



## **Bí Cineálta**

### **(Anti-Bullying Policy)**

#### **1.Introduction:**

Loreto College Foxrock is an all-girls, Catholic, fee-charging secondary school in Dublin under the trusteeship of the Loreto Education Trust. In the spirit of Mary Ward, Loreto College Foxrock is a caring, enabling, learning community where all staff and students work together with mutual respect to fulfil their potential with integrity and compassion. This policy outlines the Bí Cineálta policies to prevent and address bullying behaviours.

#### **2.Rationale:**

The Board of Management of Loreto College Foxrock has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024. 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. 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.

#### **3. 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. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement 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 our school's Code of Behaviour

#### 4. 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	21/03/2025 22/05/2025	Whole Staff Bí Cineálta training. Focus Group
Students	26/03/2025 – 30/03/2025	Survey
Parents		Parents Association
Board of Management		In person BOM meeting
Wider School Community (as appropriate)		
Date Policy was approved: 23/06/2025		
Date Policy was last reviewed: 23/06/2025		

#### 5. Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

##### 5.1 Prevention Strategies

Our school implements the following strategies for the prevention of bullying behaviour:

- **Curriculum Integration:** Bullying prevention strategies, including those addressing cyberbullying, identity-based bullying, and homophobic/transphobic bullying, are integrated into the school curriculum, particularly through SPHE and RSE programs. There are also well-being modules developed for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year, such as Empathy and Resilience, to help encourage cooperation and compassion among students.
- **Definition and Understanding:** The school aim to educate students on what constitutes bullying behaviour, including subtle forms, and to promote an understanding of the impact of bullying.
- **Religious and Cultural Education:** Teachers of RE promote respect for all religious denominations and world views, and lessons incorporate content that fosters awareness of other cultures and encourages students to think globally.
- **Staff Training:** Staff members are provided with practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate.
- **Cineáltas Champions:** There are student-led initiatives that promote positive and inclusive behaviours, encouraging them to be "upstanders" and to report bullying. Such initiatives include Stand-up week, posters and school announcements in inclusion and cyberbullying. They sign a pledge book and add their handprint to the school Pledge Wall.

- **Student Council:** The Student Council is empowered to take on leadership roles and raises awareness regarding bullying behaviour and ways to address it.
- **Whole-School Ethos:** The School ethos promotes truth, justice, freedom, joy and sincerity, in relation to the 8 points of the Mary Ward compass. The school aims to establish a proactive, preventative role in addressing bullying, with an emphasis on creating a management, staff, parents, and student partnership.
- **Positive School Climate:** Emphasis is placed on embracing diversity, mutual respect, and justice in all relationships, fostering a school climate that promotes positive behaviour and discourages inappropriate conduct.
- **Pastoral Care:** All teachers have pastoral responsibility for students in their care. Each year is assigned a Year Head; each class is assigned a Tutor. Tutors and students meet daily and there is a weekly assembly to meet the Year-Head. All year groups are assigned a Guidance Counsellor. This pastoral care system provides ongoing support and fostering of positive relationships in each year group. The Student Support Team – the Year Head(s), AEN, Guidance, and Senior Management meet weekly to discuss each year group's progress. Other preventative strategies, such as sociograms, may be used to help combat bullying behaviours.
- **Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Programme:** This program provides additional support to students with specific tuition, including those with learning, emotional, behavioural, or physical disabilities, to promote positive self-esteem.
- **Celebrating Diversity:** Initiatives promote the value of diversity and address issues such as prejudice and stereotypes. The school participates in themed weeks such as "Stand-Up Week" to promote inclusivity and respect for diversity.
- **Extracurricular Activities:** A wide range of extracurricular activities are available in the school. These activities foster bonding, mutual support, appreciation, and respect, promoting positive relationships and a sense of self-worth.
- **Parents/Guardians Involvement:** Parents/Guardians play a pivotal role, with an emphasis on supporting the school message of mutual respect and the recognition that bullying is not acceptable behaviour. The Parent Association regularly hosts workshops to help raise awareness of different types of bullying behaviour, such as cyberbullying, with parents.

## 5.2 Supervision and monitoring

Our school implements the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- **Teaching/Classroom:** All teachers are responsible for implementing positive and collaborative atmosphere in their classrooms. As a whole school initiative, students will be assigned seating in all classes, and these will be rotated on a monthly basis to help foster more integration and closer relationships between students.
- **ISAs:** ISAs play a vital role in supporting students and observing/supervising outside class time to identify and address bullying issues early.
- **Pastoral Care:** All teachers, Year Heads, and Tutors, monitor student relational behaviour for signs of bullying behaviour.
- **Supervision:** Staff are scheduled to supervise students before and after school and during break times and will monitor student behaviour where practicable.
- **Reporting Procedures:** Clear procedures are in place for students, parents, and staff to report any incidents of bullying behaviour to the teaching staff, Year Heads, Deputy Principal, or Principal.

