



**OUR  
LADY'S  
SCHOOL**  
TERENURE



## Anti-Bullying Policy

*Ratified by the Board of Management on:*

*Date: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020*

*Signature:*

(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

<i>Commenced: 2014</i>
<i>Date of last Review: March 2020</i>
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## Introductory Statement

Our Lady's School's Anti-Bullying Policy, in keeping with our Mission Statement, aims to establish the framework within which the whole school community will manage issues relating to bullying and the school's strategy to prevent bullying behaviour. Our Lady's School believes that all members of the school community are entitled to a school environment, which is free from bullying and the fear of bullying. All members of the school community will be encouraged to support such an environment. All members of the school community will be made aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to bullying.

The primary aim of the policy is to resolve any issues and restore relationships as far as is practicable. The goals, objectives and key measures of this policy will be linked to other policies in the school and integrated in aspects of the curriculum. The policy is developed in consultation with the staff, Board of Management, Students' Council and the Parents' Council of Our Lady's School and complies with the following:

1. Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
2. Equal Status Act, 2000 to 2004
3. The Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 1993
4. Child Protection Guidelines
5. Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, Sept. 2013

This policy is linked to the Code of Positive Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Guidance Policy, SEN Policy and Dignity in the Workplace Policy.

## Definition and Types of Bullying

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

**Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.**

**(Dept. of Education 2013)**

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

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, transphobic bullying (bullying targeted at those who are or who are perceived to be LGBTI+), racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- Physical aggression, including pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people.
- Intimidation, including body language, shouting, vocal or facial expression which conveys aggression and /or dislike.
- Cyber-bullying is bullying, which is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies.

- Name calling, including persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s), which hurts, insults or humiliates, should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour.
- Damage to property, including items of personal property which may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- Extortion whereby items such as money and other property are taken by force/threat or students are forced to carry out actions against their will.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.

**However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image, statement or any other form of intimidation or aggression can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.**

**A single incident can have a serious effect on a pupil and may also constitute harassment which is legally prohibited in schools under equality legislation.**

This policy applies to all members of the school community; teachers, other school staff, parents/guardians and others, insofar as measures under the policy relate to them. It links with the Dignity in the Workplace Policy.

The policy applies to the following time periods/ activities:

- School time (including break times)
- School tours/trips
- Extra-curricular activities

The school reserves the right to apply its bullying policy in respect of bullying that occurs at a location, activity, function or programme that is not school-related if in the opinion of the Principal and/or the Board of Management the alleged bullying has created a hostile environment at school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim at the school and/or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

### **The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:**

In Our Lady's School we aim to promote a happy school where each individual student, staff member and parent will be valued and where pupils will enjoy learning in a friendly atmosphere where good relations, genuine interaction and consultation are encouraged.

Bullying of others is not consistent with the spirit of Our Lady's School. It is not acceptable behaviour and will not be tolerated. The entire school community will work proactively to promote an environment where bullying/harassment does not take place.

The school will use the following approaches:

### **Culture and climate:**

- An inclusive school culture is promoted through the House and Pastoral care structures in the school.

- Respectful behaviour is expected between all members of the school community. Students are explicitly taught what respectful language and behaviour sounds like, looks like and feels like, both inside and outside class through the enactment of the Code of Positive Behaviour. Staff members model desired behaviour in their interaction with students and colleagues. They acknowledge desired respectful behaviour. They give constructive feedback when respectful behaviour is lacking.
- The values of Restorative Practice (respect, empathy, safety, personal accountability, equality, community, trust) are promoted in addressing conflict resolution. This involves scaffolding dialogue between affected parties using questions that focus on what has happened and what steps are needed to move positively forward. Restorative Practice aims to consciously build relationships, respond to conflict in a healthy way, and connect us to our best selves and to one another. The values of this philosophy inform how each person thinks, engages, speaks, listens, and approaches situations, all day, every day. Staff training in Restorative Practice is facilitated.
- Positive contributions to the school community are encouraged, acknowledged and rewarded through the merit system. Inclusion is one of a number of positive behaviours explicitly reinforced in this way.
- Positive contributions to the school community are also encouraged, acknowledged and rewarded in other ways such as through school representation and student leadership opportunities - the 6th Year Council, the Class Captain System, the Student Council, formal recognition at Awards Ceremonies, display of student work, verbal and formal affirmation by Form Tutors, Year Heads and Senior Management, participation in internal and external competitions, etc.
- Students are regularly reminded of the support structures available to them (6<sup>th</sup> Year councillors, mentors, Form Teachers, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellors, Deputy Principals, the Principal).
- By stressing the importance of reporting matters of concern, an environment of openness and tolerance is promoted, which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment. This helps dispel a culture of secrecy, which is often associated with bullying and harassment.

