



Roll No: 11894 I

Dignity at Work Policy

Introduction

Scoil Mhuire 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.

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, in collaboration with the school community, to create, develop and maintain an environment in which all staff, pupils, and parents are treated with dignity.

In order to achieve a policy that is the result of collaboration and with full staff involvement, the Board engaged an external facilitator to facilitate a number of sessions with all staff members, and not just teacher staff in 2017/2018. The stated purpose of these engagements was to identify the core elements of a Dignity at Work policy and to explore options and establish priorities for the Scoil Mhuire policy that will promote good practice for effectively managing issues arising under the policy.

This Policy is formulated in accordance with [Working Together INTO 2024](#)

Dignity in the Workplace Charter

Scoil Mhuire Management and staff are committed to a positive work environment where management, teaching and learning, and all work and activities are conducted in an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, openness and equality.

All staff – including Management and staff members – are required to behave and conduct themselves in a manner that respects the right of each individual in the School to dignity, courtesy and respect at work. Behaviour that is inappropriate, including adult bullying and harassment, is not acceptable, and we as a school community at Scoil Mhuire will seek to prevent any such behaviours. Furthermore, inappropriate behaviours will not be tolerated. As a community we recognise that we each have a part to play in modelling and promoting a positive work environment.

In the event that inappropriate behaviours do occur, we will seek to address the behaviours in a timely and appropriate manner to ensure that the inappropriate behaviours cease and that collegial relations can be restored. It may not be appropriate to immediately explain to the other party that their behaviour is unacceptable. It is suggested that we set out the proposed outcomes to addressing the behaviours here and outline the detailed steps below in the informal and formal procedures.

The Aim of the Policy

The aim of this Policy is to:

- To promote a positive working environment in Scoil Mhuire;
- To create awareness of the potential problems of inappropriate behaviour including adult bullying, harassment and sexual harassment;
- To provide clear and accessible steps to ensure that all claims/allegations of inappropriate adult behaviour are treated in a manner most likely to allow for the timely, effective and, where possible, informal resolution of issues, so as to maintain good relations between staff.

We recognise that adult bullying and harassment complaints may arise among work colleagues and may also arise in relation to visitors to the school. In either case, our commitment is to create and develop Scoil Mhuire as a positive working environment for all and we will strive to achieve and maintain this by:

- Actively developing and proactively maintaining a supportive atmosphere
- Good and open communication (e.g. through opportunities and regular staff meetings)
- Appropriate interpersonal behaviour
- Collaboration
- Open discussion and early resolution of conflict
- Recognition, feedback and affirmation as appropriate
- Fair treatment of all staff (including fair and appropriate systems of selection and promotion in line with agreed procedures)

Objectives of the Policy

The objectives of this Policy are as follows:

- To promote and maintain a safe and positive work environment in Scoil Mhuire · To create an atmosphere of collaboration, openness, respect and equality · To raise awareness of Management and staff in relation to the importance of fostering positive working relations with one's colleagues
- To provide practical guidance on how to develop and maintain good working relations · To generate understanding of the importance of good communication
- To foster best practice so as to enable issues to be managed at an early stage and in a constructive manner [problems will naturally arise and so the emphasis is better placed on the constructive resolution of issues rather than trying to prevent problems] · To acknowledge that disagreement is normal and inevitable but its management can be planned and supported

- To ensure that adequate procedures to effectively address issues – both informally and formally – are readily available and clear to all staff members
- To prevent the recurrence of issues that negatively impact on working relationships
- To acknowledge and promote what is working well in Scoil Mhuire

Key Aspects of this Policy

- An awareness of the importance of demonstrating a sense of fair play, tolerance and goodwill towards others
- It is recognised that there are certain behaviours which are not acceptable among staff members and which can create negative staff relations.
- It is recognised that it is important to constructively resolve issues at the earliest opportunity so that issues do not fester and result in inevitable conflict.
- All staff are aware of, and have access to, copies of relevant school policies and procedures.
- These policies are implemented fairly and consistently and with appropriate oversight, monitoring and review.
- The Board of Scoil Mhuire is committed to ensuring the appropriate development and implementation of this Policy.

