



St. Peter's National School

Equality and Anti-Harassment Policy

Introduction

Recognising that Equality and dignity in the workplace is a collective and shared responsibility, between all members of the whole school community, this policy formulation was led by the In-School Management Team, informed by the views of staff, PTA and the Board of Management (BOM).

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

- The IPPN and NPC joint document 'Supporting Each Other'
- The INTO document 'Working Together'
- DES Circular 40/97 Assaults on Staff in Primary Schools
- The Health & Safety Authority's 'Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work, 2005'
- 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).

Rationale

The Board of Management and the staff are committed to creating, maintaining and enhancing a positive work environment where work is done in an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, openness and equality.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

St. Peter's N.S. is a Church of Ireland co-educational primary school. The Board and the Staff promote respect for all and value each member of the school community. The school's mission statement promotes the spirit of inclusiveness and the principles of equality.

Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that all employees of the Board of Management are treated with dignity and respect
- To prevent adult bullying and harassment in the workplace
- To formally recognise that all members of the school community have a part to play in modelling and promoting good behaviour
- To outline procedures that will be used to investigate and to deal with allegations of harassment, bullying and other inappropriate behaviour.

Content

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the Board of Management has adopted the definition of bullying as outlined in the Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Workplace Bullying under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

Bullying is defined as

'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 in this definition may be an affront to dignity but as a once off incident is not considered to be bullying.

Harassment (other than sexual harassment) is defined as

'any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the discriminatory grounds covered by the Equality Acts 1998 to 2008:

- *civil status*
- *family status*
- *sexual orientation*
- *religious belief (or none)*
- *age*
- *disability*
- *race, nationality or ethnic or national origin*
- *gender*
- *membership of the Traveller community'*

Harassment is defined in the Acts as:

'any form of unwanted conduct related to any of these 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.'

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 creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.'

The Board of Management recognises that bullying and harassment complaints may arise among work colleagues but they 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.

A Positive Work Environment

It has been agreed by the Board of Management, Staff and Parents/Guardians that we will all work together to make St. Peter's N.S. a positive place in which to work. A positive workplace is characterised by

- A supportive atmosphere
- Good and open communication
- Appropriate interpersonal behaviour
- Collaboration
- Open discussion and resolution of conflict
- Recognition, feedback and affirmation as appropriate
- Fair treatment of all staff (including fair systems of selection and promotion in line with agreed procedures)

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

Reflecting our commitment to respect and dignity, our Health & Safety Statement includes a commitment to a positive work environment.

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, the Board of Management will take seriously any allegations of workplace bullying or harassment.

Allegations will be addressed and investigated in accordance with nationally-agreed practice. There will be a focus on the earliest possible resolution. Investigations will proceed as necessary from informal to formal stages and will have a stress on confidentiality.

In Conclusion

The Board of Management wishes to make it clear that all members of this school community have a duty of care to themselves and to each other. The Board of Management has a duty of care towards its' employees. Similarly, employees have a duty of care towards one another. In formulating this policy, we sought to set out principles and practices to support the exercise of that duty in our school.

The Board of Management will take seriously any inappropriate and undermining behaviour among colleagues. Such behaviour when perpetrated against an employee of this school by any other person will also be taken seriously by the Board of Management and may result in exclusion from the school premises or a cessation of contracts for goods or services.

Success Criteria

The following will provide some practical indicators of the success of this policy:

- A positive, collaborative atmosphere among staff members
- Evidence of regular Board of Management meetings, staff meetings and meetings with the Parents' Association
- Feedback from Staff Members to the Board of Management

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Principal, Staff and members of the school community to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

Implementation

This policy will be implemented immediately, following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parents' Association.

Ratification and Review

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management and communicated to the Parents' Association in May 2019

Review Date

April 2021

Signed:

Chairperson: Rod. Eugene Liff Date: 8 May 2019

Principal: BB AA Date: 8-5-19.