



St. Peter Apostle Junior National School

St. Peter Apostle Junior National School



Dignity at Work

Policy Summary Details

Policy Title:	Dignity at Work
Written/Reviewed:	September 2025
Ratified by the BOM	October, 2025



Introduction

Our Dignity at work policy is formulated in light of the Labour Relations Commission's Codes of Practice S.I. No.17/2002 and S.I. 208/2012 for addressing bullying in the workplace and harassment/sexual harassment respectively, together with the Health & Safety Authority *Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work 2021*. The policy is informed by the *Working Together 2024– Ag Obair Le Chéile* document, which was prepared by the following management bodies: the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland Board of Education, Educate Together, An Forás Pátrúnachta, the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education, the Muslim Primary Education Board. Regular review of this policy and discussions based upon it will take place as often as is practicable, and / or when updated Codes of Practice are introduced.

1 Vision and mission statement

We in St. Peter Apostle Junior school believe in the potential of each child. As a staff we seek to ensure that all children in our care have equality of opportunity to derive positive outcomes from their educational experience. In doing so, we endeavour to create a safe, happy, respectful, and inclusive learning environment, where the diverse needs of all different types of learners are catered for. It is envisioned that by providing an all-inclusive approach to education that the children in our school shall reach their academic potential whilst developing the confidence and courage to be fair, kind, moral, tolerant and respectful when acting in the world.

We strive to realise vision by seeking to:

- Craft a caring, supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment in which children's social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual development is catered for,
- Develop children's interests, talents and hobbies by providing a wide range of learning experiences,
- Harness the collective talents of all staff to ensure that all children, irrespective of their medical status and/or special educational needs feel cherished and thrive in in dynamic educational settings,
- Provide tailored learning experiences for children who present with special educational needs (gifted or otherwise) by meeting children where they are at and building upon their strengths,
- Collaborate with colleagues and outside agencies to ensure focused and effective supports are in place to advance the social, emotional, and cognitive development of all the children in our care,
- Build strong and collaborative relationships with parents with a view to fine tuning and augmenting the supports that children receive in both the home and school,
- Promote a culture of inclusivity by ensuring that children across the school settings integrate as appropriate during tuition time, yard breaks and school events,
- Create an environment where all have freedom and opportunity to reach their full potential.

2 Linkage of the dignity at work policy to the vision for the school

As set out in our vision and mission statement, we in St. Peter Apostle JNS are committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for all pupils. The same holds true for our working environment. St. Peter Apostle Junior National School is where we spend a considerable part of our lives. Promoting and maintaining positive and professional



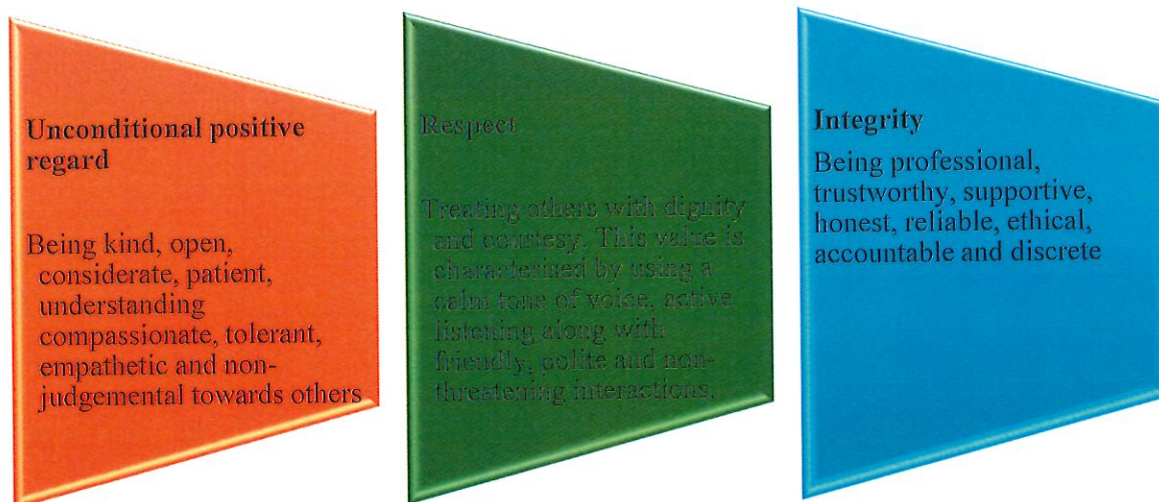
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interpersonal relationships is central to our work and wellbeing. St. Peter Apostle Junior National School is committed to a positive work environment where work is done in an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, openness and equality.

