relevant Links to other Policies

- Code of Behaviour
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Acceptable Usage / Internet Safety Policy
- Each class will be involved in compiling a Rights and Responsibilities Charter in line with our status as a Rights Respecting School.

Procedures for Dealing with Bullying

- The school raises awareness and understanding about the nature and unacceptability of bullying, enabling children to recognise, reject and report bullying when they see it. This is done through a variety of lessons, surveys and video clips on the Anti-Bullying Campaign Programme.

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved, rather than to apportion blame.

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- 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 is made clear to pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Parents are invited to discuss their concerns with the relevant teacher if they feel their child is being bullied. If a parent reports an incident of alleged bullying to the school, which was reported to them by their child, in investigating this bullying, the school will first begin by speaking to the child who reported it to their parent. This interview will be conducted sensitively, outside of the classroom, to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- If an incident of alleged bullying has been reported directly to the principal, by a parent or pupil, the principal will bring this report to the relevant class teacher to investigate further. The principal may become involved again in the investigation; if necessary (See below for procedure).
- Non-teaching staff such as the secretary, SNA's, caretaker and cleaner are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating Bullying Behaviour

- 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 may be resolved. A record is kept of all incidents investigated and the Principal must be informed.
- Parents and children 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 are encouraged to take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

The following procedure will be followed:

1. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
2. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. The pupil who has reported the bullying will usually be interviewed first. Any other pupil involved – either directly or as a bystander will be interviewed subsequently. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
3. 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.
4. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first by the relevant teacher and another teacher, either the Principal or Deputy Principal.

5. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
6. Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
7. It may in certain circumstances be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
8. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy).
In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has not occurred (e.g. an isolated incident, a misunderstanding, an accident), but where the allegation was of a serious nature, or where a pupil is particularly distressed, the parents of the parties involved may be contacted after the investigation, so that the incident and investigation can be explained to parents, so that they can speak about it with their child, if they wish.
9. The bullying behaviour must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording sheet as per **Appendix 1**. This must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. Any other relevant information should also be recorded e.g. a record of the discussions that took place and the actions taken.
In cases where a teacher has determined that bullying has not occurred, or in the case of an isolated or concerning incident warranting monitoring, an Incident Report Form should be completed by the teacher. See Appendix 2
10. The school should give Parents an opportunity of discussing an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he / she is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts should be made to try to get him / her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
11. The pupil is given a verbal warning and will be requested to apologise to the victim. A Pupil Behaviour Promise must be signed by the child and his / her Parents.
12. 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. This can have a therapeutic effect.

Follow Up & Recording

- 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
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

- If the bullying behaviour continues, then sanctions from the school's Code of Behaviour will be enforced up to and including suspension in line with Rules for National Schools.
- **It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required as outlined in the School's Code of Behaviour, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.**
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, 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 the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

The school's Programme of Support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience to their Class Teacher if they choose.
- Offering an opportunity to talk about the experience to the Principal/Deputy Principal if they choose.
- Circle Time
- Ongoing monitoring and observation of pupil.
- Consultation with NEPS psychologist or H.S.E. where appropriate.
- Facilitation of counselling, if deemed necessary, for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

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.

Bullying by Adults

In the case of **intra-staff bullying**, Our Lady of Lourdes N.S. will adopt the procedures outlined in Section C [c2] of the INTO booklet: "Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations". A copy of this document is available for free download on the INTO website.

In the case of **Teacher-Child bullying**, a complaint should in the first instance be raised with the teacher in question by the parent/ guardian of the child if possible and then if necessary referred to the Principal. Where it has not been possible to agree a framework for resolution, the matter should be referred in writing by both parties to the Board of Management for investigation.

In the case of **Parent-Teacher bullying**, the Principal should be informed in the first instance, and if deemed necessary the Board of Management should subsequently be informed in writing.

In the case of **Parent/Visitor to the school-Child bullying**, the complaint should be referred in the first instance to the child's class teacher and subsequently to the Principal if unresolved.

In the case of **Principal-Parent/Child bullying**, the matter should be raised with the Principal if possible, or referred to the Board of Management.

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.

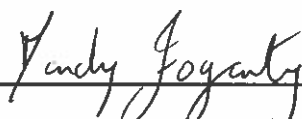
Implementation, Review & Communication

At least once in every school term, the Principal must provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

1. The overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template **Appendix 1**) since the previous report to the Board.
2. Confirmation that all cases referred to above have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary schools*.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year (**Appendix 3**).

A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: 
Chairperson, Board of Management

October 2023
Date

Signed: 
Principal

October 2023
Date