

St Paul's School Policy to address staff relations difficulties, adult bullying or harassment.

St Paul's NS strives to be a Christian, caring, safe and happy school. A key asset to the staff of St Paul's is the support and security of working in a school where there are positive staff working relations. It is very important in St Paul's NS that teachers support each other and create a school climate which fosters positive working relations. Each teacher must be prepared to operate as part of a team and within the authority structures of the school.

All teaching staff are members of INTO and a teacher is elected yearly to act as staff rep for a period of one year

Staff Relations Difficulties:

Procedures to address staff-relations difficulties are set out in the "Working Together" document. This document was devised by the following bodies:

- CatholicPrimary School Managers Association.
- Church of Ireland, Board of Education.
- National Association of Boards of Management for Special Education.
- Educate Together.

The Board of Management of St Paul's NS recommends the procedure outlined in the document to address staff relations difficulties

Adult Bullying or Harassment and Grievances:

The Board of Management of St Paul's NS views bullying, sexual harassment, or other harassment on specified discriminatory grounds as very serious and unacceptable behaviour.

The Board of Management of St Paul's NS recognises that all employees have the right to a workplace free from sexual harassment and bullying and is fully committed to ensuring that all employees are able to enjoy that right. It is incumbent on the staff and management to promote a culture of positive working relations at all times.

There is a responsibility on all employees to ensure a workplace free from sexual harassment and bullying for all employees and to be aware of this policy.

Any complaint of sexual harassment and bullying shall be fully and properly investigated and if substantiated, will be regarded as grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. An attempt will be made to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance, but if this is not possible, a formal procedure will be invoked. Confidentiality will be ensured, insofar as is possible, at all times during the investigation for all parties involved.

Sexual harassment means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on a person's sex, which affects the dignity of men and women at work. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which is offensive and causes discomfort or humiliation to the individual concerned.

Example of sexual harassment include:

- Unwanted physical or verbal advances.
- Unwanted touching or physical gestures.
- Comments and remarks of a sexual or discriminatory nature.

- Unwelcome comments about personal appearance.
- Demands of sexual favours.
- Displays of pinups or pornographic material.
- Innuendos of a sexual nature based on a person's sex.
- Bullying.

This list is not exhaustive.

The Health and Safety Authority defines bullying as follows: "Bullying in the workplace is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person or persons. Bullying is where aggression or cruelty, viciousness, intimidation or a need to humiliate, dominate the relationships. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while to be condemned, should not be described as bullying. In the workplace environment there can be conflicts and interpersonal difficulties. Many of these are legitimate industrial relations difficulties, which should be dealt with through the appropriate industrial relations channels. Only aggressive behaviour which is systematic and on going should be regarded as bullying".

In summary, Adult Bullying can take many different forms, which usually include:

- Intimidation or harassment.
- Aggression.
- Verbal abuse.
- Humiliation.
- Undermining.
- Dominance or abuse of power.
- Different or unfavourable treatment.
- Exclusion or isolation.

Key factors of Adult Bullying are that behaviour is generally:

- Persistent,
- Unwanted,
- Subtle and
- Unwanted.

The Board of Management of St Paul's NS recommend that any employee who feels he/she has been or is being sexually harassed or bullied, should refer to the "Working Together" document.

Within this document, procedures are set out to address staff relations, difficulties, adult bullying or harassment and grievances. The Board of Management of St Paul's NS recommends following the procedure outlined.

- *This policy was completed and made ready for the school plan on 16th November 2006*
- *This policy was included in policy document booklet presented to members of Board of Management at meeting of November 21st 2006; and ratified at the meeting of January 30th 2007*
- *The following addendum to this policy was added in June 2008:*

POLICY 16 ADDENDUM – DIGNITY AT WORK:

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING A POSITIVE AND EFFECTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

The policy is 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) and 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)

A. 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. All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Management is committed to intervening in an appropriate matter – utilising one of the 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 be utilised where appropriate.

B. What is Workplace Bullying and Harassment?

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.”

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, religion, sexual orientation etc.). 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 colleagues but 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.

C. A Positive Work Environment

It is agreed that we will all work to make this school a good place to work. A good place to work has a positive work 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)

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.