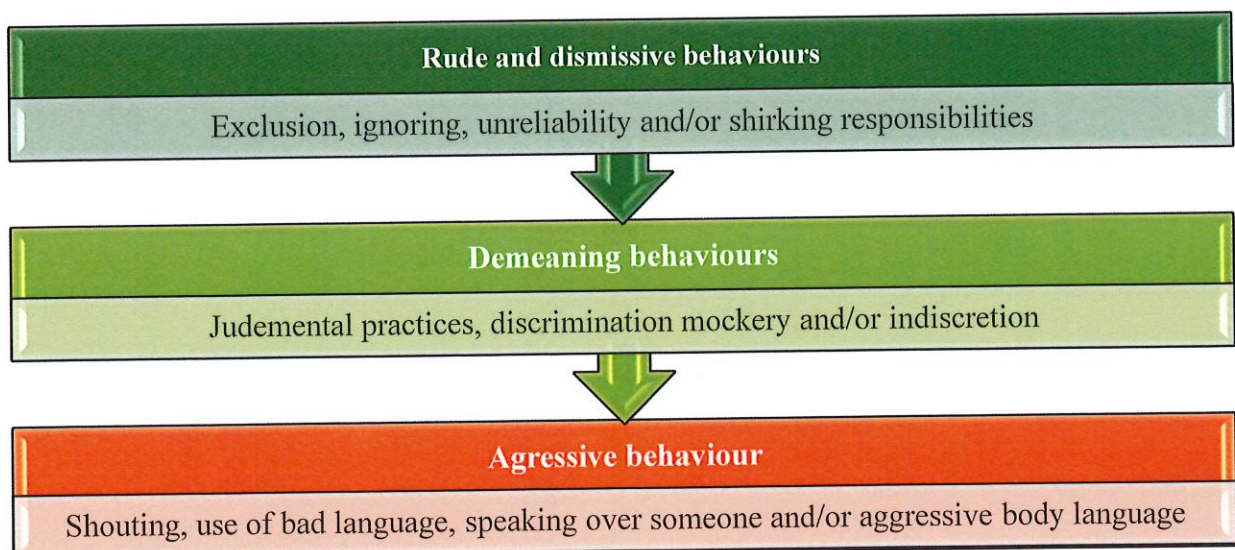
Adult bullying and harassment will not be tolerated at St. Peter Apostle JNS. All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Management is committed to intervening in an appropriate manner - utilising one of the accepted procedures (in line with *Working Together 2024– Ag Obair Le Chéile*) - to investigate and deal with allegations of bullying or harassment. The provisions of DES Circulars 61/2017 and 62/2017 with respect to the assault of teachers and SNAs will be applied, as appropriate.

3 Values underpinning our positive work environment

We all have a responsibility to make St. Peter Apostle a good place to work. As such, it has the staff in St. Peter Apostle JNS have narrowed down three core values upon which we expect the behaviours in our workplace to be based upon. These are as follows:



It has been agreed by staff that behaviours that run counter to our values and thus would serve to undermine our positive work environment are:





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.

4 Definitions

4.1 Workplace bullying

The Board of Management defines bullying as 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.

A key characteristic of bullying is that it usually takes place over a period of time. It is regular and persistent inappropriate behaviour, which is specifically targeted at one employee or a group of employees.

