

LORETO ABBEY SECONDARY SCHOOL, DALKEY



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

'Our school is a caring Christian Community in which pupils have the opportunity to achieve academic excellence and to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, creatively and physically in a healthy environment.'

The Board of Management of Loreto Abbey recognises the very serious nature of bullying behaviour and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour. The Board of Management has adopted Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024 to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

The Board of Management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. The nurturing of the person of each student is unashamedly at the heart of the education which a Loreto school seeks to provide. Care for the individual student is a hallmark of Loreto Education (A

Loreto Education: Continuing the Journey, pg. 15). Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that everybody in our school is treated with respect and care. As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be diminished or devalued and everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as:

- Targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm.
- The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature.
- Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

Loreto Abbey Secondary School, Dalkey is committed to developing and implementing a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Targeted behaviour

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for

example. Withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

Repeated behaviour

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

Imbalance of power

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. (However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.)

Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it

involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.

Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.

Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying.

These behaviours, while not defined as bullying can be distressing. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	4th April 2025	One half day training on Bi Cinealta. Group feedback on the four areas of wellbeing and how they are contributing to anti bullying procedures in the school. Staff Survey.
Students	18th March 2025 Week of March 31st 2025	Student Survey distributed Bi Cinealta assemblies with each year group

	April 10th and 11th 2025	Consultation with the SPHE Support Group on preventative strategies
	May 2nd 2025	Follow up consultation with the SPHE Support Group on preventative strategies
Parents	18th March 2025	Parent Survey
	25th March	Consultation with the Parents Association on strategies.
Board of Management	28th February 2025	Presentation made to Board of Management by Will Flanagan and Dara Shortt.
	8th May 2025	Progress update made to the Board of Management by Robert Dunne
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	19th May 2025	Consultation survey with School support staff and coaching staff.
	23rd/26th May 2025	Consultation with local shops and cafes about our new procedures and to alert them that we are always contactable if they wever witness any kind of bullying behaviour.
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate as laid out Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures). In developing the preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates our school in a real way.

Loreto Abbey takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at our board of management and staff meetings. The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to, and in dialogue with parents, and thereby build a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence. In continuing to develop prevention strategies, our school will take as much time as is practicable listening to young persons and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs.

Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young persons and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and will help inform future prevention strategies.

Homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour

- Challenging gender stereotypes wherever they may occur.
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- Continue to have 'Stand-Up' week and promote the notion that 'stand-up' is for all year, not just for a week. The week should also focus on the damage of offensive language.
- Promoting Inclusive language in classes.
- Using inclusive language when greeting students
- Encouraging the use of pronouns
- Continue to have student voice represented throughout school
- Invite LGBTQ+ Advocates or organisations to speak with students at assemblies. Through sharing real life experiences/storytelling empathy and understanding will be evoked for students.
- Inform students about who they can talk to .
- Talk to students about the effects of homophobic language/bullying in SPHE class.
- Caras and Amigas should continue to act as role models for younger students and make it clear to younger years that homophobic comments can be very damaging.
- Cover more about slurs and sexual orientation in SPHE class.

Racist bullying behaviour

- Providing support to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language.
- Ensuring that reading material in the library represents appropriate lived experiences of different students' backgrounds.
- Providing opportunities within class time to discuss tolerance and equality.
- Having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display.
- Having a 'Culture Day' as part of Bi Cinealta week to learn about the culture of other students.
- Discuss racist bullying in SPHE class.
- Explain to younger years about racist bullying by organising topic specific assemblies.
- More education on the dangers of negative stereotypes - senior religion or SPHE class.
- Show videos highlighting equality and diversity

Sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment

- Using the updated SPHE specifications at post-primary level to teach students about healthy relationships.
- Continue promoting positive role models within the school community
- Encourage students not to be a bystander to events / comments
- Address Boundaries / Physical Boundaries in SPHE
- Engage external guest speakers to discuss the legal consequences of such behaviour - eg COCOs law to emphasise the seriousness of the topic.
- Younger years should be taught in particular about the damage a rumour or image sharing can do. SPHE classes should emphasise this.

Exclusion bullying behaviour

- Teachers should always assign roles in group work
- Teachers should create seating plans for all junior classes and change them termly.
- Continue to promote Lunchtime clubs and seek ideas for more
- Promote “put yourself in someone else’s shoes message as much as possible”. This message could be reinforced in morning prayer.
- Introduce more bonding activities for 1st and 2nd Years other than the cinema. There should be activities where students can talk / bond / build skills / work together.
- A new merit should be added to recognise inclusive behaviours.
- The role of amiga should continue and be prominent and visible.
- Caras should emphasise to their 1st years the importance of inclusion. They should highlight the importance of talking to everyone and encouraging them to make friends with girls from different classes.
- The importance of forgiveness should be reinforced in SPHE classes and in RE classes.
- Continue to highlight the importance of sports. All students should be encouraged to do sports as it is a great way to make friends.
- The ‘Make Space’ stools at lunchtime is a very good idea and will be rolled out at all the lunch tables.
- Promote the anonymous email address students can use to report bullying.
- The Student Council should host a clubs and societies day in September where all the clubs promote themselves.

Online bullying behaviour

- Teach students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship in SPHE.
- The Digital Ambassadors should hold an Internet safety day.
- Continue to implement the mobile phone policy.
- Facilitate Peer workshops around cyberbullying.
- Teaching students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- Garda Talks
- Continue to implement the school's acceptable use policy
- Regularly updating blocked apps and sites

Physical bullying behaviour

- Highlight the consequences involved eg: expulsion
- Learn techniques on how to deal with issues without resorting to violence. This could be covered in SPHE
- Self Defence workshops in TY
- Empower students with confidence to stand up for themselves.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

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.

