

## ANTI-HARASSMENT STATEMENT

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- **Loreto College opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and harassment.** This includes incidents that may take place in a ‘virtual space’ including social media, mobile phones, blogs or otherwise on the internet.
- Harassment can happen on its own or alongside other forms of discrimination.
- Harassment may consist of unwanted behaviour, an act or series of actions directed towards someone because of a personal, physical or cultural characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating someone’s dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- Unwanted behaviour could be:
  - spoken or written words or abuse
  - offensive emails, tweets or comments on social networking sites
  - images and graffiti
  - physical gestures
  - facial expressions
  - jokes
- This applies both inside and outside of College, on College trips or events (including social events).
- Harassment is unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 if it is because of or connected to one of these things (Please refer to Equality and Diversity Policy for further information):
  - age
  - disability
  - gender reassignment
  - race
  - religion or belief
  - sex
  - sexual orientation

- 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).
- It is a criminal offence to commit intentional harassment. This occurs if a person '**with intent** causes a person alarm or distress' and in particular:
  - uses threatening, abusive or insulting language or behaviour or disorderly behaviour, or,
  - displays any writing, sign or other visible representation which is threatening, abusive or insulting, so causing a person harassment, alarm or distress.

### **Sexual harassment**

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a student's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments
- sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualized names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (college should be consider when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

It may include:

- non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
- sexualised online bullying;
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

### **Racial harassment**

Racial harassment can be sustained or offensive behaviour, physical or verbal, or it can be a single incident. Such behaviour includes:

- Derogatory name calling
- Insults and racist jokes
- Ridicule of an individual for cultural differences
- Exclusion from normal workplace conversation or social events
- Unfair allocation of work and social responsibilities
- Racist graffiti or insignia
- Verbal abuse and threats
- Physical attack

### **Other forms of harassment**

Other forms of harassment for example, towards people with **disabilities**, or towards people on the grounds of **age** have common characteristics with sexual and racial harassment in that they may be:

- Personally directed or non-specific
  - Verbal, physical, or written or in the form of insinuations
  - 'Jokes' or ridicule
  - Refusals to co-operate with others
  - Bullying, either physical or verbal
  - Display, storage or circulation of offensive material (including information held on computer)
  - Constant criticism of the performance of work tasks.
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- The characteristics of harassment are that behaviour is unwanted by the recipient and that it is for each individual to determine what behaviour is acceptable to them and what they regard as offensive.
  - Harassment is not dependent on an intention to cause distress or hurt but is assessed by the impact the behaviour has on the recipient.

### **Complaints can be dealt with in one of two ways:**

- **Informally** with the person straight away or
- **Formally** through the college systems as identified in the **Complaints Procedure, Code of Respect, Student Behaviour Policy** and **Equal Opportunities Policies**.