### **Curriculum:**

- A cross-curricular approach is taken to preventing bullying involving Pastoral Care, S.P.H.E, C.S.P.E, R.S.E., R. E. and I.T.
- A post of responsibility (Assistant Principal 2) has been assigned to the area of Wellbeing.
- The core tenets of tolerance for others, self-control, fairness and the principles of natural justice are explored as part of the Wellbeing programme in our school. These are continually consolidated in all other subject areas and in our daily interaction with each other.
- A staff and student Wellbeing Committee has been established.
- Wellbeing Week focuses on positive mental health for all.
- All 1<sup>st</sup> Year students participate in the Friends for Life programme (staff trained to deliver this evidence based intervention programme).

### **Co-curricular:**

- Whole school and year group themed events aimed at the prevention of bullying behaviour.
- Awareness initiatives e.g. Stand Up Awareness Week, help to promote an inclusive culture that is welcoming of difference and diversity.
- Staff training in Working Things Out, an evidence based CBT programme which aims to help young people build communication and conflict resolution skills in order to help them improve their relationships within their families, in school and in the community. Training in 'Mind Out ' a

SPHE programme developed to support the social, emotional and mental wellbeing on young people focusing on relationship management.

- A 1<sup>st</sup> Year induction programme includes helping new students commit to contributing to a positive school environment and to understand the school's policy with regard to bullying if it arises.
- Transition programmes throughout the six years (e.g. TY Induction, TY in to 5<sup>th</sup> Year, 6<sup>th</sup> Year in to life after school, Leaving Certificate Applied) aim to equip students with a growth mindset and the capacity to embrace change in a resilient manner.

### Extra-curricular:

- The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities (sporting and non-sporting, competitive and non-competitive) that are open to all pupils. It is hoped that these activities will develop self-esteem and assertiveness and build a sense of connectedness with school life.
- A post of responsibility (Assistant Principal 2) has been assigned to the co-ordination of extra-curricular activities and the affirmation of student achievement.

### Policy:

- Respectful behaviour is reinforced through the school's Code of Positive Behaviour, an excerpt of which is printed in student journals and revisited regularly in Pastoral Care.
- A Student Charter is displayed in the school journal and in classrooms. This is reviewed by the students annually and offers a prescription for a happy and healthy school.
- The Anti-Bullying Policy is available to the school community. It is published on the school website and an abridged version is in the student journal.
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-bullying Policy.
- Targeted strategies are used, as outlined in the Guidance and SEN Policies, for identifying and supporting students with emotional, academic or behavioural needs, both transitory and longer term, which can be supported through the SET Allocation Model.
- Promoting responsible use of the internet and its communication platforms through the Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy (includes material on cyber bullying).

### Leadership:

- Staff members remain vigilant for any potential sign of bullying and follow the school's procedures when bullying behaviour is identified.
- Staff members provide supervision of students, taking particular care of students who are identified as being at risk of being bullied or engaging in bullying behaviour.
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies).
- A focus on student leadership opportunities (e.g. 6<sup>th</sup> Year Council, 5<sup>th</sup> Year mentoring programme, TY initiatives, the Class Captain structure, the Student Council, etc.) aim to promote inclusion, empathy and social responsibility across the student body.

### Student Responsibilities:

Respectful behavior is expected between all members of the school community. All students have an active role to play in maintaining a positive, bully-free environment in Our Lady's School. **All incidents must be reported to a teacher.**

Students' rights and responsibilities are outlined in the student journal.

In the course of any investigation, students are obliged to divulge all information that may be of assistance to resolving the situation.

Sanctions will be applied to the following:

- (1) students who actively encourage bullying behaviour.
- (2) students who observe bullying behaviour and fail to report it.

### **Parental Support:**

Our Lady's school recognises the central role parents/guardians play in the prevention of bullying behaviour. The school will actively involve them and/or the Parents' Council in:

- awareness-raising campaigns around social media and cyberbullying.
- highlighting the responsibilities of parents/guardians in relation to modelling respectful behaviour and good working relationships.

*What can parents do to help their child cope during a bullying incident?*

It is not advisable to advocate hitting back.

Discuss some coping strategies with them.

Encourage them to tell.

Encourage them to stay with friends - avoid bullies.

Save any abusive phone, online or multimedia message and report them to the Garda.

*What should a parent do if they know that their child is being bullied?*

Assure them that it is not their fault and that you will help them sort it out.

Contact the school to speak with the relevant Year Head.

Have details of the events from your child's point of view.

Ask that the incident be investigated and what supports the school can offer your child.