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

It is agreed that the adoption of this policy in our school will be accompanied by a number of steps to examine our work environment and, as necessary, to agree changes which a commitment to dignity at work. These steps will be initiated by Management, and be repeated by way of a review at appropriate intervals.

The actions to be undertaken may generally be described as Identification, Assessment, Implementing Strategies and Monitoring. The attached illustration indicates that this is a continuous process.

D. 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/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 the workplace. This policy aims to ensure that a positive environment prevents such behaviours from occurring. Where bullying or harassment does occur or is alleged to have occurred, there are means of tackling it through the agreed procedure.

E. 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.

Supportive and effective procedures, in accordance with nationally-agreed practice, are in place in this school. These procedures to address and investigate allegations will focus on the earliest possible resolution, will proceed as necessary from informal to formal stages and will have a stress on confidentiality.

F. 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 duty in our school.

Just as inappropriate and undermining behaviours 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 a good place to work.

- *This addendum was completed and made ready for the school plan on June 30th 2008 and was ratified by the Board of Management at their meeting on October 1st 2008.*
- *This policy was reviewed at our staff meeting on September 19th 2011 – reminders but no changes*
- *This policy were reviewed at staff meeting on September 7th 2015 – no changes*
- *This policy were reviewed by principal in March 2015 – INTO information added*
- *Date for review: School Year: 2018-19*

POLICY DOCUMENT: NO.17– STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Background:

According to the Education Act (1998) Section 9

The BoM of a school should ensure that the needs of personnel involved in management functions and staff development needs generally in the school are identified and provided for.

Under the Education Act (1998) Section 23 also The Principal shall be responsible for the creation, together with the board, parents of students and the teachers, of a school environment which is supportive of learning among the students and which promotes the professional development of the teachers,

Circular Letter 28/03 (Primary) Teacher Fee Refund Scheme

The purpose of the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme is to provide funding towards the cost of course and examination fees incurred by Primary and Post-Primary teachers on successful completion of in-career development courses approved by the Department and school authorities. All enquiries should be directed to:

The Administrator, Teacher Fee Refund Scheme, St. Patrick's, Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue Dublin 9. Tel: (01) 8535102 (01) Fax: (01) 8535114, e-mail: madge.bulger@mie.ie

What do we understand by 'development' in the context of this school?

(a) The principal will take responsibility for the development of

- Teaching staff
- Post of responsibility holders

The BoM takes responsibilities for the development of

- SNAs
- Ancillary staff
- Members of Board of Management

The parents association takes responsibilities for the development of

- Parents' Association

(b) Forms of staff development

- Workshops/seminars for whole staff on issues relevant to the school as a whole
- Staff members attending courses relevant to the identified needs of the school
- Courses specific to particular roles within the staff (e.g. resource teachers, management courses for staff members in leadership roles...)
- Opportunities for development within the school context – e.g. *mentoring, shared teaching,*
- Opportunities for development within staff meetings
- Teachers with specific expertise/post holders facilitation Croke Park Hours

(c) Principal support:

- The principal provides time for staff to go on one-day training courses and organises for the supervision of their classes with the support of teaching staff.

- The BoM may provide financial assistance to defray costs of fees etc. for staff members who attend training, e.g. First-Aid training course in Health and Safety

(d) Issues the school has addressed:

- ***EPV Days (replaced 2019 by new EPV policy – EPV policy superceded the following)***
 - Teachers to request EPV day from principal and then inform Eileen Fitzgerald (deputy principal)
 - Only one teacher from each phase can avail of an EPV day at a time (not as applicable to supplementary-teaching team)
 - EPV days not to be taken in June where possible, unless in exceptional circumstances and with permission of principal
 - It is recommended that teachers refrain from taking EPV days together i.e. one EPV day at a time to be encouraged
- ***Responding to multiple applications for study leave in any one year:***
 - Applications can be made in writing to the Board on Management
 - The BoM decides after receipt of applications from staff who will be granted permission to take up study leave or attend courses pertaining to staff development. All staff members are entitled to apply to the board
- ***Dissemination of learning to others:***
 - Croke Park Hours
 - Report at staff meetings, BoM meetings, and teacher meetings
 - Review meetings to discuss possible changes to school policies or curriculum additions as a result of staff-development training courses