



St. Patrick's Primary School Dignity at Work Policy

Rationale

The Board of Management of St. Patrick's Primary School has adopted this policy following consultation with all staff members.

The policy is formulated in light of a number of background documents, including:

- The Health & Safety Authority's ***Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work (2007)***.
- **The Equality Authority's Code of Practice, given legal effect in the Statutory Instrument entitled *Employment Equality Act 1998 (Code of Practice) (Harassment) Order 2002 (S.I. No. 78 of 2002)***
- **Working Together 2024 (Ag Obair le Chéile)**

The Management at St. Patrick's Primary School has a duty of care towards employees. Similarly, employees have a duty of care towards one another. This policy seeks to set out principles and practices to support the exercise of that duty in our school. Just as inappropriate and undermining behaviour among work colleagues is taken seriously, so is such behaviour when perpetrated against an employee of this school by any other person.

Together we are committed to building and maintaining a work environment where respectful, open and equal relationships are the norm.

Core Principles

St. Patrick's Primary School is committed to a positive work environment where staff members are enabled to carry out their work in an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, openness and equality.

Adult bullying and harassment in the workplace are phenomena which this school will seek to prevent and will not tolerate. All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and

respect. Management is committed to intervening in an appropriate manner - utilising one of the accepted Management/INTO procedures - to investigate and deal with allegations of bullying or harassment. (Working Together- Ag Obair le Chéile 2024). The provisions of Circular 40/97 on *Assaults on Staff in Primary Schools* will be utilised as appropriate.

What is Workplace Bullying and Harassment?

The Board of Management adopts the definition of adult bullying as set out by the Task Force (2001):

"Workplace Bullying is repeated, inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work.. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but, as a once off incident, is not considered to be bullying".

Harassment is covered by Employment Equality legislation and is based on a person's standing within one of the nine categories (or grounds) specified in that legislation (gender, marital status, religion, sexual orientation etc.) Harassment is defined in law as *"unwanted conduct related to one or more of the discriminatory grounds which "has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person."*

It is recognised that bullying and harassment complaints may arise among work colleagues but may also arise in relation to visitors to the school, including parents. In either case, the commitment to a positive workplace, where dignity at work is respected, prevails.

A Positive Work Environment

All members of the school community are committed to creating a positive work environment. This will be characterised by the following:

Bullying is not:	Bullying could be:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective criticism and corrections that are intended to provide constructive feedback to an employee. They are intended to assist the employee with their work. • expressing differences of opinion strongly, • offering constructive feedback, guidance, or advice about 	<p>The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of types of behaviour that may constitute bullying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal abuse/insults, undermining remarks • Exclusion with negative consequences

<p>work-related behaviour which is not of itself welcome,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ordinary performance management, • reasonable corrective action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of employees (for example managing a worker's performance, taking reasonable disciplinary actions, or assigning work), or • workplace conflict where people disagree with or disregard the others' point of view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being treated less favourably than colleagues in similar roles • Intimidation and/or Aggression • Humiliation, ridicule, belittling efforts • Disseminating malicious rumours, gossip or innuendo • Excessive monitoring of work • Repeatedly manipulating a person's job content and targets • Blaming a person for things beyond their control • Withholding work-related information • Intrusion – pestering, spying or stalking • Use of aggressive and obscene language <p>A key characteristic of bullying is that it usually takes place over a period of time, it is regular and persistent inappropriate behaviour, which is specifically targeted at one employee or a group of employees.</p>
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Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the following grounds:

- i. Gender
- ii. Civil status
- iii. Family status
- iv. Sexual orientation
- v. Religious belief
- vi. Age
- vii. Disability
- viii. Race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin
- ix. Membership of the Traveller community

which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. Unlike bullying, a single incident may constitute harassment.

Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and/or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

It is recognised that bullying and harassment complaints may arise among work colleagues but may also arise in relation to visitors to the school. In either case, the commitment to a positive workplace, where dignity at work is respected, prevails.

Such behaviours should not be part of a workplace. This policy aims to ensure that a positive environment prevents such behaviours from occurring. Where bullying or harassment does occur or is alleged to have occurred, there are means of tackling it through the agreed procedure as outlined below.:

Every person has a responsibility to play their part in contributing to a positive work environment. In this regard, a person who is a witness or bystander has a clear responsibility to raise concerns about dignity at work and threats to this, in an appropriate and timely manner. :

What happens if there is an Allegation of Bullying or Harassment?

Without prejudice to an individual's right to take such advice or steps as they themselves may decide, Management will take seriously any allegations or workplace bullying or harassment.

Supportive and effective procedures, in accordance with nationally-agreed practice, [Working Together / Bullying Prevention Policy-Complaint Procedure for Staff and Harassment/Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy - Complaint Procedure for Staff] - Working Together 2024 are in place in this school. These procedures to address and investigate allegations will focus on the earliest possible resolution, will proceed as necessary from informal to formal stages and will have a stress on confidentiality.

Implementation and Review

a. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the school community have responsibility for ensuring that the guidelines as outlined in this policy are appropriately followed.

b. Timeframe

This whole-school policy will be implemented from 2024/2025.

c. Review

The policy will be reviewed as and when necessary.

Ratification and Communication

This policy will also be drawn to the attention of all staff members at the first staff meeting of each academic year. This policy will be published on the school website, and a signed copy will be available in the office if requested.

Together we are committed to building and maintaining a work environment where respectful, open and equal relationships are the norm. In summary, we are committed to having a good and safe place to work, where every individual's dignity is respected.

Along with this policy, the *Working Together 2024 - Ag Obair le Chéile* document is also being ratified by the B.O.M. in accordance with nationally agreed practice.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the pupils, parents, staff and Board of Management of St. Patrick's Primary School.

This policy was ratified on 12th December 2024. This policy will be reviewed as necessary.

Signed: *Fr. Tony Finn (Chairperson of the Board of Management)*

Signed: *Riona Donoghue (Acting Principal)*

Date: *12/12/2024*

**Please note that the signed copy of this policy is in the school office*