Behaviours that may constitute bullying behaviour include but are not limited to:

- Verbal abuse/insults, undermining remarks
- Exclusionary behaviours
- Intimidation
- Aggression
- Humiliation, ridicule
- Humiliation
- Undermining
- Dominance or abuse of power
- Different or less favourable treatment
- Belittling a person's opinion / efforts
- Disseminating malicious rumours, gossip or innuendo
- Other menacing behaviour.

When considering the definition of bullying it is also important to note the following **non-exhaustive** list of what bullying *is not*:

- Strongly expressing differences of opinion
- Offering constructive feedback, guidance, or advice about work-related behaviour which is not of itself welcome
- Ordinary performance management
- Reasonable corrective action taken by Principal/ employer which may include monitoring of the work of the Teacher
- Workplace conflict where people disagree with or disregard the others' point of view
- An isolated incident which may be an affront to dignity in the workplace but as it is a once off incident, it is not considered to be bullying.



4.2 Workplace harassment

Harassment is 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, related to any of the following grounds:

1. Gender
2. Civil status
3. Family status
4. Sexual orientation
5. Religious belief
6. Age
7. Disability
8. Race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin
9. Membership of the Traveller community

Unlike bullying, a single incident may constitute harassment. Harassment may constitute any act or conduct, such as, spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

4.3 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and/or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. Sexual harassment may include:

- Physical conduct of a sexual nature
- Verbal conduct of a sexual nature
- Non-verbal contact of a sexual nature which may include the sharing (or threatening to share) sexually offensive images and/or the engagement of social media in a manner that is sexually offensive.

The *Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment and Harassment at Work, 2022*, states that the intention of the perpetrator of the sexual harassment is irrelevant and as such staff in St. Peter Apostle JNS recognise that parties subject to this procedure may or may not have intended for the effect of their behaviour to be the experienced effect of the alleged victim – but nonetheless may ultimately constitute sexual harassment.

It is recognised that bullying and harassment complaints may arise among work 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.

4.4 Digital harassment

It is to be expected that staff are aware of their own online presence, and they should adhere to the guidelines of the Teaching Council's Professional Standards. However, staff are also entitled to a private life online and this should be respected. For example, a staff member should not feel under pressure to "friend" another member of the school community.

If members of staff agree to share contact details, they should not be expected to reply to school related communications outside of school time if they do not wish to do so. While messages may be sent via Aladdin or email at any time, staff members are not expected to check in to them or respond to them outside of working hours.



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4.5 Harassment and wider school community

In St. Peter Apostle Junior National School, we believe that all members of the school community have the right to feel happy, safe and to be given opportunities to learn. Anyone entering our building or grounds or those involved in school-related activities off-site are expected to adhere to behaviours that underpin the values that serve as the foundation for our positive work environment. See section ... For instance, pupils are expected to act in line with our values in a way that is appropriate to their age, social maturity and understanding. It is also important and expected that that all adult stakeholders behave in a manner that falls within this *Dignity at Work Policy*. Some examples of acceptable behaviour are listed as follows:

