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***Loreto college crumlin***

***anti-Bullying Policy***

1. 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 Loreto College Crumlin 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.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that 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 and respect;
  + encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
  + 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; and
* 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); and
* On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. 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.

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

* deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
* cyber-bullying and
* 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 of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school’s code of 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 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.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*. (See [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) – Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools).

4. The ‘relevant teacher(s)’ for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

* Any Teacher who first receives a complaint or witnesses bullying behaviour reports this to the Year Head.
* Year Head investigates the complaint.
* DP or P adjudicates whether more intervention is needed beyond the relevant Year Head’s initial intervention(s).

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows-

* The School makes it clear to all members of the school community that bullying of any kind is unacceptable, irrespective of whether it is a student, a staff member or any other person that is the subject of such behaviour.

* While when investigating and dealing with bullying the principle focus is on resolving differences and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than apportioning blame), the School nevertheless reserves the right to take disciplinary action, where such is warranted, in accordance with the school’s Code of Positive Behaviour, against those who bully others.

* The prevention and awareness of bullying is integral to this policy and students will, through both their curricular and extra-curricular programmes, SPHE, EFL RSE,CSPE, Religion, student journal, sports and all school organised groups. be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth/self-respect. The school will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the full potential of these programmes to combat bullying is exploited.
* The focus of the School’s prevention strategy will be to build empathy, respect, responsibility and resilience in students.
* Racism workshops are organised for 1st Year students. Workshops are facilitated by TY students with the help of Amnesty International.
* Soar Anti-Bullying Workshops are organised for 2nd Year and TY students to encourage openness and sharing of experiences in this area.
* Stand Up Week is an annual event organised specifically aimed at identity based bullying including in particular , homophobic and transphobic bullying.
* Prevention and awareness raising measures will address all forms of bullying including cyber-bullying.  Students will learn how  to stay safe on-line and develop an understanding of when and what to report to school staff when concerns arise.
* The school will, in all its communication with students and their parents, from the induction of the student, make every reasonable effort to highlight the importance of the students reporting incidents of concerns about bullying to a member of the

teaching staff.. Students will be advised of situations where confidence cannot be guaranteed.  The combat of  bullying will rely on all students recognising and reporting incidents. The wellbeing of students is  dependent on the vigilance of their fellow students and their preparedness to report concerns of bullying to school staff and/or management.  An anti-bullying message will be reinforced by all staff on an ongoing basis.

* A school wide approach will be adopted, including management, staff, parents, parents association, students and members of the wider community, to prevent and combat bullying.

* In accordance with 6.8.9. of the DES Procedures ‘parents and students are expected 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.’

* The school will establish links with others, School Completion Representative, Youth Workers for example, who come in daily contact with its students in order to enlist them in countering bullying behaviour by reporting it to parents and /or the school.

* Where necessary the school will seek the assistance of NEPS, the HSE and the Gardaí, as appropriate, to combat bullying.

* In combating bullying, the school will take a particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with Additional Educational Needs (AEN). This will involve supporting inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying particular attention to student induction and cultivating a school culture that respects everyone and values helping one another. The school will also deliver specific teaching of social skills through targeted small group intervention.

* The school is committed to surveying the student body annually to identify the extent of bullying and, in so far as is possible, the students that are affected by it. This will form part of the Student Council’s work during an Anti-Bullying Awareness Week.

* The school’s RSE and SPHE programmes will specifically address the issue of bullying on a whole-school basis annually. This will coincide with the mandatory delivery period of RSE near the start of term 2.

* The school will, each year, hold a Stand-Up week and Well-Being week to highlight the whole issue of bullying and staying safe using modern technology.
* The school’s senior students/6th Year Prefects will be strongly encouraged in recognising bullying behaviour, for bringing concerns about bullying behaviour to the attention of a teacher and for supporting vulnerable students in relation to bullying.

