

Dignity in the Workplace Policy

The Board of Management of Granagh National School, recognizes that all staff members have the right to work in an atmosphere of mutual respect and justice and is fully committed to ensuring that every staff member will enjoy that right.

Each and every member of the school community has a duty to uphold the right of every individual in the school to work in an environment of mutual respect and justice.

This policy was drawn up in consultation with staff, parent representatives and the Board of Management. 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).

Together, we are committed to creating and maintaining a safe work environment where respectful, open and equal relationships are the norm. Management has a duty of care towards its 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 that duty in Granagh National School.

Core Principles of Policy

The Board of Management of Granagh National School is committed to the creation of a positive work environment where work is undertaken in an atmosphere of:

- (i) respect,
- (ii) collaboration,
- (iii) openness
- (iv) equality

Integral to this employment value is the commitment to provide a workplace of mutual respect and fairness to all.

Objectives of Dignity at Work Policy

It is recognised that complaints of improper conduct or behaviour may arise as and between work colleagues. Such complaints may also arise as and between employees and persons who, for whatever reason, come into Granagh National School. This policy reflects the commitment of all at the school to the creation of a positive workplace, where dignity at work is respected.

The policy seeks to:

- Foster the creation and maintenance of a positive working environment for all who work in Granagh National School
- Acknowledge the right of each individual to dignity in the workplace
- Ensure that all are aware of and committed to the principles of justice and equality which underpin the policy.

Definitions

For the purposes of the procedures outlined in this document, the Board of Management has adopted these definitions:

Bullying:

Workplace bullying as defined by the Employment Equality Act 1998 and 2004 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:

Harassment is defined in Section 14A(7) of the Employment Equality Act 1998 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 1998 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.

A Positive Work Environment

It is agreed that all staff will work to make Granagh National School a good place to work.

A good place to work has a positive work environment characterised by:

- A supportive and welcoming atmosphere
- Appropriate interpersonal behaviour
- Collaboration
- Fair treatment of all staff
- Respect for the dignity of others
- All staff, regardless of status and whether permanent, temporary or student are afforded the same respect

A System of Mutual Respect and Fairness.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 includes 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.

Every person has a responsibility to play his/her part in contributing to the creation of a positive work environment. In this regard, a person who is a witness or bystander and who observes the occurrence of improper conduct or behaviour, has a clear responsibility to raise concerns about dignity at work and threats to this, in an appropriate and timely manner.

Improper conduct or behaviour

Improper conduct or behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal abuse/insults, undermining remarks
- Non-verbal behaviour
- Actions designed to undermine another person
- Shouting
- Excessive monitoring of work
 - Humiliation
 - Intimidation
 - Assignment of unreasonable tasks and/or deadlines
- Implied threats

Such conduct or behaviours need not and should not be part of any workplace. This policy aims to ensure that a positive environment prevails in which such behaviours are prevented from occurring.

Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Improper Conduct or Behaviour

The Board of Management will take seriously any allegations of improper conduct or behaviour in the workplace. To that end, a two stage approach will be adopted for the management of complaints which may arise.

Stage One: Informal Procedure

- If the conduct or behaviour of one or more members of staff towards another is found to be unacceptable by the latter, (s)he has the right to explain to the former that (s)he is being made to feel uncomfortable at work or is being offended in some way.

If, as a result of this informal conversation, the offending words, behaviour or demeanour change so as to make the environment comfortable for the person who experiences the unwelcome behaviour, the matter will be closed.

- Should the offended party feel unable to approach the person(s) whose conduct or behaviour is causing offence, (s)he may approach the Principal/Chairperson, or another person who may be associated with the school but not working directly with staff, who has been nominated by the school, in agreement with the staff.
- The role of the contact person at this informal stage will be to support and advise the person who has contacted him/her as to what steps might be taken to resolve the situation informally. He or she will act as an impartial mediator but will have no direct role in the grievance procedure. He or she will at no stage divulge any information about the particular case without the consent of the staff member who has sought advice from him or her.
- As soon as any member of staff is made to feel uncomfortable by the conduct or behaviour of another, (s)he should keep detailed notes of incidents including times, dates and particulars of incidents. If other members of staff witness any of the incidents, they may be asked, without prejudice to themselves, to provide a report to the Principal/Chairperson.
- If despite the above actions, the issue is not resolved and the unacceptable conduct or behaviour continues, the staff member who believes him / herself to be the target of such conduct or behaviour will bring the matter to Stage Two.

Stage Two: Formal Procedure

- Should the complainant find that the informal procedure outlined does not bring about a resolution of the problem, (s)he should approach the Principal/Chairperson who can represent his or her case to the Board of Management. The nature of the complaint may be outlined orally or in writing.

- On receipt of the complaint the Board of Management will investigate the complaint in the following way:

1. The Chairperson will meet with the complainant to ascertain the details of the complaint. The complainant will be given an opportunity to be heard; allowed representation if requested; be assured of confidentiality where possible. The Chairperson will seek to ascertain the nature of the conduct or behaviour at issue, who was involved; when the incident(s) occurred; where the incident(s) occurred; whether there were witnesses to the event(s). The Chairperson, together with the complainant will explore possible solutions to the problem. A written record of the meeting, together with a written statement provided by the complainant will be kept on file. Confidentiality of the complainant will be maintained at this stage in the investigation.

2. The person alleged to have been engaging in improper conduct will then be advised of the complaints made against him/her; (S)he will be given an opportunity to be heard; allowed representation if requested; be assured of confidentiality where possible. (S)he will be given the opportunity to read the written statement(s) of the complainant and will be requested to respond to the allegations in writing.

3. Copies of all written records will be kept in the school files.

4. If following investigation the complaint is found to be valid, prompt action will be taken by the Board of Management to stop the improper conduct or behaviour by issuing a verbal warning to the person(s) involved.

5. If the improper conduct or behaviour continues, the Board of Management will issue a written warning to the person(s) involved

6. If it is found that the conduct or behaviour complained of has been misinterpreted and that the person(s) alleged to have engaged in improper conduct or behaviour was genuinely unaware of the effects of his or her demeanour, words or actions, but on being made aware, makes every effort to put the situation right for the complainant, no further action will be taken and the investigation will be closed.

7. Should the improper conduct or behaviour persist following a written warning, the Board of Management will adopt such measures as it deems fit to facilitate a full and comprehensive investigation of the matter.

Monitoring & Review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on May 15th 2019

This policy will be due for review in two years, that is, during the school year 2020-2021. It may be revisited sooner if the need arises.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management.