- **Parents/Guardians Involvement:** When Parents/Guardians have concerns of bullying behaviour, whether in-person or online behaviour, the school encourages parents to bring these concerns to the attention of school management.
- **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools:** The school adheres to these procedures as a guiding framework for addressing bullying.
- ***Loreto Foxrock Code of Behaviour and Loreto Foxrock Acceptable Use Policy – ICT and social media:*** These policies support a positive culture that opposes inappropriate behaviour both on online platforms and in in-person interactions in our school community.

## 6. Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

### 6.1 Teachers' Responsibility

The teachers with responsibility for **investigating** bullying behaviour are Year Heads/Deputy Principal/Principal.

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
- act in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

### 6.2 When Bullying Behaviour is reported

Upon receiving a report of bullying behaviour from a student, parent, or other staff member, the Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal will:

- **Listen and Reassure:** Ensure the student experiencing bullying feels listened to, safe, and reassured. Their views will be heard and taken into account.
- **Investigate Promptly and Sensitively:**
  - Determine if bullying behaviour has occurred by checking whether the incident was harmful, targeted, and repeated.
  - They will take into account any possible power imbalances.
  - Identify "what, where, when, and why" the bullying occurred.
  - Engage with all students involved individually, then as a group (if applicable), ensuring everyone's perspective is heard.
  - Encourage students to provide written accounts of the incident.
  - Consider the age and ability of all involved.
  - Recognise that bullying behaviour can be subtle and hurtful, even if not immediately obvious.
  - Record all information on the Cineáltas Reporting Form, and upload this onto the appropriate TEAM.
- **Inform Parents/Guardians:** Where applicable/appropriate, the Parents/guardians of all parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to discuss the actions to be taken, in line with the Bí Cineálta policy.

- **When a Student Requests No Action:** If a student experiencing bullying behaviour asks a staff member not to take action, their reasons will be listened to, and they will be offered ongoing support. While respecting their wishes, the school may still need to intervene to ensure the student's safety and well-being, particularly if there are concerns about their welfare. Parents/Guardians may also make requests for no action; these will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Under Department Guidelines “*A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs **when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school**. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their *Bí Cineálta* policy.*”

### 6.3 Supports in cases of bullying

- **Support and Monitoring:** The student experiencing bullying will receive appropriate support and monitoring to ensure their safety and well-being. This includes addressing relational difficulties and ensuring their needs are met.
- **Intervention Strategies:** Strategies will be tailored to the specific circumstances, ranging from discussions and restorative practices to formal disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour. Mediation may be used only if teachers have been trained in its methods and the students involved have agreed to its use.
- **Determining if Bullying Behaviour has Ceased**
  - The teacher will meet with students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress.
  - Ongoing supervision and support will be provided to the student who experienced the bullying, even after the behaviour has ceased.
  - If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher will review strategies with students and parents and agree on a timeframe for continued monitoring.
  - If the bullying behaviour continues, the school will consider using appropriate disciplinary sanctions as per the Code of Behaviour.
- **Supports Available:** The school will draw upon internal and external supports to prevent and address bullying behaviour, including:
  - **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS):** NEPS provides psychological services to promote well-being, academic, social, and emotional development. NEPS psychologists can advise schools on best practice, provide training, and offer direct casework or indirect casework support for students and families.
  - **School Guidance Counsellors:** Students will be offered access to pastoral care or a guidance counsellor to help process their experiences and build resilience.
- **Students Who Witness Bullying:** Students who have witnessed bullying will be provided to following supports:
  - **Empowering Bystanders:** students are encouraged to safely intervene or report bullying through clear reporting mechanisms (e.g., a designated teacher, anonymous reporting box, or online form).
  - **Awareness Programmes:** students are educated on the impact of bystander behaviour, reinforcing that passivity enables bullying while speaking up can create change.
  - **Encouraging Reporting without Fear:** students are assured that reporting bullying will be handled discreetly and effectively.
- **Supporting Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour**
  - **Non-Punitive, Restorative Approach:** students are engaged in a restorative justice process, helping them understand the impact of their actions.

- Behaviour Reflection Plans: individual behaviour plans are developed that focus on empathy, respect, and accountability. Focus on the already existing Loreto Ethos.
- Pastoral Care & Guidance: access to mentoring, counselling, or structured interventions to address underlying issues are provided, as needed by the student and outline in the policy.
- Parental Collaboration: parents are engaged with to implement consistent expectations and behavioural strategies at home and in school.
- Continuous Monitoring & Support: the student's progress is regularly assessed, and ongoing guidance is provided to promote positive behaviour change.
- **Complaints Process:** If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed, they should refer to the school's formal complaint procedures. Information on complaint procedures for schools is available from the Ombudsman for Children's Office.

#### 6.4 Recording Bullying Behaviour

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.

#### **7. Section D: Oversight**

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and 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, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See 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 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: *G Ryan*.  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: *2/9/25*.

Signed: *B Prindle*  
(Principal)

Date: *23/6/2025*.