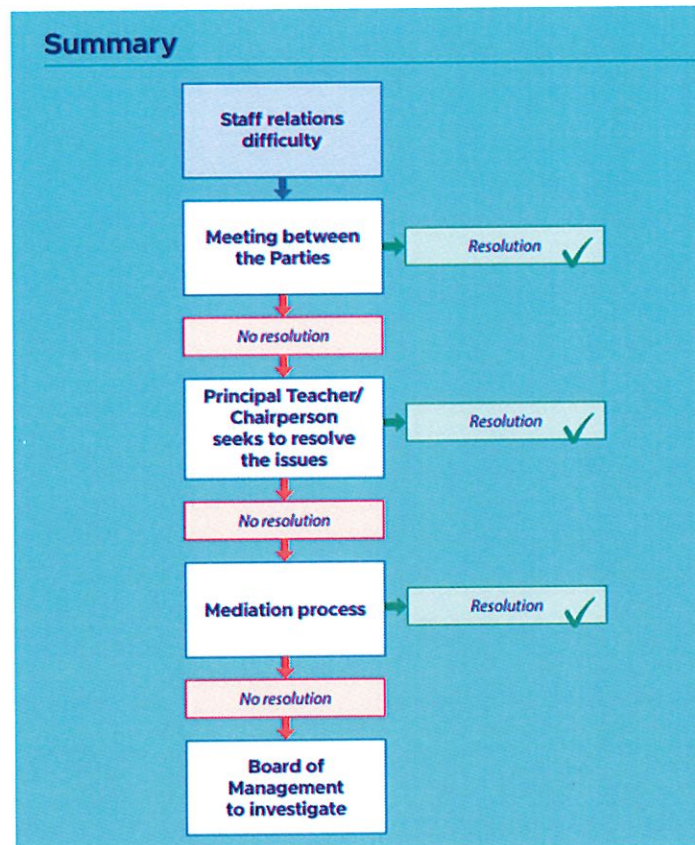
- All stakeholders should speak to each other with respect. Using aggressive language or tones is not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays signs of aggression in the school building or grounds, he/she may be asked to remove themselves from the building/grounds. In certain cases, the Gardai may be called to ensure the safety of all parties.
- Stakeholders should not interrupt teacher/pupil contact time. Should a parent/guardian wish to meet with a teacher, he/she should make an appointment to do so through the school office, Aladdin or written communication to the staff member in question.
- When requesting a meeting with a staff member, it is good practice to outline the purpose of the meeting when making the appointment. This can save considerable time and help to identify supporting material for the issue at hand.
- Stakeholders should not isolate others or attempt to influence others against particular individuals or groups in the school.
- Violence or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated. An Garda Síochána may become involved in any incident of violence or aggression between two parties.
- Staff members will only speak about a particular pupil with his/her parents/guardians. Other pupils will not be discussed. The staff of the school will respect your child's right to privacy, so it is asked that parents respect other pupil's right to privacy also.
- In line with our Child Safeguarding Statement, stakeholders should never approach a child in an aggressive manner.

5 Staff - Resolution procedures for workplace difficulties

5.1 Staff relations difficulties

It is the view of the BOM and staff in St. Peter Apostle JNS that if you find yourself experiencing staff conflict, **you have a responsibility to act to resolve it**. The Nationally agreed procedures set out in the document entitled *Working Together 2024 - Ag Obair Le Chéile* for addressing staff relations difficulties will be used to provide a resolution framework for staff members who find themselves experience staff conflict. As detailed in the summary **diagram below/overleaf** the procedures work on the principle of least amount of intervention, whereby the staff member involved will seek to resolve any conflict by at an early stage by having an informal chat. If early, informal attempts fail, the level of intervention and formality increases. Details of the steps can be found at https://www.into.ie/app/uploads/2019/07/Working-Together_English.pdf

An outline summary of the recommended formal staff relations procedures is as follows:



Please refer to the *Working Together 2024 - Ag Obair Le Chéile* document for further detail on the procedures and templates for recording at each stage.