Scope of the Policy

This Policy applies to inappropriate behaviours, including adult bullying, harassment and sexual harassment, not only by staff but also by any person with whom a staff member might reasonably expect to come in contact in the course of his/her school activities, including visitors to the school.

Protection under this Policy extends beyond the School environment to all work related events including off-site meetings, conferences, and sports/social events.

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 the responsibility of Management and each staff member to be aware of this Policy and the concept of Dignity at Work for each person in the Scoil Mhuire community. (See Section on Responsibility of Management below for further information.)

Victimisation:

Staff members who make a complaint or who give evidence in proceedings associated with this Policy, will not be victimised.

What is Bullying and Harassment?

Information in relation to bullying, harassment and sexual harassment is included in line with HSA and EA codes of practice to ensure clarity and to build awareness.

Bullying or harassment can be broadly characterised as behaviours which are unwanted, unwelcome, intimidating or offensive to the recipient. It is the unwanted nature of the contact that distinguishes bullying, harassment and sexual harassment from acceptable behaviour that is welcome and mutual. Bullying and harassment are defined by the impact of the behaviour on the recipient where those behaviours could reasonably be regarded as undermining the person's right to dignity at work.

The effect of the behaviour on the staff member concerned is what is important. The intention of the perpetrator is irrelevant.

It is up to each member of staff to decide what behaviour is unwelcome, irrespective of the attitude of others to the matter.

Bullying definition:

*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 puts at risk the safety, health and/or welfare of people at work. A pattern of the following behaviours are examples of types of bullying:

- Exclusion and isolation
- Verbal abuse/insults
- Interference with personal property or work station
- Being treated less favourably than others
- Intrusion – pestering, spying or stalking
- Menacing or threatening behaviour
- Undermining a person's role
- Excessive monitoring of work
- Humiliation
- Withholding work-related information
- Blame for things beyond the person's control
- Spreading malicious rumours.

Please note that the above is not an exhaustive list.

Key factors of adult workplace bullying are that the behaviour is:

- Persistent
- Unwanted
- Overt or subtle
- Physical or non-physical

What Bullying is Not

The exercise of legitimate management functions in a reasonable and fair manner does not constitute bullying and this view of the Board of Management is endorsed by the INTO and by other Trade Unions. Nor do the following constitute bullying:

- Reasonable and proportional discipline arising from the management of the performance of a staff member
- Actions taken that can be justified as regards the safety, health and welfare of the staff and pupils
- Actions taken which can be justified as regards the safety, health and welfare of the employees
- Legitimate management responses to crisis situations which may require immediate action
- Complaints relating to reasonable instructions issued by management in relation to the assignment of normal duties or relating to terms and conditions of employment

Harassment

Harassment is closely related to bullying and while it is illegal and should not be tolerated in the workplace, it does not fit the definition. To assist in differentiating the two it is worth considering that harassment is governed by Equality legislation and is predicated on the person being a member of one of the nine categories specified within the anti-harassment legislation. Bullying is legally distinct from harassment as bullying behaviour is not predicated on membership of any distinct group. [HSA, 2007:5]

Harassment definition:

*Harassment is any form of **unwanted conduct** related to any of the nine discriminatory grounds that has **the purpose or effect of violation a person's dignity** and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.*

In reaching consensus on our definition of harassment we consulted with each other, reviewed current Employment Equality legislation and researched generally but not exclusively based on a person's standing within one of the nine categories specified in the legislation Employment Act 1998 & 2004:

- Gender
- Marital status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race, ethnic origin or colour
- Membership of the Travelling community

Many forms of behaviour may constitute harassment including:

- Verbal harassment – jokes, comments, ridicule or songs
- Written harassment – including text messages, emails or notices
- Physical harassment – jostling, shoving or any form of assault
- Intimidatory harassment – gestures, posturing or threatening poses
- Visual displays such as posters, emblems or badges
- Isolation or exclusion from social activities
- Pressure to behave in a manner that the employee thinks is inappropriate, for example, being required to dress in a manner unsuited to a person's ethnic or religious background

Harassment may consist of a single incident or repeated inappropriate behaviour. [adapted from
EA COP, 2002:8-9]

Sexual Harassment

The Equality Act 2004 outlaws sexual discrimination in the workplace in the course of employment whether by an employer, another employee or by clients, customers or business contacts of the organisation.

