

Anti-Bullying Policy

Lucan Community College

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by Tusla (The Child and Family Agency), the Board of Management of Lucan Community College 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 (<http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Bullying/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-in-Schools.html>) which were published in September 2013. This policy operates in line with the Child Protection Policy.

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;
 - 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 – Bullying is an issue for all members of the school community including teachers, cleaning staff, caretaking staff, office staff, parents and students. All of the named groups come into contact with each other at various times of the day and may therefore encounter incidents of student - student bullying which is the scope of this policy.
- 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.

Aontas meaning *Unity*, encapsulates the ethos of the college. Our fundamental belief is that school, and in particular the work and the activities involved, should be a pleasant as well as an enriching experience. We therefore lay total emphasis on the school as a community – of students, staff and parents – working in harmony. We consider that everyone has an absolute right to work and develop in a happy atmosphere free from unnecessary stress and tension.

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,
- 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
- physical aggression
- damage to property – (damage to clothing, school books, bicycle, lockers etc.)
- extortion – (of lunch money or property etc.)
- intimidation – (aggressive body language).

A list of other kinds of bullying is provided in Appendix 1. This list is not exhaustive.

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*.

4. The roles and responsibilities for reporting, investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- (i) We encourage **students** to inform staff at all times of any incidents of bullying that they may be aware of and to behave in a way which is expected of a Lucan Community College student and not engage in activities of a bullying nature.
- (ii) The **Principal** has overall responsibility for development and implementation of the policy. It is his/her role to ensure that all other parties are aware of their responsibilities to ensure the safety of all students.
- (iii) In the absence or unavailability of the Principal, the **Deputy Principal** or other designated person will ensure that this policy is implemented.
- (iv) It is the responsibility of the person to whom the bullying incident is reported to ensure that the appropriate person is informed so that the incident can be investigated and appropriately managed. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school are as follows:

- Member of the Anti-Bullying team
- Subject teacher
- Class tutor
- Year head
- Guidance Counsellor
- Deputy Principal

- Principal.

The school behaviour referral system should be the guide in deciding at what level the reported incident should be referred.

(v) It is the responsibility of **parents** to inform the school if any information vis à vis bullying that comes to their attention.

(vi) It is the responsibility of the **staff** (see Guidelines) to inform parents of any incidents of bullying relating to their son/daughter at an early stage although this may not be done in the first instance (see procedures 6.8.9 (xiv)). It is vitally important that we have open lines of communication working both ways between school and home.

(vii) As a school community we all need to be aware of the signs/symptoms of bullying. These include:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school (requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel etc.);
- Unwillingness to go to school (refusal to attend or 'mitching');
- Deterioration in educational performance;
- Pattern of physical illnesses –(Headaches, stomach aches etc);
- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour;
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress;
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- Possessions missing or damaged;
- Increased requests for money or stealing money;
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing;
- Serious change in pattern of friendship, especially loss of friends.

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 are used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

(i) The college strives to educate the whole school community in relation to bullying and to reduce the number of incidents thereof.

(ii) The college will make all parents aware of this policy by discussing it at Parents' Information Evenings, publishing it on the college website and publishing extracts in the student journal.

(iii) The college operates an Anti-Bullying programme ongoing in the school linked into some or all of the students' classes. This will be coordinated by the appropriate staff members with the assistance of the Year Heads, Management teams and subject teachers.

(iv) The college makes use of available resources including the Anti-Bullying Campaign website and carries out questionnaires, interviews and appropriate exercises as part of its preventative and management strategies.

6. The college strives to ensure that we have a set of procedures to deal adequately with incidents of bullying. 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 (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

Education and Prevention:

The whole-school anti bullying ethos is developed through the SPHE programme, special programmes such as anti-bullying week for first years and peer training in conflict resolution and mediation during student leadership training. Additional preventative strategies will be implemented on an ongoing basis. In addition, staff modelling of respect and a problem-solving approach to dealing with bullying behaviour and emphasis on our school motto of *Aontas - Unity* set the tone for the school community.

Investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour:

Our approach when dealing with reported incidents of bullying puts repairing harm done to relationships and people above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment. Punishment may not necessarily be part of the initial response to bullying behaviour. The steps followed by the relevant teacher will include some or all of the following:

- Investigation by the relevant teacher of the instance of reported or suspected bullying behaviour;
- Students involved asked to write an account of what happened;
- Interviewing of students;
- Use of templates to conduct interviews and investigations;
- Requesting students to sign a promise to treat all students fairly, equally and respectfully including a list of named students where appropriate;
- Using a questionnaire with class groups to encourage reporting of bullying behaviours;
- Emphasising that the intention of the process is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop;
- Explaining that students who report bullying therefore are not getting others 'into trouble' so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying behaviour continued;
- Completing a report on the findings of the investigation, any intervention made and any other relevant information;
- Involvement of parents/guardians where a commitment to stop bullying behaviour is not honoured;
- Requesting parents/guardians to countersign a promise to treat all students fairly, equally and respectfully;
- Applying serious sanctions where this additional promise to cease bullying behaviour is not honoured;
- Seeking support for the student alleged to be engaged in bullying behaviour from the guidance department where deemed appropriate;
- Retaining documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution securely.

Sanctions:

Where a student has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promise to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may be contacted by the relevant teacher and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
- The student may be suspended;
- The case may be referred to the Board of Management as a disciplinary procedure;

- The case may be referred to the Board of Management seeking expulsion of the student.

As with all cases of extreme inappropriate behaviour, the College will avail of successive sanctions up to and including permanent exclusion, as outlined in the School Behaviour Policy.

In the case where incidents of bullying continue or have not been resolved within 20 school days after the initial determination by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, a copy of the completed relevant recording template shall be provided to the Principal (using Appendix 3 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools).

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools).

Students who are being bullied:

- Ending the bullying behaviour;
- Continuing to strengthen the school culture to foster respect for all students;
- Continuing to strengthen the school culture to foster empathy towards and support for bullied students;
- Indicating clearly through awareness raising programmes that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted student;
- Striving to speedily identify those responsible for bullying behaviour and resolving the bullying situations;
- Supporting bullied students through our pastoral care and guidance services;
- Helping bullied students raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in extra-curricular activities).
- Training and empowering student leadership teams in the school to promote respect for all students and to see bullying behaviour as not acceptable.

Students engaged in bullying behaviour:

- Making it clear that students who engaged in bullying behaviour and who stop this behaviour are not blamed or punished;
- Offering support to students to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs that do not violate the rights of others;
- Helping students who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in extra-curricular activities).
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance students' feelings of self-worth;
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child;
- Appropriate contact with student's parents/guardians to ensure student is supported in their efforts to change behaviour;
- In dealing with bullying behaviour, seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform;
- Use of appropriate referral to school guidance counsellors and/or to outside support agencies.

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. The Principal will report to the Board on bullying issues that have been reported to the Principal under the terms set out in the anti-bullying guidelines.

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 _____ [date].

11. This policy will be available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. 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 (using Appendix 4 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools). 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' Association. A record of the review and its outcome (e.g. an appropriate action plan) will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1

Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:**
 - Shouting and uncontrolled anger
 - Personal insults
 - Verbal abuse
 - Offensive language directed at an individual
 - Continually shouting or dismissing others
 - Public verbal attacks/criticism
 - Domineering behaviour
 - Open aggression
 - Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact
- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**
 - Treating in a dictatorial manner,
 - Ridicule
 - Persistent slagging
 - Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort
 - Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual.
 - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family
 - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork
- **Interference with property, for example:**
 - Stealing/damaging books or equipment
 - Stealing/damaging clothing or other property
 - Demanding money with menaces
 - Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property
 - Marking/defacing property
- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**
 - Condescending tone
 - Deliberately withholding significant information and resources
 - Writing of anonymous notes
 - Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments
 - Malicious tricks/derogatory jokes
 - Knowingly spreading rumours
 - Belittling others efforts, their enthusiasm or their new ideas
 - Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling)
 - Negative remarks regarding gender, sexual identity or orientation
 - Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying)
 - Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence,
 - Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person
- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**
 - Deliberately marginalising an individual
 - Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group
 - Deliberately preventing a person from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational
 - Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
 - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
 - Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

(for referral to Principal after 20 school days without resolution of the reported incident)

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	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other:	

Yard	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other:	

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

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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

9. Details of actions taken:

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

***Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.**

Appendix 4 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 Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?	
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 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

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Date _____

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of Lucan Community College 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 _____ Date _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____

Principal

Appendix 5: Documentation of yearly review

Date	Notes
15 June 2015	<p>Policy reviewed to comply with template for Anti Bullying Procedures and to describe the school's Anti Bullying processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor typos corrected.• Link added in section 1 to the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools• Appendix 5, history of changes added. <p>Board of Management considered feedback from parents and staff and ratified the policy.</p>