



St. Peter Apostle Junior National School

# St. Peter Apostle Junior National School



## Dignity in the Workplace and Workplace Bullying and Harassment

### Policy Summary Details

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>Dignity in the Workplace Policy</b>
<b>Written/Reviewed:</b>	January, 2020
<b>Date Ratified by BOM:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> February 2020



# St. Peter Apostle Junior National School

## Introduction

The Board of Management of St. Peter Apostle Junior School seek to promote an environment within which all employees will be treated with dignity. This school is committed to a positive work environment where work is done in an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, openness and equality. It is recognized by the Board of Management that all employees have the right to a workplace free from bullying and harassment (including sexual harassment) and thus, the Board is fully committed to ensuring that all employees are able to enjoy that right. Harassment and bullying are deemed by the Board to be negative behaviors that can seriously damage working and social conditions and so, are behaviours that will not be tolerated during the course of work or any other activity of the school.

There is a responsibility on all employees to be aware of this policy and to promote a working environment free of threat, harassment and intimidation. It is important to distinguish harassment, including sexual harassment, from normal social interaction at work involving mutually acceptable behaviour. This policy applies to harassment not only by staff but also by any person with whom an employee might reasonably expect to come in contact in the course of his/her school activities including visitors to the school. In any case, the commitment to a positive workplace, where dignity at work is respected, prevails.

## Aims and objectives

Through this policy the Board of Management of St. Peter Apostle JNS 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:

- What is meant by workplace bullying and sexual harassment;
- How workplace bullying and sexual harassment may be prevented;
- The steps to take if workplace bullying and sexual harassment occurs;
- Ensure adequate procedures are readily available to deal with the problem of workplace bullying and sexual harassment;
- Put measures into place to prevent the occurrence and/or reoccurrence of workplace bullying and sexual harassment.

Through the enactment of this policy the Board of Management of St. Peter Apostle Junior School endeavor to be 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)



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### Recommended good practice

The Board of Management of St. Peter Apostle JNS recognises the importance of promoting positive harmonious relationships within the school community by ensuring that all people, both adults and pupils alike, are treated with dignity and respect. It is agreed that we will work to make this school a good place to work. To that end, in our school, we aim to create a supportive workplace atmosphere in which:

- Regular, transparent, open and direct communication and opportunities for debate are encouraged;
- Collaborative decision making and constructive discussion based on consultation within the school community is fostered;
- The different roles performed in the school by each member of staff (teaching and non-teaching) are acknowledged and affirmed;
- There is fair treatment of all staff (including fair systems of selection and promotion in line with agreed procedures);
- The entitlement of each member of staff to be treated with respect and dignity is recognised;
- An awareness of the importance of demonstrating a sense of fair play, tolerance and goodwill is created;
- It is recognised that there are certain behaviours which are not acceptable among staff members and which create negative staff relations;
- 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;
- All staff are aware of and have access to copies of school policies and procedures covering curricular and administrative areas;
- A dignity at work charter is visibly displayed in the school (*Vide* Appendix 1)
- These policies are implemented fairly and consistently and where the Board of Management will ensure their implementation.

### What is workplace bullying?

Bullying is a workplace issue and a human relations issue. Harassment or bullying in any form is unacceptable. It is based on a person's standing within one of the nine categories (or grounds) specified in Employment Equality legislation; Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004 (Government of Ireland, 1998, 2004). Through this legislation the Government of Ireland outlaws discrimination on nine distinct grounds – gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and



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membership of the travelling community (*Vide* Appendix 2).

For the purposes of the procedures outlined in this document, the Board of Management has adopted the definition of workplace bullying that is provided in the Report of the Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying (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 (Task Force, 2001)

Bullying behaviour generally amounts to psychological abuse which can result in serious pain and suffering. Researchers repeatedly assert 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.

In summary, workplace bullying can take many different forms, which include but are by no means limited to the following:

- Purposely undermining someone;
- Targeting someone for special negative treatment;
- Manipulation of an individual's reputation;
- Social exclusion or isolation;
- Intimidation;
- Aggressive or obscene language;
- Jokes that are obviously offensive to one individual by spoken word or email;
- Intrusion by pestering, spying and stalking;
- Unreasonable assignments to duties which are obviously unfavourable to one individual;
- Repeated requests with impossible deadline or impossible tasks

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

- Persistent
- Unwanted
- Subtle
- Non-physical

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.



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### What is harassment/sexual harassment?

Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the discriminatory grounds. Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In both cases it is 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

Through The Employment Equality Act (1998) the Government of Ireland defines sexual harassment as any act of the following:

- **Unwanted physical intimacy** - This may include unwanted physical contact such as unnecessary touching, patting, pinching or brushing against another employee's body, assault or coercive sexual intercourse.
- **Verbal conduct of a sexual nature** - This includes unwelcome sexual advances, propositions or pressure for sexual activity, continued suggestions for social activity outside the workplace after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome, unwanted or offensive flirtations, suggestive remarks, innuendos or lewd comments.
- **Non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature** - This may include the display of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures, objects, written material, emails, text-messages or faxes. It may also include leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive gestures

### Making a complaint of workplace bullying/ harassment

Any employee who feels he or she has been or is being bullied or sexually harassed should ask the perpetrator to stop. Where this form of action is unsuccessful the employee may report the matter to any of the following school personnel:

- The Principal;
- The Deputy Principal;
- Teacher/member of the Board of Management;
- Chairperson of the Board of Management of St. Peter Apostle JNS.

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. Any complaint of harassment shall be fully and properly investigated by the Board of Management and if substantiated, will be regarded as grounds for disciplinary action and may be referred on to the Teaching Council.

An attempt will be made to resolve the matter informally if appropriate. If it is not



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possible to resolve the matter informally, a formal complaints procedure as agreed by the INTO and management bodies shall be applied. This procedure is outlined in the INTO Members Handbook (2003) and the CPSMA Management Board Members Handbook. No record of any complaint will be registered on an employees' file unless a formal procedure as outlined in these documents is applied.

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 insofar as possible, confidentiality will be ensured at all times during the investigation for all parties involved. In seeking a resolution, due respect shall be had for the rights of the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.

It is the policy of the school that issues of harassment are best dealt with within the school. However, no aspect of this policy affects any employees' individual legal rights to take their complaint outside of the school.

### **Conclusion**

The Board of Management has a duty of care towards employees. Similarly, employees have a duty of care towards one another. Through this policy, the Board of Management of St. Peter Apostle JNS seek to set out principles and practices to support the exercise of that duty in our school and to ensure that each and every member of the school community experiences dignity 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 good place to work.

### **Monitoring, evaluation and review**

Members of the teaching staff and other school personnel along with the Board of Management have been involved in the preparation of this policy. A copy of this policy will be given to all employees on their appointment to a position within St. Peter Apostle JNS.

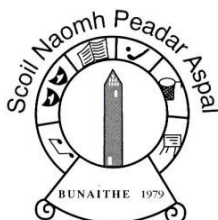
Signed: .....  
*For and behalf of Board of Management*

Date: Ratified .....



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### Appendix 1: Dignity in the workplace charter



### St. Peter Apostle Junior National School Dignity at Work Charter

The staff of St. Peter Apostle JNS recognise that “central to the concept of an effective workplace is the commitment of management and the workforce to develop and maintain an atmosphere in which the dignity of each individual is respected” (Report of the Task Force for the Prevention of Workplace Bullying). In a bid to ensure that all who are connected to this school experience a respectful environment, we as a staff are committed to the following dignity at work charter:

- All who work in St. Peter Apostle JNS are expected to respect the right of each individual to dignity in their working life.
- The right of each individual pupil to dignity at St. Peter Apostle JNS is also respected. All pupils will be treated equally and respected for their individuality and diversity.
- Bullying in any form will not be accepted by us and will not be tolerated.
- Our policies and procedures will underpin the principles and objectives of this Charter. All individuals, whether teachers or pupils, at St. Peter Apostle JNS, or others directly employed or contracted by us, have a duty and responsibility to uphold this Dignity at Work Charter. School management and staff have a specific responsibility to promote its provisions.



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### Appendix 2: Employment Equality Acts 1998 & 2004: Grounds of discrimination

The legislation prohibits discrimination on the following nine grounds:

1. **The gender ground:** A man, a woman or a transsexual person (specific protection is provided for pregnant employees or in relation to maternity leave);
2. **The marital status ground:** Single, married, separated, divorced or widowed;
3. **The family status ground:** A parent of a person under 18 years or the resident primary carer or a parent of a person with a disability;
4. **The sexual orientation ground:** Gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual;
5. **The religion ground:** Different religious belief, background, outlook or none;
6. **The age ground:** This applies to all ages above the maximum age at which a person is statutorily obliged to attend school;
7. **The disability ground:** This is broadly defined including people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions;
8. **The race ground:** A particular race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic origin;
9. **The Traveller community ground:** People who are commonly called Travellers, who are identified both by Travellers and others as people with a shared history, culture and traditions, identified historically as a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.