ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Policy Owner	Deputy Principal
Policy Category	Student
Published on website	Yes
Statutory	Yes
Last Review	October 2023
Reviewed by	Standards Committee
Approved by	December 2024
Next Review:	December 2026

Vision
Loreto College is centred in God, rooted in Christ and animated by the spirit of Mary Ward, the founder of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our vision is that it will be an educational community where each person has the experience of being loved and valued as a sacred individual created by a loving God; a community where students enjoy an enriching and liberating education that helps them grow into the fullness of life and empowers them to be men and women of courage who are alive to the needs of humanity and committed to making a better world.

Introduction
The College aims to be an educational community which gives expression to the core values of Mary Ward - freedom, justice, sincerity, truth, joy, excellence and internationality.

Loreto College has the highest expectations of personal, academic and professional excellence. This document sets out the College's policy and guidance on the procedures it will follow in the instance of bullying. In doing so, the college will be mindful of its core values and of its duty of care to all its staff and students and will endeavour to act at all times with justice, compassion and respect for the dignity and worth of all those involved, recognising that bullying is a fundamental affront to our belief that each person needs to be treated with Christ like respect.

Preamble
Loreto College's ethos, discipline and guidance provision promote positive relationships of care and mutual respect. Students can expect to be in a safe, happy and secure environment where teaching and learning can take place.

Education at Loreto will be characterised by:

- affirming personal worth and dignity
- developing attitudes, values and principles.
- a global awareness that promotes solidarity with others that crosses all divides - cultural, racial, religions, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or belief.

Each member of the College is valued as a unique person who has a past, present and future whom God has called by a name of his/her own.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the College's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Code of Respect
- Student Behaviour Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Anti-harassment Statement
- Attendance Procedures

Loreto College Mission Statement declares that

"Loreto College values all students as individuals."

"The College presents a lifestyle based on a Christ-like respect for other people."

Our Equal Opportunities Policy states that

"The College will establish and maintain a learning environment in which all students feel at ease and in which guidance, counselling and induction will be given without any form of discrimination."

College-wide Characteristics state that

"Each student is given the opportunity to experience working in a Christian Community in which relationships (as well as) programmes of study demonstrate a commitment to the values of freedom, justice, sincerity, truth, joy, excellence and internationality."

Students will experience a Christian Community that permeates all aspects of college life.

It is the philosophy of Education of Loreto College to be an educational community where:

- Love, freedom, justice, sincerity, and joy find expression.
- Young people feel accepted and allowed to experience the exercise of appropriate responsibility.
- The potential of each individual spiritual intellectual, physical is recognised and respected.
- Special concern for the disadvantaged and under-privileged is experienced and encouraged.

1. General Statement

1.1 Loreto College recognises bullying to be a potential problem in any college.

1.2 'Bullying' will not be tolerated at Loreto College. Any reported incidence of bullying will be treated seriously and thoroughly investigated.

1.3 This document/policy defines what is understood by 'bullying' and states how Loreto College will act to prevent bullying, raise staff and student awareness and deal with any reported incidence of bullying.

1.4 The Tutorial Programme and the R.E. Programme will foster an atmosphere in which bullying is unacceptable in the college and provide a forum for discussion of bullying.

1.5 The guidelines in this statement detail how staff should respond to any incident involving bullying. Clear procedures which will be followed by Head of Halls should bullying occur are outlined.

1.6 The College values its partnership with parents, and procedures for working with parents when bullying occur are outlined.

2. Definition of 'bullying'

2.1 There is no legal definition of bullying. However, it is usually defined as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

It takes many forms and can include:

- physical assault
- teasing
- making threats
- name calling
- cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (for example email, social networks and instant messenger)

2.2 Bullying can be a long-standing violence, mental or physical conducted by an individual or group and directed towards an individual who is not able to defend their self in that situation. It is peer on peer abuse.

2.3 Peer on peer abuse could take place on college grounds, outside of college or in a virtual space e.g. mobile phone/social media etc.

2.4 Peer on peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Bullying covers all aspects of potential communication e.g. verbal, physical, virtual- cyberbullying (including sexting) etc. It can also include unwelcome sexual touching/assault, 'initiation/hazing' violence. (Hazing-practice of rituals and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group.)

2.5 The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside college. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

2.6 The outcome of bullying is always painful and distressing to the victim. It should not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up.'

