



Dignity at Work

Building & Maintaining a Positive & Effective Work Environment

Background:

The Board of Management of Scoil San Carlo S.N.S. originally adopted this policy on 24th September 2018, following consultation with all staff members. It was 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) and in recent times, the publication of the new 'Working Together 2024- Ag Obair Le Chéile' document to facilitate the resolution of internal staff disputes, which emphasises the importance of a positive and collaborative workplace culture based on professional respect of other's positions, roles and responsibilities.

Core Principles of Policy

This school is committed to a positive work environment where work is done 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. This policy aims to ensure that a positive environment prevents such behaviours from occurring.

All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Management is committed to intervening in an appropriate manner, utilising accepted Management/INTO procedures, to investigate and deal with

allegations of bullying or harassment. The provisions of Circular 40/97 on Assaults on Staff in Primary Schools will also be utilised as appropriate.

Definitions of Workplace Bullying

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".

Bullying behaviour generally amounts to psychological abuse which causes serious pain and suffering. Studies have shown that any person may become a target, irrespective of their personality or ability. In addition to its unacceptable effects on persons who are its targets, workplace bullying and harassment is extremely detrimental to organisational effectiveness.

Bullying may include behaviours such as:

- Verbal abuse/insults, undermining remarks
- Excessive monitoring of work
- Withholding work-related information
- Exclusion with negative consequences.

Definition of Harassment

Harassment is covered by *Employment Equality* legislation and is based on a person's standing within one of the nine categories/grounds specified in that legislation (gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religious belief (or none), age, disability, race or colour, nationality or ethnic origin or membership of the Traveller Community).

Harassment may consist of the single incident or repeated inappropriate

behaviour.

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 regard to visitors to the school. In either case, the commitment to a positive workplace, where dignity at work is respected, prevails, where every person will be treated equally and be respected for their individuality and diversity.

Bullying or harassment in any form and from any party is not accepted by us and will not be tolerated. Such behaviours should not be part of a workplace.

Where there is an Allegation of Bullying or Harassment

Our school recognises that Adult Bullying and Harassment are problems where they occur in any workplace.

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 or workplace bullying or harassment.

Where bullying or harassment does occur or is alleged to have occurred, there are means of tackling it through supportive and effective procedures, in accordance with nationally-agreed practice. The 'Working Together (Ag Obair Le Chéile) 2024' procedures were adopted by our Board of Management in September 2024. These procedures, designed to address and investigate allegations, will focus on the earliest possible resolution. They will proceed as necessary from informal to formal stages and will have a stress on mediation and confidentiality.

Mediation is the preferred method under this policy for the resolution of complaints of bullying and harassment which are not capable of being resolved by school staff. The objective of mediation is to resolve the matter speedily and confidentially without recourse to a formal investigation and with the minimum of conflict and stress for the individuals involved.

If the mediation process does not produce a satisfactory outcome, the complainant may seek to have the matter resolved through formal investigation. Any information that emerges during the course of the mediation process will remain strictly confidential and cannot be disclosed as part of the formal investigation.

If the complaint is upheld, the matter may be progressed through the disciplinary procedure or other appropriate action may be taken such as counselling and mediation.

Establishing a Positive Working Climate

As a school community, Scoil San Carlo SNS commits itself to working together to maintain a workplace environment that encourages and supports the right to dignity at work.

A good place to work has a positive environment characterised by;

- A supportive atmosphere
- Good and open communication, e.g. through opportunities at regular staff meetings
- 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)

Everyone in the school community is entitled to expect the right to dignity in their working life, and also have a duty and responsibility to uphold this Dignity at Work Charter.

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.

Our related policies and procedures, which include our Anti-Bullying Policy and Grievances Policy, will underpin the objectives of this charter.

The Safety Statement - as mandated under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 - will also include a commitment to a positive work environment,

in light of the Employer's obligations as outlined at Section 8 of that Act, including the duty to manage work activities in such a way as to prevent "improper conduct or behaviour" likely to put health and safety at risk.

Summary

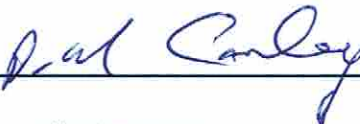
Management has a duty of care towards employees. Similarly, employees have a duty of care towards one another. This policy seeks to set out definitions, principles and practices to support the exercise of that duty in our school. Just as inappropriate and undermining behaviour among work colleagues is 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.

In summary, we are committed to having our school be a good place to work.

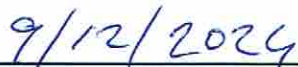
Ratification/ Review

Any reviews of this policy will reflect our commitment to dignity at work. This policy will be scheduled for review every two years, or earlier in the event of any shortcomings being identified.

This policy was reviewed by staff and ratified by the Board of Management in December 2024.



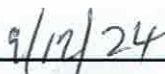
Chairperson



Date



Principal



Date