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## **Equality, Respect and Dignity in the Workplace Policy**

### **Introduction**

The Board of Management, in consultation with staff and parents drew up this policy on Equality in the Workplace.

This policy is formulated in consideration 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 and 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.

### **Rationale**

Scoil Cholmcille is a school which is committed to creating, maintaining and constantly striving to enhance 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**

Scoil Cholmcille is a Catholic co-educational school for girls and boys. The BOM and staff promote respect for all and value each member of the school community. As a team, we believe that all employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

### **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.

### **Definition of what we consider Bullying & Harassment in our Community**

For the purposes of this policy, the Board of Management has adopted the definition of adult 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.

*‘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 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 (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 Travelling 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 and intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person’.*

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

## **A Positive Work Environment**

It has been agreed by the BoM, staff and parents that we will all work together to make Scoil Cholmcille a positive place in which to work. Scoil Cholmcille is a great place to work and we will strive to keep it that way, through

- A supportive atmosphere
- Good and open communication (e.g. through opportunities and 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)

Every person in the school community has a responsibility to play his/her part in contributing to our 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 Safety Statement (which is to be reviewed in 2019) will be amended to include a commitment to a positive work environment.

In developing and adopting this policy in [Insert School Name], we have taken a number of steps to examine our work environment and, as necessary, have agreed changes which reflect a commitment to dignity at work. These steps will be initiated both by the team generally and supported by management. Reflecting our commitment to a positive workplace, we have agreed to review this policy each year.

## **Adult Bullying & Harassment**

Scoil Cholmcille recognises that adult bullying and harassment are problems if they occur in any workplace. These behaviours generally amount to psychological abuse which causes serious pain and suffering. We believe that in addition to its unacceptable effects on our team who may be targeted, these behaviours do not help our effectiveness as a team.

Bullying may include behaviours such as:

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

Such behaviours need not and should not be part of a workplace. Our policy aims to ensure that we create a positive environment which will prevent such behaviours from occurring. Where bullying or harassment does occur, we will deal with it through the agreed procedure.

### **Steps to take 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 or workplace bullying or harassment.

Supportive and effective procedures, in accordance with nationally-agreed practice, are in place in Scoil Cholmcille. These procedures to address and investigate allegations focus on the earliest possible resolution and 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 BoM 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.

Just as inappropriate and undermining behaviour among colleagues is taken seriously, so is such behaviour when perpetrated against an employee of this school by any other person. Such behaviour 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
- 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.

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

**Ratification and Review**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in December 2018.

**Review Date**

As necessary