https://www.into.ie/app/uploads/2019/07/Working-Together_English.pdf

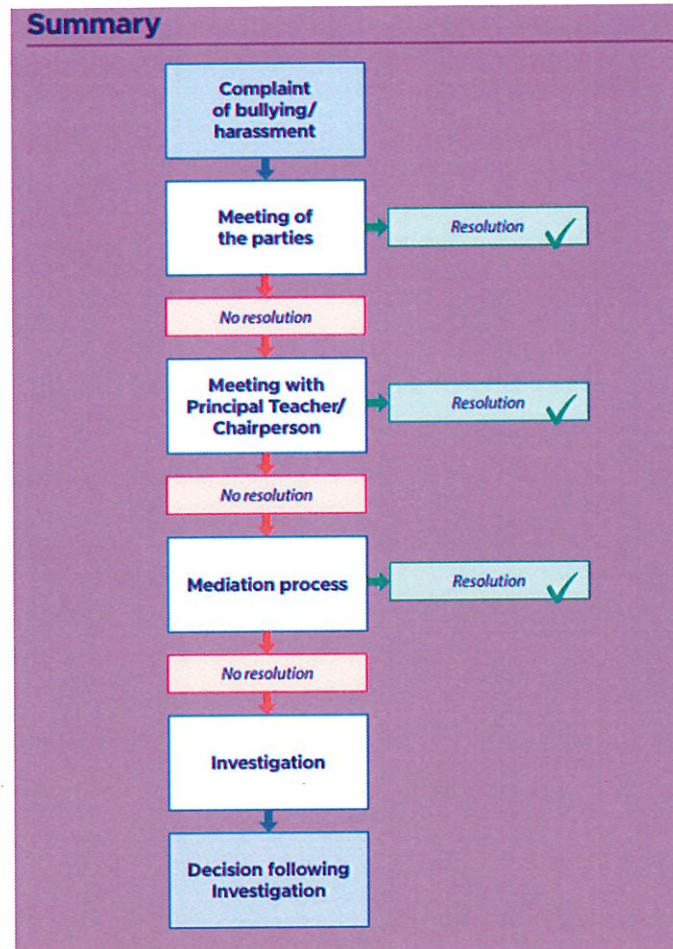
5.2 Resolving an allegation of workplace bullying or harassment

The diagram below provides a summary of the procedures that should be adopted by an individual teacher for addressing complaints of adult bullying/harassment. In considering whether or not to initiate this procedure, teachers should get advice. Advice is available from the following:

1. INTO Head Office
2. INTO Local CEC Representative
3. Employee Assistance Service (contact details below)

It is important to note that as articulated in the nationally agreed guidelines generally, if either party to the allegation is on leave the procedure is paused for the duration of the leave. Notwithstanding this, there may be incidents/ circumstances where a party involved in this procedure who is on leave and is medically certified to, wishes to continue. This is allowable subject to consent, e.g. sick leave/career break.

It is incumbent on Party A to raise their complaint in a timely manner and as a rule, within 6 months of the issue(s) which give rise to the complaint. In exceptional circumstances, the six-month time limit may be extended e.g. in circumstances where Party A is on approved leave, school closures etc.



Please refer to the *Working Together 2024 - Ag Obair Le Chéile* document for further detail on the procedures and templates for recording at each stage.

https://www.into.ie/app/uploads/2019/07/Working-Together_English.pdf

5.3 Management and dealing with allegations of workplace bullying/harassment

Chairpersons and members of boards of management can seek advice from the relevant Management Body for their school, in relation to implementing the procedure. The parties to this procedure who are available to support in the above are: Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA), Church of Ireland Education Board, Educate Together, An Forás Pátrúnachta, Muslim Primary Education Board, and National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABMSE).

Fundamental tenets of this procedure are that:

1. A complainant or complainants will be treated with fairness, sensitivity, and respect.
2. A person or persons alleged to have bullied or harassed will be treated with fairness, sensitivity and respect.
3. Confidentiality is assured for all parties concerned.
4. All parties involved will not be victimised as a result of their participation in the process.
5. All parties involved will be afforded fairness and natural justice.
6. There is an onus on Party A to provide specific details in order for Party B to be afforded the opportunity to respond.

5.4 Staff - Support services

Currently via [Spectrum.Life](#), the Employee Assistance Service (EAS) offers free support for digital and mental health and wellbeing. **The service is available to all school staff** and is known as ‘Wellbeing Together: Folláine le Chéile’.

The EAS provides advice to employees on a range of issues including wellbeing, legal, financial, bereavement, conflict, and mediation. It also provides support and advice to managers to help them deal with health and wellbeing issues in the workplace.

