DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

(required under Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005)

Dear Staff Member,

The purpose of this document is to ensure that the Board of Management of St. Paul's Primary School is compliant with current legislation in relation to the Health and Safety Act 2005 and the Code of Practice on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying (May 2007).

The objective of the policy is to ensure school management is compliant with their duties under section 8 (2) (b) of the 2005 Act as regards 'managing and conducting work activities in such a way as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, any improper conduct or behaviour likely to put the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees at risk'.

It also applies to employees in relation to their duties under section 13 (1) (e) of the 2005 Act to 'not engage in improper conduct or behaviour that is likely to endanger his or her own safety, health and welfare at work or that of any other person'.

A copy of this document will be issued to each staff member.

It is each employee's responsibility to ensure that they become familiar with the contents of this document.

A copy of the Dignity at Work Charter will be displayed in a visible part of the school premises in order for management, staff, visitors and the general public to view.

In the unlikely event of a complaint in relation to bullying in the workplace in St. Paul's Primary School, the procedures contained within this policy, will be followed.

This document will be subject to periodic review.

Secretary, Board of Management

Dignity at Work Charter

St. Paul's Primary School Adopts the HSA Dignity in the Workplace Charter

We *commit ourselves to working together to maintain a workplace environment that encourages and supports the right to dignity at work. All who work here are expected to respect the right of each individual to dignity in their working life. All will be treated equally and respected for their individuality and diversity.*

Bullying in any form is not accepted by us and will not be tolerated. Our policies and procedures will underpin the principles and objectives of this Charter.

All individuals, whether directly employed or contracted by us, have a duty and a responsibility to uphold this Dignity at Work Charter.

Dignity in the Workplace Policy and Procedures

Introduction:

A core employment value is the commitment to ensuring that each individual is guaranteed a working environment where s/he may expect to be treated with dignity both by management and work colleagues. This approach is a positive emphasis on the importance of each individual and the contribution s/he makes to the success of the workplace. It guarantees the optimal working conditions that allow individuals to freely maximise their role in the workforce. Sound management ethos is based on providing leadership that encourages individuals in this regard. This is best achieved in our school through the creation and maintenance of a positive working environment.

Integral to this employment value and in particular to the principle of mutual respect is the commitment to provide a workplace free from bullying. It is in such a context that the philosophy and policy statement will be realised.

Objectives of Dignity at Work Policy

- To create and maintain a positive working environment in St. Paul's Primary School the right of each individual to dignity at work is recognised and protected.

- To ensure that all are aware of and committed to the principles set out in this policy.

The Board of Management of St. Paul's Primary School is committed to providing all employees with an environment that is free from any form of workplace bullying.

The purpose of this document is to outline the Board's policy and procedures in relation to workplace bullying.

A complaint of workplace bullying will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly and in accordance with due process.

In approving this policy, the Board has agreed that:

- It be brought to the attention of all Staff
- All Staff be asked to co-operate in its implementation

The Policy

The objective of the policy is to eliminate workplace bullying and to contribute to a supportive environment where Staff has the right to carry out the work of the school - '*the education of the whole person'*.

The policy guarantees that all complaints will be taken seriously and investigated promptly, and that all parties involved will be treated with respect.

Staff will be protected from victimisation or discrimination for assisting in an investigation. Victimisation as a result of a member of Staff raising a complaint will not be tolerated.

DEFINITIONS

Definition of Bullying:

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.
(Codes of Practice 2002 under the Industrial Relations Act and the Health and Safety at Work Act)

Harassment and Sexual Harassment:

The Employment Equality Act, 1998 and 2004 specifically deals with harassment in the workplace. The new Code aims to give practical guidance and advice. Harassment that is based on the following nine grounds - Gender, Age, Marital Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Race, Religion or membership of the Traveller Community is a form of discrimination in relation to conditions of employment.

Sexual Harassment:

Sexual Harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2004 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. (Complaints relating to sexual harassment may be processed through the INTO Sexual Harassment for Schools – separate document)

Harassment:
Harassment on the other eight grounds covered by the legislation is any unwanted conduct related to any of the eight grounds (other than gender) and the conduct 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. (Employment Equality Act 2004)

What Constitutes 'Unacceptable Behaviour'/ Workplace Bullying?

Bullying can take a number of forms. Under the Health and Safety Act there is a requirement that personnel are consulted in respect of acceptable/unacceptable behaviour and that through this consultation process, the staff will have ownership of the policy as it relates to their school/organisation.

A pattern of the following behaviours are examples of types of bullying:

- Exclusion with negative consequences
- Verbal abuse/insults
- Physical abuse
- Being treated less favourably than colleagues
- Shouting
- Intrusion – pestering, spying or stalking
- Menacing behaviour
- Intimidation
- Aggression
- Undermining behaviour
- Excessive monitoring of work
- Humiliation
- Withholding work-related information
- Setting unreasonable and unrealistic targets
- Blame for things beyond the person's control
- Unequal treatment

<u>This list is not exhaustive.</u>

It is noted that a once-off incident is not normally considered to be bullying behaviour.

What are the Effects of Bullying?

International research shows that the effects may be physiological, psychological and behavioural.

Effects on the individual: research shows that individuals who are continually bullied lose self confidence asself-esteem is eroded and they are at an increased risk of suffering stress. There may be serious effects on health and the person's career may be adversely affected.

Effects on the Organisation: individuals who are bullied will find it difficult if not impossible to give their best in the workplace. Among the well-documented effects are increased sickness/absenteeism, low morale, a tense atmosphere, cliques or factions.

Why might an individual be reluctant to take action?

Because the particular workplace culture passively supports bullying i.e. staff in general are unaware of the seriousness of bullying.

Because of fear that the complaint may not be taken seriously.

Because s/he may be seen as unable for the job or/and a weak person.

If the alleged bully is a person in authority, there may be the fear management will support the alleged perpetrator(s).

Because making a complaint could result in further intimidation and increased bullying.

Because there are no witnesses to the bullying and it would be one person's word against another

Because s/he might be seen to be lacking in credibility or/and personal status

Where there are witnesses, these might be unwilling to come forward because they are afraid of being branded troublemakers

What can I do to ensure that workplace bullying does not occur in this

school? By being familiar with the school policy.

By participating in in-service with respect to dignity at work.

By engaging in consultation with respect to the development and review of the dignity in the workplace policy.

By being aware and educated about workplace bullying.

What can I do to stop people bullying me?

Tell them it has to stop! This may be more difficult for some individuals than for others. It is inappropriate for work colleagues to act out their behaviour in an unacceptable manner. If you find it impossible or difficult to make an approach, tell somebody – the Principal, a Contact Person, the INTO Staff Rep, a Deputy Principal, or other…GET HELP AND SUPPORT.

What may be the consequences of not dealing with workplace bullying?

There are consequences for the individuals who perceive themselves to be targets of bullying behaviour, for the alleged perpetrators(s), for organisational culture/ethos and for the Board of Management.

Are there performance criteria by which the success of the Policy might be judged?

- The existence of a policy on Dignity in the Workplace and the prevention of workplace bullying forms part of health, safety and welfare at work
- Awareness/availability of Policy
- Existence of Charter in a visible place: Dignity in the Workplace
- Dignity in the Workplace as well as inappropriate/bullying behaviour are defined in the Board Policy
- Employee's right to complain is respected
- Informal resolution of complaints is encouraged.