Work with the school to develop a strategy to deal with the problem.

**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 behaviour are as follows:**

### **Reporting**

**Every person in the school has a duty to be alert and report incidents of bullying if witnessed.**

Students and the whole school community must be encouraged to tell if they are being bullied or if they are aware of someone else who is being bullied.

### **Who to Tell**

- An initial report/disclosure of bullying can be made to **any member of the school staff**.
  - This is often, but not always, the Form Teacher.
  - It might be a subject teacher, a Year Head, A Deputy Principal, the Principal, a Guidance Counsellor, a Special Needs Assistant, the Receptionist, etc.
- A student may also approach a 6<sup>th</sup> Year Councillor, a student mentor or a friend, however, it is the duty of these students to report the matter immediately to a teacher for follow up.
- A student may also like to request a meeting with a Guidance Counsellor by posting an appointment slip in to the red box outside the Guidance Counsellor's office door who will then arrange an appointment time with the student through the Form Teacher or via email.

- **If a student needs a member of staff urgently and cannot find them, they should always ask for assistance at Reception.**

### **The principles of the investigation**

The Year Head is responsible for the coordination of the investigation. Where bullying is established and/or in the case of a serious incident, it is referred on to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

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. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. When analysing incidents, the relevant teacher and Year Head should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.

If in the opinion of the school and in accordance with the definition of bullying provided by the DES (2013), bullying behaviour has been identified, it will be officially recorded in line with DES procedures.

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties rather than to apportion blame.

Pupils and parents/guardians are required to cooperate 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.

### **What to expect during an investigation**

- When a student reports an incident of bullying they will be reassured that they have made an important step towards the resolution of the situation.
- The student will be interviewed individually and asked how they would like the situation to be resolved. It may be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s). They will be regularly met with to ensure that bullying has stopped and is not resumed.
- The student against whom the allegations have been made will be interviewed separately and their side of the story listened to. It may be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s). They will be regularly met to ensure any bullying behaviour which may have happened has stopped.
- If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved may be met as a group.
- Anyone else who may have witnessed the incident will also be interviewed in order to get a fuller understanding of the incident and written statements may be taken.
- In cases where it has been determined by the school that bullying behaviour has occurred the parents/guardians of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will give parents an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the action being taken by the school for the pupils involved.
- Any student affected by the bullying will be supported and referred, if appropriate, to counselling or other support services available.
- Those found to be bullying will be supported in order to raise their awareness of the effects of their actions and to prevent such behaviour continuing. If appropriate, they will be sanctioned in line with the OLS Code of Positive Behaviour. In any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, the school's policy is that it is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parents/guardians and the school.

- Meetings with the relevant parties 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.
- All interventions will be noted by the Year Head on the Template for Recording Bullying Form (Appendix 1).
- If the bullying behaviour continues and / or the situation is not resolved this form will be passed to the D. Principal / Principal for further action. This may include seeking the assistance of outside agencies where appropriate and available.

### **Follow up and recording:**

In cases where the school considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded further according to the DES procedures. The Deputy Principal/Principal will be actively involved at this stage if they have not already been.

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the school staff will, as part of their 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.

### **Repeated acts of bullying and/or one off serious incidents including cyberbullying may require more serious sanctions including suspension or permanent exclusion.**

In situations where the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school will consult NEPS and/or the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan.

It may be appropriate in the case of serious incidents to refer the matter to the Garda who will investigate further.

Where parents/guardians are not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, they will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

In the event that parents/guardians have exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise them of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, he/she will use his/her professional judgment in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

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

- (1) the overall number of bullying cases reported.
- (2) confirmation that all cases referred to at (1) above have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures.

An annual review by the Board of Management will be held in order to facilitate the ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy.

**The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:**

A support programme will be available for all students affected by bullying. This includes both the student(s) who has been bullied and the student(s) who carried out the bullying behaviour. This support includes counselling and can be extended to other students who observed the bullying. Where needed, students, in consultation with parents/guardians, may be referred to outside agencies including NEPS for further assistance.

**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.

**Staff Training**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate training is provided to staff.

**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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 16th June, 2014.

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 Le Chéile Schools Trust.

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 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.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Template for recording bullying behaviour

### 1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/ report (tick relevant box/es)		4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box/es)	
Pupil concerned		Playground	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		School Bus	
		Other	

### 5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern


### 6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box/es)

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
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 (specify)

### 8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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### 9. Details of actions taken

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

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

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy, will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff 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 pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any 'Ombudsman for Children' investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the Anti-bullying Policy

To: \_\_\_\_\_

The Board of Management of Our Lady's School wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_