2.7 A child or young person being lesbian, gay or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk for harm, however, they can sometimes be targeted by other children (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024). Risks can be compounded where students who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced by LGBT students, and provide a safe space for students to speak out or share their concerns with staff.

3. Raising Awareness of Students and Staff

3.1 Learning materials, case studies and videos in the Tutorial Programme and R.E. lessons will raise student awareness of respecting each other and working together positively in the college community.

3.2 Through the tutorial system, students are in twice weekly contact with their tutor to communicate any concerns they may have about bullying behaviour. Issues surrounding bullying are directly addressed in tutorial through the Code of Respect.

3.3 Students are encouraged to understand that it is the responsible and mature course of action to report any incident involving bullying to a member of staff.

3.4 All Loreto staff are required to unequivocally condemn bullying and to view seriously any reported incidence of bullying.

3.5 Staff should be aware of the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse. For example, this could include girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

3.6 Staff and students should also be aware of the potential issues which can be prevalent regarding homophobic and transphobic bullying

4. Guidelines for Staff encountering incidents of bullying

4.1 If a member of staff observes or receives a report of bullying the matter should be referred to the Head of Hall of both the victim of the bullying and the bully.

4.2 Any student who has been bullied will be reassured by the member of staff who sees or receives a report of the incident. Staff should always make it clear that they disapprove of bullying and that bullying is never the fault of the victim. Staff will explain why they will refer the matter to the student(s) Head of Hall.

4.3 All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

4.4 All staff will be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse) and that this can happen both inside and outside of college and online.

4.5 All staff will understand, that even if there are no reports in college it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding peer on peer abuse they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead, Andrea Pritchard or deputies.

4.6 All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

4.7 Staff will recognise that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys' perpetrators, but that all peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

4.8 All staff should be aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Students are at risk of bullying abuse online as well as face to face. In many cases bullying will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life. Children/students can also bully their peers online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images or 'nudes', especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content.

4.9 To protect the wellbeing, dignity and safety of all, students are not allowed to create and / or distribute videos, images, messages or any other social media posts of students, staff or the College community which may cause harm, upset or offence or which may bring the College into disrepute. This also includes the use of the College's name, location, buildings (both internal and external) or logo which could cause concern or distress to any member of the College community. If a student was found to have behaved in this way they will be asked to remove the post and the Student Behaviour Policy will be followed.

5. Procedures to be followed when an incident of bullying is reported to a Head of Hall.
The Head of Hall will:

5.1 Investigate and speak individually with victim, bully and witnesses in order to decide upon the appropriate course of action.

5.2 If appropriate, inform the parents of both the victim(s) and bully(ies).

5.3 Take positive steps to support and protect students who have been bullied to re-store their self-confidence and esteem. The College will offer counselling to enable the student to grow in confidence and develop strategies and techniques of self-assertiveness.

5.4 Work with the bully to enable them to effect changes in their behaviour and empathise with the victims of bullying. Unchecked bullying damages the bully as well as the victim - "It is only by the development of higher values such as empathy, consideration and unselfishness that the bully is likely to relinquish his/her behaviour".

5.5 Reassure any witnesses that they have acted responsibly and followed the right course of action in reporting the incident. The Head of Hall will explain the action that they propose to take.

5.6 Inform any staff involved of the action that will be taken.

5.7 Keep a written record of the incident, the interviews and the action taken.

5.8 Continue to work with both victim and bully to report on progress.

5.9 Where appropriate, inform parents of the outcome of the bullying incident and agree a constructive plan of action.

5.10 In a very serious instance of bullying, refer the matter to the Head of student services for consideration of immediate Disciplinary procedure which might, in the final resort, include permanent exclusion. Where an incident is relevant to sexual abuse, violence or harassment and a crime has been committed, this will be reported to the Police. Sexual violence and sexual harassment are not acceptable and will never be tolerated.

6. Recurrence of Bullying

6.1 If bullying re-occurs the students involved in the bullying of another student will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedures of the College which, in the final resort, may lead to permanent exclusion from College**.**

7. Allegations of Bullying against members of staff or volunteers

7.1 The college will follow procedures in line with the Safeguarding Policy and if any allegation is made against a member of staff the Deputy Principal will investigate any allegations promptly and will engage the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate. The Principal or appointed deputy may suspend the member of staff whilst an investigation is taking place.