For the purpose of this Policy, the definition of sexual harassment as outlined in the Equality Act 2004 will apply as follows:

*[Sexual harassment is] ...any act or conduct including spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material that is **unwelcome and** could reasonably be regarded as **sexually offensive, humiliating or intimidating**.*

EA COP, 2002:27

Sexual harassment may consist of a single incident or repeated inappropriate behavior and applies to incidents of a sexual nature between a woman and a man and to individuals of the same sex.

Sexual harassment may take many forms, for example:

- Sexual jokes, stories, comments, use of telephone (including text messages), fax or radio systems for inappropriate suggestive comments, unwelcome comments about dress or appearance;
- Display of offensive pictures, slogans, graffiti, written suggestive materials, etc. through electronic mail or otherwise (including a display of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures or objects);
- Asking personal questions, telling lies or spreading rumours about a colleague's sex life
- Unwanted physical contact ranging from unnecessary touching to assault; · Persisting in unwelcome attempts to form or continue a relationship from which the consent of one party has not been given or has been withdrawn.

Responsibilities of Staff

All staff members have a role in promoting a positive working environment in Scoil Mhuire and each staff member has a responsibility for ensuring that the work environment in Scoil Mhuire is free of intimidation, harassment and/or threat of any sort.

Specifically, each staff member should demonstrate a clear understanding of:

- acceptable collegial interaction
- normal management strategies and
- mutually acceptable behaviour

...In order to understand what is being described in this Policy as unacceptable behaviour that could undermine the right to dignity at work for any colleague or other person with whom they come into contact during the course of their work.

Responsibilities of Management

It is the responsibility of the Principal and manager/supervisors to:

- Familiarise themselves with this Policy
- Uphold the Policy as an integral part of their work
- Promote awareness of the Policy among staff
- Communicate Policy to staff and non-staff members (ensure copies of the Policy are readily available)
- Be vigilant for signs of bullying and/or harassment
- Intervene or take appropriate steps in any instance where offensive behaviour is observed or brought to their attention
- Provide good example by treating all in the workplace with dignity and respect · Respond sensitively and confidentially to a staff member who makes a complaint of bullying or harassment
- Explain the procedures to be followed if a complaint is made
- Ensure, insofar as practicable, that the staff member is not victimised for doing so
- Monitor and follow up situations after a complaint is made to ensure that it does not reoccur

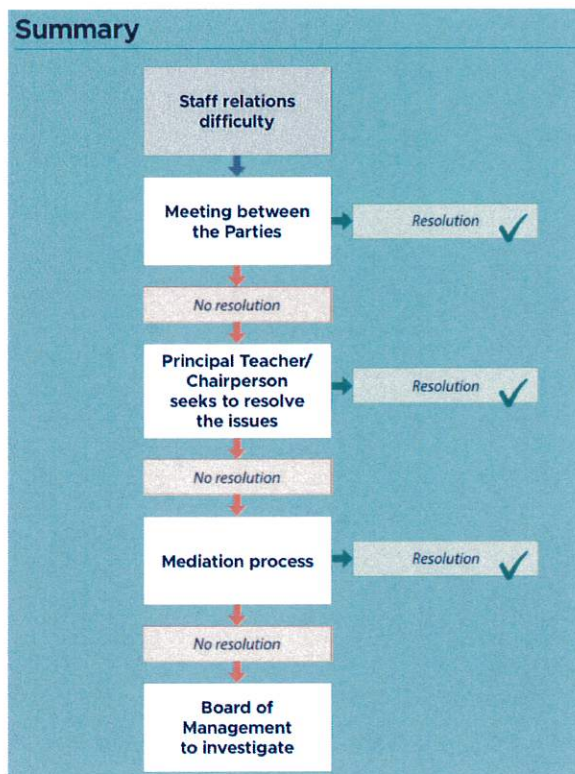
Procedures for Dealing with Issues arising under this Policy

In many instances complaints of adult bullying and harassment can be dealt with successfully on an informal basis. Often such incidents can be resolved amicably between the parties involved using an informal approach. In many instances, such an intervention will be sufficient to enable the alleged perpetrator to see the offending behaviour from the complainant's perspective and no further action may be required.

