

Dignity at Work Policy

Introduction;

School of the Holy Spirit endorses the right of every member of staff to be treated with dignity and respect and to work in an environment of equality, openness, collaboration and inclusiveness. We constantly strive to promote positive staff relations and we recognise that we all play a part in modelling good behaviour. Our policies, procedures and guidelines aim to encourage positive relationships, minimise the potential for conflict and address conflict constructively when it occurs.

The ethical values that underpin 'The Professional Code of Conduct for Teachers' include 'respect, trust and care' for others. It is clear, therefore, that teachers are ethically, contractually and professionally bound to develop a culture ensuring a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for all.

The Board of Management recognises that all employees have the right to a workplace free from bullying, harassment and sexual harassment.

This policy is underpinned by the 'Working Together *Ag Obair Le Chéile* 2024' publication.

Regarding our 'workplace', the provisions within this policy cover our school building and grounds, work-related undertakings such as extra-curricular activities involving our students (sports, concerts, school trips), approved attendance at courses and conferences and 'work related social events' (See below).

A Positive Working Environment;

School of the Holy Spirit strives to achieve a positive working environment in the following ways

- A welcoming and supportive atmosphere.
- A range of regular communication procedures- meetings (staff, section, class, individual), phone calls, emails, WhatsApp messaging, hard copy.
- A range of regular meetings - ISM, Staff Meetings, SNA Meetings, weekly Team Meetings, Section Meetings and other.
- Three representatives of the SNA school staff to voice SNA concerns to school leadership and to liaise between SNA staff and school leadership.
- Policies, Procedures and Practices for all school- related teaching and learning, activities and situations with regular communication of same and input from all stakeholders in policy development.
- Regular, targeted training for staff - whole school, teacher/SNA, target groups and/or individuals.
- Encouragement for staff to engage in CPD.
- Induction practices for new teachers, SNAs, Substitutes, and students on placement.
- An emphasis on 'the team' approach in each classroom (teacher and SNAs as team).
- Principal visit to all classrooms each morning to greet staff and students.
- Staff encouraged to use initiative and personal strengths and interests to inform work.
- Staff treated fairly and equitably at all times.
- Celebrations of staff birthdays, achievements and family-related events.
- An open door approach from the Principal and Deputy Principal for staff concerns.
- Staff voice encouraged and respected at meetings.
- Affirmation of staff achievements.
- Wellbeing school events e.g. pot luck lunches, treats at break times, end of term/year events, social events outside school.

This policy defines Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment below.

The Board of Management has formally adopted 'Working Together *Ag Obair Le Chéile* 2024' and in the case of a situation where conflict is unresolved through informal measures the staged process will commence.

Definition of Workplace Bullying:

School of the Holy Spirit adopts the definition of adult bullying as set out by the Report of the Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying (2001) which has also been adopted by the Health and Safety Authority.

'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'.

Examples of behaviour that may constitute adult workplace bullying:

- Purposely undermining someone
- Targeting someone for special negative treatment
- Manipulation of an individual's reputation
- Social exclusion or isolation
- Intimidation
- Aggressive or obscene language
- Jokes that are obviously offensive to one individual by spoken word, text or email or electronic/social messaging
- Intrusion by pestering, spying and stalking
- Unreasonable assignments to duties which are obviously unfavourable to one individual
- Repeated requests with impossible deadlines or impossible tasks
- Excessive monitoring of work
- Withholding work-related information
- Blame for things beyond the person's control

Bullying is not:

- An isolated incident of inappropriate behaviour
- Exercise of proper authority by management
- Fair and constructive criticism of an employee's performance, conduct or attendance

Definition of Workplace Harassment:

For the purposes of this Dignity at Work Policy, the definition of harassment as outlined in the Equality Act 2004 will apply as follows

Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct, related to any of the nine discriminatory grounds and being conduct 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.

Harassment that is based on the following nine discriminatory grounds - marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, or membership of the traveller community- is a form of discrimination in relation to conditions of employment.

