



Patrician Primary School

Dignity at Work Policy

**Building & Maintaining a Positive & Effective Work
Environment**



Introduction

Patrician Primary 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. All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Management is committed to intervening in an appropriate manner. The following documents are relevant to the formulation of this policy:

- INTO *'Working Together'* Procedures and Policies (2000)
- Circular 40/97 *Assaults on Staff in Primary Schools*
- Health & Safety Authority (HSA) *Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work* (2007)
- Equality Authority *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).
- Teaching Council *Code of Professional Practice*
- Patrician Primary *Staff Grievance and Discipline Policy*
- Patrician Primary *Shared Vision Statement*
- Patrician Primary *Health and Safety Statement*

Core Principles

This school is committed to a positive work environment where work is done in an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, openness and equality. While the school's Anti-Bullying policy focuses on the dignity of the children in the school and their right to learning in a positive school environment, this policy focuses on the similar rights of employees in the school.

Adult bullying, harassment and abuse 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. The Board of Management is committed to intervening in an appropriate manner when necessary.

Scope

This Policy applies to all staff members of Patrician Primary School: teachers, SNAs and ancillary staff. These are all hereinafter collectively referred to as 'The Staff'.



Policy Statement

What is Workplace Bullying and Harassment?

Adult Bullying

The Board of Management adopts the definition of adult bullying as set out by the Task Force on Workplace Bullying (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. "

Isolated incidents of affronts to dignity:

The Task Force on Workplace Bullying (2001) also states that:

"An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition (above paragraph) may be an affront to dignity at work but, as a once off incident, is not considered to be bullying". While isolated incidents of abuse or hostile behaviour towards staff members are not considered bullying, they are not accepted as being appropriate by the Board of Management

Harassment

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, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.) Gender/Sexual Orientation refers to all aspects of LGBTQ+. 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."*

Sexual Harassment

According to the HSE, sexual harassment can be written, verbal or physical. It can happen to men and women.

Sexual harassment may include:

- unwelcome touching, grabbing or other physical contact
- comments that have sexual meanings
- asking for sex or sexual favours
- leering and staring
- displaying rude and offensive material
- sexual gestures and body movements
- sexual jokes and comments
- questions about your sex life
- sex-based insults
- criminal offences such as obscene phone calls, indecent exposure and sexual assault



None of the above are deemed to be acceptable by the Board of Management and will not be tolerated in any way.

It is recognised that bullying and harassment complaints may arise among work colleagues but may also arise in relation to people outside of the staff group. In either case, the commitment to a positive workplace, where dignity at work is respected, prevails. Bullying, harassment or once-off affronts to dignity of the workers in this school will not be tolerated by the Board of Management.

All staff members may refer to the school Grievances and Discipline Policy and its procedures in the event of any of the above situations happening within the staff team.

Positive Work Environment

It is agreed that we will all work to make this school a happy place to work. A happy place to work is defined by:

- Living our Catholic Ethos and our shared Patrician Philosophy (See School Vision Statement)
- A supportive atmosphere
- Good and open communication (e.g. through opportunities at regular staff meetings)
- Appropriate interpersonal behaviour
- Collaboration and openness to cooperate with all colleagues
- 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)

Health and Safety Statement

The school Health & 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.

The Rights of the Worker

All staff members have the right to come to work without fear of reprisal by another member of staff or another member of the school community (i.e. parent body, other local representatives).



Inter-Staff Grievances

The Patrician Primary Disciplinary and Grievances policy refers to procedures that are agreed upon by the INTO and the CPSMA. The *Teaching Council Code of Professional Practice* and the INTO 'Working Together' document are also a reference for this school policy. Please see that policy for full details and steps.

Grievances of staff caused by parents/guardians or other outside agencies:

It is acknowledged by the Board of Management that the vast majority of communication between staff, parents and other outside agencies is very cordial, professional and courteous. Open and frequent communication between all parties is welcomed in order to provide the best possible service for the children of the school community. We strive as a school to deal with any potential disagreements or difficult conversations in a manner that is professional and sensitive towards the feelings of all parties. This policy is in place for situations that may arise where staff members feel they have been treated inappropriately by parents/guardians or members of other outside agencies.

The school Parental Complaints procedures should be referred to in the event of a parent/guardian needing to communicate a difficulty to or with a staff member.

