

# St. Brendan's Boys' N.S.



## Dignity at Work Policy

Address	St. Brendan's Boys' N.S. Mount Pleasant, Loughrea, Co. Galway H62YW57
Telephone	091841217
Email	<a href="mailto:annette.regan@stbrendansbns.com">annette.regan@stbrendansbns.com</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.stbrendansbns.com">http://www.stbrendansbns.com</a>
School Name	St. Brendan's Boys' N.S.
Date of Commencement	08/11/2022

## School context

St. Brendan's Boy's N.S is the town primary school in Loughrea. The school is a Catholic school operating under the patronage of the Bishop of the Clonfert. It is a vertical school with children from 23 nationalities. There are a number of children enrolled from the Traveller community.

The values detailed in our ethos and mission statement are reflected in the operation of our school and in our school policies. The school's ethos and mission statement are available on the school website.

## Rationale

A core employment value is the commitment to ensuring that each individual is guaranteed a working environment where s/he may expect to be treated with dignity both by management, work colleagues, and all other stakeholders of the school. This approach emphasises the importance of each individual and the contribution s/he makes to the success of the workplace. It guarantees the optimal working conditions that allow individuals to freely maximise their role in the workforce. Sound management ethos is based on providing leadership that encourages individuals in this regard. This is best achieved in our school through the creation and maintenance of a positive working environment.

## Legal framework

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005; Industrial Relations Act, 1990; Employment Equality Act, 1998; Code of Practice on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying (May 2007).

## Aims

This policy aims to raise awareness among staff about the importance of fostering positive working relations with one's colleagues and to give practical guidance to employers and employees on workplace bullying and sexual harassment:

- (a) Definition
- (b) Prevention
- (c) Response procedures

This policy also aims to ensure that the Board of Management of St. Brendan's Boys' National School is compliant with current legislation in relation to the Health & Safety Act 2005 and the Code of Practice on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying (May 2007).

## Procedures

The policy guarantees that all complaints will be taken seriously and investigated promptly, and that all parties involved will be treated with respect. A complaint of workplace bullying will be dealt with in accordance to due process.

The *Procedures for Addressing Workplace Bullying* (Labour Relations Commission, 2017) provide details on the process (Appendix 1). Staff will be protected from victimisation or discrimination for assisting in an investigation. Victimisation as a result of a member of staff raising a complaint will not be tolerated.

In approving this policy, the Board has agreed that:

- It be brought to the attention of all staff.
- All staff be asked to co-operate in its implementation.

## **Definitions**

### **Bullying**

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.

### **Codes of Practice 2002 under the Industrial Relations Act and the Health and Safety at Work Act**

#### **Harassment and Sexual Harassment**

The Equality Act 1998 (Code of Practice) (Harassment) Order 2012 specifically deals with harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace. The Code aims to give practical guidance and advice. Harassment that is based on the following grounds:

- Gender,
- Age,
- Civil Status,
- Family Status,
- Sexual Orientation,
- Disability,
- Race,
- Religion
- Traveller Community membership as a form of discrimination in relation to conditions of employment.

#### **Harassment**

Harassment is defined in Section 14A (7) of the Employment Equality Act as any form of unwanted 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.

The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

#### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual Harassment is defined in Section 14(A)(7) of the Employment Equality Act as any form of 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 unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display, or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

### **What Constitutes 'Unacceptable Behaviour'/ Workplace Bullying?**

Bullying can take a number of forms. Under the Health and Safety Act there is a requirement that personnel are consulted in respect of acceptable/unacceptable behaviour. Through this consultation process, the staff will have ownership of the policy as it relates to their school.

A pattern of the following behaviours are examples of types of bullying:

- Exclusion with negative consequences
- Verbal abuse/insults
- Physical abuse
- Being treated less favourably than colleagues
- Unnecessary and repeated shouting
- Intrusion – pestering, spying or stalking
- Menacing behaviour
- Intimidation
- Aggression
- Undermining behaviour
- Excessive monitoring of work
- Humiliation
- Withholding work-related information
- Setting unreasonable and unrealistic targets
- Blame for things beyond the person's control
- Unequal treatment
- Spreading rumours
- Undermining the professionalism of others
- Spreading rumours/gossip
- Deliberate non-cooperation

This list is not exhaustive.

It is noted that a once-off incident is not normally considered to be bullying behaviour. While it might not be defined as bullying, a once-off incident of the above behaviour could be an affront to a person's dignity. In our school we promote positive behaviour as described on Page 6 of this policy.