A staff member who feels subjected to inappropriate behaviours should choose the appropriate procedure in accordance with the INTO Working Together Document 2024.

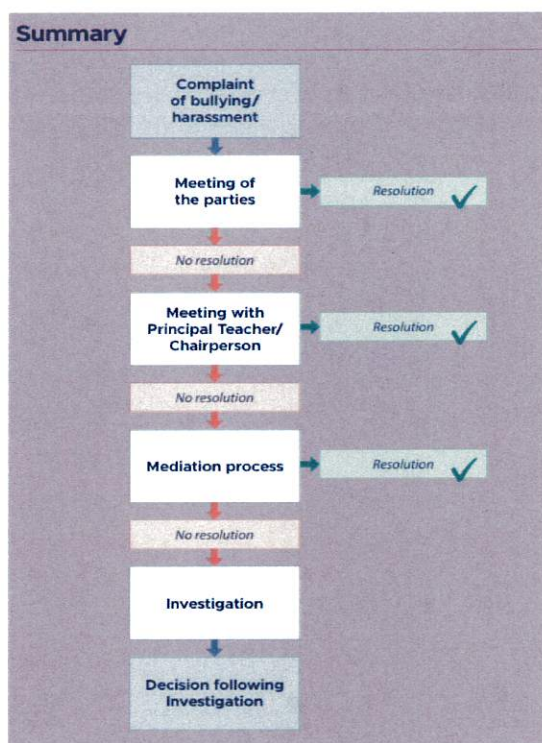
Procedure 1 : Staff Relations Difficulties

- Please see p4 of the document [Working Together 2024](#)
- Relevant Templates available on p10/11/12 of the document



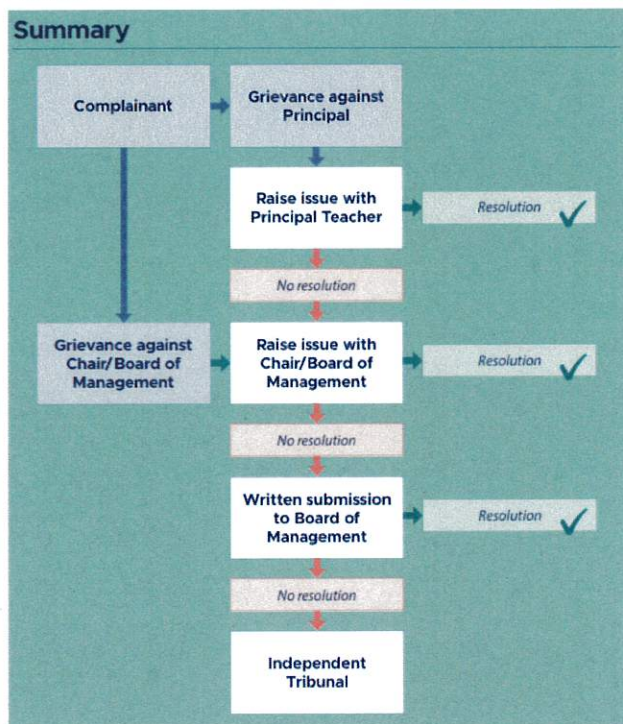
Procedure 2: Bullying and Harassment

- Please see p13 of the document [Working Together 2024](#)
- Relevant Templates available on p23/24/25/26 of the document



Procedure 3: Grievance

- Please see p27 of the document [Working Together 2024](#)



Review and Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in February 2018. Reviewed and updated February 2022. In line with Working Together, INTO 2024 this policy was reviewed March 2025. It will be reviewed every 4 years and/or as changes arise that suggest the need for review.

Signed : *Josephine Henry*

Date: *24th June 2026*