The Equality Act 2004 extended the definition of harassment to include discrimination which arises where one of the nine grounds is imputed to a person who is associated with another person, and is treated, by virtue of the association, less favourably than the other person. The Equality Act 2004 outlaws the discrimination in the course of employment by an employer, another employee or by clients, customers or business contacts of the organisation. In the case of our school, this includes parents/guardians, coaches, visiting teachers and other visitors to the school.

Forms of Harassment:

- Verbal harassment: jokes, comments, ridicule or songs
- Written harassment: Including text messages, emails, social media postings and handwritten notices
- Physical harassment such as jostling, shoving or any form of assault
- Non-verbal harassment including gestures, posturing or threatening poses
- Visual Displays such as posters, emblems or badges
- Isolation or exclusion from workplace social activities

- Pressure to behave in a manner that the employee thinks is inappropriate e.g. being required to dress in a manner unsuited to a person's ethnic or religious background

This is not an exhaustive list. Harassment may consist of a single incident or repeated incidents.

Digital Harassment:

Staff are expected to be aware of their own online presence and should adhere to the guidelines of the Teaching Council's Professional Standards and our school's Social Media Policy.

Staff are not expected to reply to school related communications outside of school time.

Workplace Sexual Harassment:

The Employment Equality Act, 1998 expressly prohibits harassment under Section 23 and defines sexual harassment as

"any unwelcome act, request or conduct, which could reasonably be regarded as sexually or otherwise on the grounds of gender, to be offensive, humiliating or intimidating to the employee in question such as;

- Acts of physical intimacy
- Requests for sexual favours
- Other acts or conduct including spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material that is unwelcome and could reasonably be regarded as sexually offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

Examples of sexual harassment include:

- Unwanted physical or verbal advances
- Unwanted touching or physical gestures
- Comments and remarks of a sexual or discriminatory nature
- Unwanted comments about personal appearance
- Sexually suggestive jokes, remarks or innuendoes
- Indecent exposure
- Displays of sexually suggestive or pornographic material

- Leering, whistling

This list is not exhaustive.

Section 23 only prohibits sexual harassment of a female by a male or a male by a female. However, for the purposes of this policy, the procedure outlined applies equally to incidents of same sex harassment.

Making a Complaint of Sexual Harassment

In such cases, the Board of Management recommends to its employees that they contact An Garda Síochána in the first instance. An Garda Síochána is best placed to provide appropriate support to the complainant and to conduct the subsequent investigation. The Board will cooperate fully (and in confidence) with An Garda Síochána.

Work-Related Social Events

At School of the Holy Spirit 'work-related social events' are those events where the school staff as a whole /the staff in general were invited to attend by the Board of Management, Parent's Association, elected Social Committee, or any current member of staff via oral invitation, school email, notice in staffroom etc. Examples of such events are Christmas Party, school anniversaries or special occasions. Not included - Private events such as weddings, birthdays, house-warmings etc.

The organisers/facilitators of 'work-related social events' as well as a School of the Holy Spirit attendees, are hereby notified that their conduct and behaviour at these events is subject to the provisions of this Dignity at Work Policy.

Every School of the Holy Spirit employee has a responsibility in ensuring that 'work-related social events' are free from bullying, harassment and sexual harassment. During work-related social events every attendee should take action to prevent or stop unacceptable behaviour as soon as it is brought to their attention.

The school will issue periodic reminders to staff regarding this Dignity at Work Policy, usually at the beginning of each new school year.

External Supports for School Staff

All employees of School of the Holy Spirit are reminded of the free and confidential Inspire counselling service /employee assistance service 1800 411057 inspirewellbeing.ie/workplaces

The Dublin Rape Crises Centre offers a free confidential listening and support service for women and men who have been raped, sexually assaulted, sexually harassed or sexually abused. It has a 24 - Hour Helpline, 365 days/year- 1800 77 8888 or email counselling@rcc.ie.

The Centre can also refer callers to local services.

This Policy was implemented in 2024/2025 school year.

Signed: Ann-Marie Butler Date: March 7th 2025

Principal