Key features of workplace bullying are that the behaviour is generally persistent, unwanted, subtle and non-physical.

### **Effects of Bullying**

International research shows that the effects may be physiological, psychological and behavioural. There are consequences for the individuals who perceive themselves to be targets of bullying behaviour, for the alleged perpetrators(s), for organisational culture/ethos and for the Board of Management.

Effects on the individual: research shows that individuals who are continually bullied lose self-confidence as self-esteem is eroded and they are at an increased risk of suffering stress. There may be serious effects on health and the person's career may be adversely affected.

Effects on the organisation: individuals who are bullied will find it difficult if not impossible to give their best in the workplace. Among the well-documented effects are increased sickness/absenteeism, low morale, a tense atmosphere, cliques or factions.

### **Why might an individual be reluctant to take action?**

- Because the particular workplace culture passively supports bullying i.e. staff in general are unaware of the seriousness of bullying.
- Because of fear that the complaint may not be taken seriously.

- Because s/he may be seen as unable for the job or/and a weak person.
- If the alleged bully is a person in authority, there may be the fear management will support the alleged perpetrator(s).
- Because making a complaint could result in further intimidation and increased bullying.
- Because there are no witnesses to the bullying and it would be one person's word against another.
- Because s/he might be seen to be lacking in credibility or/and personal status.
- Because s/he may have concerns about job security.
- Witnesses might be unwilling to come forward for a variety of reasons.

### **What can I do to ensure that workplace bullying does not occur in this school?**

- By being familiar with the school policy.
- By participating in in-service with respect to dignity at work.
- By engaging in consultation with respect to the development and review of the dignity in the workplace policy.
- By being aware and educated about workplace bullying.

### **Communication**

This may be more difficult for some individuals than for others. It is inappropriate for work colleagues to act out their behaviour in an unacceptable manner. If you find it impossible or difficult to make an approach to the person involved in the alleged bullying, tell somebody else – the Principal, a Contact Person. Please see *Procedures for Addressing Workplace Bullying* (Appendix 1), the INTO staff representative or the Deputy Principal.

### **Employment Assistant and Wellbeing Programme**

**Spectrum Life** (formerly Inspire Workplace Services) are the current providers of the Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Services which includes a **free confidential service** for all staff and their families. It is accessible by means of a Freephone telephone helpline available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It provides confidential counselling on a range of personal health and wellbeing issues given by qualified clinicians and can be a support if you are finding things difficult.

Freephone Helpline 1800 411 057

SMS and What's App – Text 'Hi' to 087 3690010

Log in to the Spectrum.Life website

## Positive behaviour in the workplace

Values promoted	Practices promoted
Professionalism Positivity Empathy Inclusiveness Respect Friendship Equality Caring Encouraging Consideration E-mail etiquette Supportive Confidentiality Trust Patience Tolerance Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We accept that there are a variety of personalities and different approaches to work.</li> <li>• We accept that what one may find humorous another might find offensive.</li> <li>• We allow other people to speak.</li> <li>• We apologise for mistakes made.</li> <li>• We try to always use appropriate language.</li> <li>• We try to be mindful of our gestures and body language and how they may be perceived.</li> <li>• We promote well-being.</li> <li>• We try to be aware of other people's personal space.</li> <li>• We strive to share methodologies and resources.</li> <li>• Regular, transparent, open and direct communication and opportunities for debate are encouraged.</li> <li>• Collaborative decision making and constructive discussion based on consultation within the school community is fostered.</li> <li>• The different roles performed in the school by each member of staff (teaching and non-teaching) are acknowledged and affirmed.</li> <li>• It is recognised that it is critical to resolve conflict at the earliest opportunity before it is allowed to fester and result in inevitable conflict.</li> <li>• All staff are aware of and have access to copies of school policies and procedures covering curricular and administrative areas.</li> <li>• These policies are implemented fairly and consistently.</li> </ul>

### Success criteria of this policy

- The existence of a policy on Dignity in the Workplace and the prevention of workplace bullying forms part of health, safety and welfare at work.
- Awareness/availability of the policy.
- Dignity in the Workplace, as well as inappropriate/bullying behaviour are defined in the policy.
- Employee's right to complain is respected.
- Informal resolution of complaints is encouraged.

### Ratification and Implementation

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 08/11/2022.

It will be implemented with immediate effect.

Staff were consulted in the development of this policy.

Signed:



Monsignor Cathal Geraghty,

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date:08/11/2022