6. 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:

* A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school**.** Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school’s anti-bullying policy.
* Students must report incidents of alleged bullying if they are to be dealt with in the school.
* Students are strongly encouraged to report incidents of alleged bullying in school to one or more of the following in school: senior student or prefect; teacher; member of the Care Team, Year Head; Deputy Principal; Principal or any other person with whom a student would be comfortable talking.
* If a student reports an incident to a person who is not the Year Head, then a formal report will be made to the Year Head or the Deputy Principal or Principal, by the person who has been told about the incident(s).
* The primary aim for the school in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore , as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved ( rather than apportion blame).
* In investigating and dealing with bullying the school will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved, this may involve the use of restorative mediation practices.
* All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the school. In that way pupils will gain confidence in ‘telling’. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
* Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them , or mentioned to them, to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.
* Parents and pupils 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.
* It is very important that all involved ( including each set of pupils and parents ) understand the above approach from the outset.
* Year Heads , Deputy Principal and Principal should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
* Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
* All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. A written record of interviews and meetings should be kept. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information this way.
* When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour the school should seek answers to questions of what, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a neutral manner.
* If a group is involved , each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other’s statements.
* Every effort will be made to support members of the group, through the possible pressures they may face from the other members of the group after the interview by the school.
* Written statements are taken by the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal from all parties involved. The student may also be asked to write their account of what has happened.
* In cases where it has been determined 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). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school an the supports for their children.
* Where it has been determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school’s anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
* It must also be made clear to all involved ( each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parents and the school.
* Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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. Indicative follow-up dates are indicated at the earliest opportunity and can be amended through agreement with the parties involved depending on the circumstances.
* In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately resolved the school must take the following factors into account:

1. *Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased*
2. *Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable*
3. *Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable*
4. *Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal*

* In certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. This may arise when a teacher/Year Head has an immediate safety concern in relation to a student(s).
* Restorative mediation will be used with students in cases where bullying has occurred. This will entail a trained restorative facilitator meeting with all parties to the conflict. The purpose of these meetings is to establish the facts, gain an understanding as to how all parties are feeling about what has happened, to provide the opportunity for parties to empathise with each other and ultimately work towards a resolution that is satisfactory to all affected parties.
* Participation in this process does not negate the use of sanctions in line with the school policy on bullying.

**The approach to sanctions will be underpinned by restorative practices.**

At the final stage, as above, appropriate sanctions will be put in place in accordance with the Code of Behaviour and at the discretion of the Year Head, Deputy Principal and Principal

* Bullying or intimidation of a very serious nature, even if it is a once off occurrence, will be dealt with as under ‘serious offences’ in the Code of Behaviour.
* **Any incidents of physical aggression or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated. Students will, in these circumstances, bypass all stages detailed in this policy and be referred immediately to the Code of Behaviour. Parents/ Guardians will be notified immediately.**
* Where there is evidence that a student has been bullied over a period of time, appropriate action will be taken.

**Note**

* *None of the students involved in the incidents has the right to discuss them with friends or other students in such a way as to make matters worse for any other student involved. Taking away a person’s good name is itself a form of bullying and will be treated as such.*

7. The school’s programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

* Pupils who have been bullied will be offered support.  This may include 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 it is needed.

* Those pupils involved in bullying behaviour will also be offered support.  This support may include counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem and increase feelings of self-worth.  It is hoped that such support will help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
* Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with adult members of the school community.
* Any student involved in incidents of bullying will be referred to the Care Team.

**8. 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.



* At least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:
* The overall number of bullying cases reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal since the previous report to the Board as recorded on the Incident Report Forms for recording Bullying Behaviour.
* Confirmation that all these cases have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the schools anti-bullying policy and their procedures (the minutes of the BOM meeting must record the above, but in so doing not include any identifying details of the pupils involved).

* Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school’s complaints procedures. Details can be obtained from the school office.
* In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

**9. 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The latest ratification of the Board of Management was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents’ Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents’ Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

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

Date:

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

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

(Principal)