Any difficulty from a parental point of view that requires discussion must be dealt with by appointment at a time that is convenient to both parties. A complaint or grievance of this nature is never appropriate to air in front of children at e.g. reception times in the morning, during class time or directly after school.

Communication during these meetings must be constructive and courteous. Forms of overt hostility, verbal or non-verbal abuse towards any staff members are not accepted by the school. The publishing of hostile language or complaints on social media such as Facebook pages, whatsapp groups or other public platforms is also not accepted by the school. Hostile behaviour like this will be reported to the principal by staff members and subsequently by the principal to the Chairperson of the Board of Management and / or to the BoM as a whole and / or to An Garda Síochána if deemed necessary. The consequences of such inappropriate behaviour may involve the principal and / or the chairperson of the Board of Management contacting the offending party to remind them of their responsibilities in relation to a positive work environment for all employees of the school.

Note: The school cannot take responsibility for any parent / guardian whatsapp groups or similar communications on social media.

As per the parental complaints procedures, the principal can be contacted for support in the event of a parental meeting with a staff member where the matter has failed to be adequately and appropriately resolved. The above criteria of appropriate communication also apply when contacting and communicating with the principal.



Adult Bullying as a Problem

Our school recognises that adult bullying and harassment are problems where they occur in any workplace.

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 (including but limited to insults, undermining remarks made to an individual, swearing at an individual)
- Excessive monitoring of work
- Withholding work-related information
- Exclusion with negative consequences
- This list is not exhaustive

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

Note: Bullying does not include:

- expressing differences of opinion respectfully
- offering constructive and respectful feedback, guidance, or advice about work-related behaviour
- ordinary performance management from the appropriate personnel
- reasonable corrective and / or disciplinary action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of employees
- This list is not exhaustive

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

The Role of the Board of Management:

Without prejudice to an individual's right to take advice or steps as they themselves may decide, the Board of Management will take seriously any allegations made that cause an affront to any staff member's dignity. The Board of Management does not tolerate any form of adult bullying, harassment or once-off inappropriate incidents of abuse or hostility. The Board of Management will defend and support any staff member who report cases of abuse towards their dignity.



Procedures:

Supportive and effective procedures, in accordance with nationally-agreed practice, are in the place in this school. These procedures 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 confidentiality.

- At the outset of any allegation, the principal will endeavour to informally mediate between staff members in the event of a grievance where possible.
- In the event of the principal being the subject of a reported allegation or making a report themselves, then the chairperson of the Board of Management will endeavour to mediate before applying formal procedures.

For full details on procedures, see Patrician Primary *Staff Grievances and Discipline* policy.

Witnessing inappropriate behaviour

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 bystander has a clear responsibility to raise concerns about dignity at work and threats to this, in an appropriate and timely manner.

Real Life and Disagreements

It is recognized by this policy and by the Board of Management that sometimes disagreements, misunderstandings, miscommunications and arguments can happen as part of daily school life and human nature. This policy aims to ensure that these issues are dealt with in as professional and reasonable manner as possible.

Appropriate and inappropriate forms of complaint

School policies that can be referred to in relation to this matter are the *Staff Discipline and Grievances* Policy and the *Parental Complaints* Procedures.

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 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.

The Board of Management will does tolerate adult bullying, harassment or once-off examples of abusive or hostile behaviour towards members of staff at any time. The Board of Management will support and defend members of staff who are deemed to be treated inappropriately in the workplace.

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 positive, happy place to work for all staff.



Roles and Responsibilities

All staff of the school under the positive and supportive leadership of the Board of Management and Principal have both a role and a responsibility in successfully implementing this policy.


Contact

Any queries regarding this policy should be directed to the principal or the Board of Management of Patrician Primary School.

Policy Review

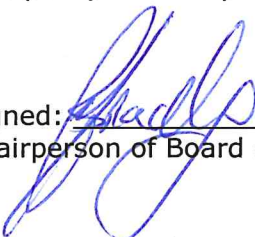
This policy will be communicated to staff and will be part of the rolling 5 year policy review plan.

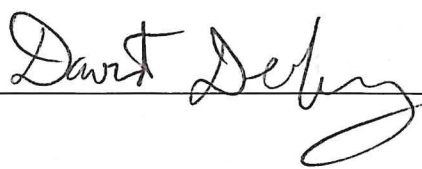
Version Control

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Ratification of Dignity at Work Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 21-6-23

Signed: 
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: 
Principal

Date: 21-6-23

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