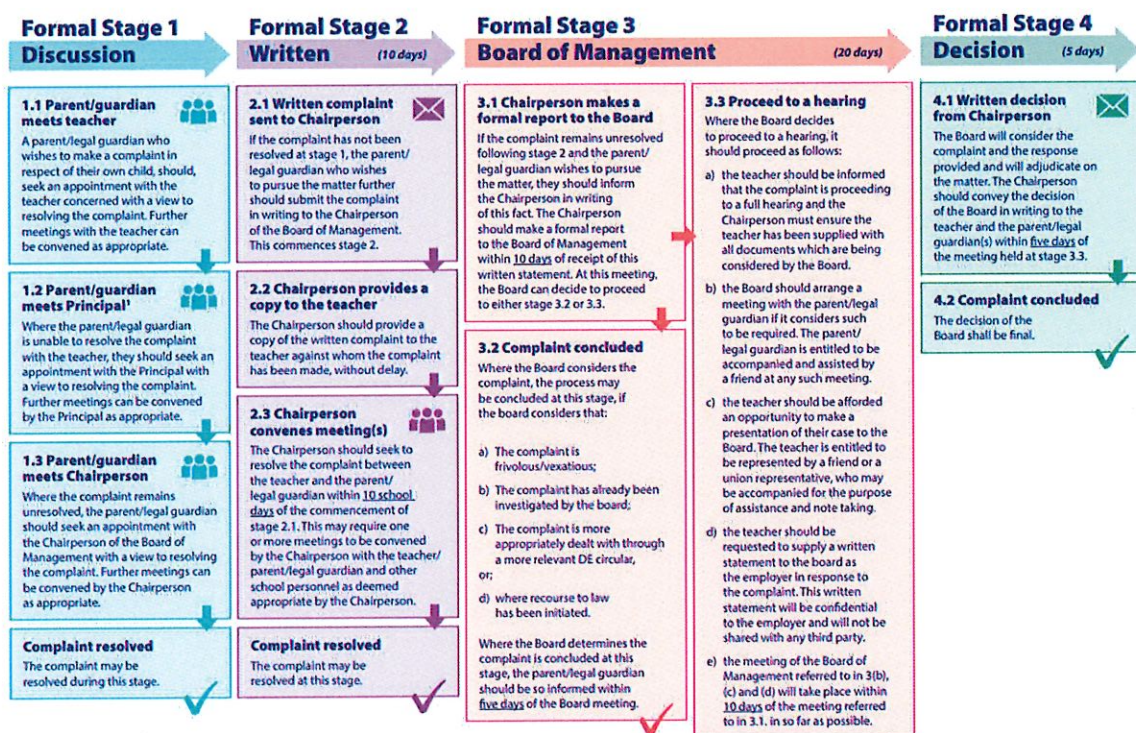
To access support, freephone 1800 411 057. Alternatively, text ‘Hi’ to 087 369 0010 on SMS or WhatsApp. The service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and so parties can engage with the EAS at any stage.

Employees can access the Spectrum.Life wellbeing portal by signing up to the [Spectrum.Life website](#).

The organisation Code may be pre-populated. If not, organisation code is yIVIIIU17

6 Parents – Resolution procedures

The BOM in St. Peter Apostle JNS has formally adopted the nationally agreed parental complaints procedures. These are the steps that should be followed for parents seeking resolution to a difficulty he/she has. See summary below



7 Summary

The Board of Management at St. Peter Apostle Junior National School recognises a duty of care towards all employees. Similarly, school staff have a duty of care towards one another. This policy seeks to set out principles, practices and procedures to support the exercise of that duty in our school.



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Inappropriate and undermining behaviour amongst staff is unacceptable and taken seriously, as is such behaviour when perpetrated against a staff member at St. Peter Apostle Junior National School by any other person.

Together, we at St. Peter Apostle Junior National School are committed to maintaining a work environment where respectful, open and equal relationships are the norm. We are also committed to resolving any potential issue that may become apparent in the workplace.

In summary, we are committed to having a good and safe place to work, where every individual's dignity is respected.

8 Date that the policy was adopted by the Board of Management

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 15/10/23 [date].

Viv. Powney Date: 15.10.23
Vivion Powney
(Chairperson)

Laura Hannon Date: 15/10/23
Laura Hannon
(Principal)