Following consultation with the school community the following areas have been identified as potential 'blind spots' or hidden spaces. Teachers on lunch/break time supervision will actively monitor and supervise these areas as part of their duty.

- Sports hall staircase
- Back staircase in sports hall
- Side of the Lecture Theatre (outside)
- Fire doors – closed off classrooms creating hidden spaces
- Little laneway to the left of the school gate (opposite the sports hall)
- Green areas towards primary school. Clear demarcation of out of bounds areas.
- Concert Hall and stage area

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Whilst a pupil or a parent may bring a concern of bullying to any teacher in the school, the first point of contact concerning an issue of bullying is the Year Head of the alleged victim.

The Year Head will be joined in investigating and dealing with bullying by the Deputy Principal or an Assistant Principal appointed by the Principal. The names, phone numbers and email addresses of all Year Heads are available on the website and outlined below.

The Principal may be involved as the investigation progresses

Senior Management Team	Robert Dunne (Principal) Gráinne Byrne (Deputy Principal) Will Flanagan (Acting Deputy Principal) Marie Breen (Deputy Principal, On Leave)
1st Year Head	Ms. Therese Ryan
2nd Year Head	Ms. Colette Gallagher
3rd Year Head	Ms. Joanne McBreen
4th Year Head	Ms. Aisling Mooney
5th Year Head	Ms. Marie Lonergan
6th Year Head	Ms. Aisling Green

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- Conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- Consider the age and ability of those involved
- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- Take action in a timely manner
- Inform parents of those involved

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows:

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

- The Year Head or teacher informed of a concern of bullying will communicate the allegation to the Principal. The Deputy Principal or an Assistant Principal will be appointed by the Principal to join the Year Head in an investigation of the allegation.

- At all times the teacher investigating will ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured.
- The parents/guardians of all parties involved will be informed by the relevant teachers that an investigation will be initiated and will be forwarded a copy of the Bí Cineálta Policy.
- The parents/guardians and pupils are required to cooperate with the investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationship of the parties of those involved as quickly as possible.
- Teachers take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- All incidents will be investigated outside of the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. The teachers seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned.
- If a group is involved, each member is engaged with individually at first and thereafter, all those involved may be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member is asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. It may also be appropriate or helpful sometimes to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher.
- Where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has not occurred the school may refer to the Code of Behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- Where it has been determined that a pupil has been engaging in bullying behaviour, it is made clear how she is in breach of the school's Anti Bullying Behaviour policy and efforts are made to try and get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved Will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of

the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour

- We recognise it is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents
- The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour
- The Principal receives the report and decides on a disciplinary sanction if necessary.

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred:

- The teacher dealing with the matter will engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement

Important factors that will be considered as part of this engagement are:

1. The nature of the bullying behaviour
 2. The effectiveness of the strategies used to address bullying behaviour.
 3. The relationship between the students involved.
- The teacher will document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and PostPrimary Schools
 - The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased will also be recorded
 - Any engagement with external services/supports will also be noted
 - It is recognised that ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
 - If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
 - If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school

consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school

- If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools they will be referred to the school's complaints procedures
- If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour in line with Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures

A support structure for pupils who have experienced bullying is in place in Loreto Abbey. Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. We use restorative practice, mediation or reconciliation where appropriate. We maintain open communications between school, parents and outside agencies. We work together to resolve the situation and protect the victim.

Restorative conversations – allow the student to share their experience in a safe, supported environment.

Check-ins with a trusted adult – regular follow-ups from a teacher, tutor, Year Head or Chaplain to build trust and monitor wellbeing.

Access to counselling – We will offer professional support to rebuild confidence, resilience, and emotional safety.

A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour is also part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem

opportunities are developed to increase feelings of self-worth. Therefore we recognise that it is important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Restorative practices: Facilitate restorative conversations where the student can reflect on their actions, understand the impact on others, and make amends in a supported environment.

Pastoral support and check-ins: Assign a trusted adult (e.g. year head, guidance counsellor, tutor or Chaplain) to meet regularly with the student to provide guidance, monitor progress, and build positive relationships.

Involvement of parents/guardians: Engage families in a constructive and collaborative way to support behavioural change and ensure consistent expectations at home and school.

Referral to support services: Where appropriate, refer the student to in-school or external services (e.g. counselling, NEPS, NEART, etc) to address underlying issues contributing to the behaviour.

Opportunities for positive leadership: Encourage the student to take on responsibility in leadership capacity in a supervised setting, helping to rebuild trust and promote positive behaviour.

Consequences paired with reflection: Use disciplinary measures alongside reflective tasks (e.g. written reflections, learning modules) to ensure the student learns from the incident.

Recording:

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students

and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour:

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Pre-determination that bullying has occurred:

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or reported to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teachers.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teachers, the relevant teachers must keep a written record of the reports
- The relevant teachers must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated as appropriate.

Determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teachers that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher 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.
- All records will be kept in a closed file in the Principal's Office.

'Take No Action' Requests

Parents may make the school aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, the school may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include:

1	The number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting
2	The number of ongoing incidents
3	The total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant:

1	Information relating to trends and patterns identified
2	Strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
3	Any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant

This update does not contain personal or identifying information as laid out in Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures. This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website, in the student journal and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed:  Date: 23rd June 2025
(Chairperson)

Signed:  Date: 23rd June 2025
(Principal)