

# St. Joseph's National School

## **Sexual Harassment – Adult Bullying Policy**

The Board of management of Saint Joseph's National School recognises that all employees have the right to a workplace free from sexual harassment and is fully committed to ensuring that all employees are able to enjoy that right.

There is a responsibility on all employees to ensure a workplace free from sexual harassment for all other employees, and to be aware of this policy.

Any complaint of sexual harassment shall be fully and properly investigated and, if substantiated, will be regarded as grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. An attempt will be made to resolve the complaint informally in the first instance but if this is not possible, a formal procedure will be invoked. Confidentiality will be ensured, insofar as is possible, at all times during the investigation for all parties involved.

### **What is Sexual Harassment?**

Sexual harassment means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on a person's sex, which affects the dignity of men and women at work. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct, which is offensive and causes discomfort or humiliation to the individual concerned.

Examples of sexual harassment include:

1. Unwanted physical or verbal advances.
2. Unwanted touching or physical gestures.
3. Comments and remarks of a sexual or discriminatory nature.
4. Unwelcome comments about personal appearance.
5. Demands of sexual favours.
6. Displays of pinups and pornographic material.
7. Innuendoes of a sexual nature or based on a person's sex.
8. Bullying.

This list is not exhaustive.

## **Adult bullying in the work place**

### **What is Adult Bullying?**

The Health & safety Authority defines bullying as follows:

Bullying in the workplace is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person or persons. Bullying is where aggression or cruelty, viciousness, intimidation or a need to humiliate, dominate the relationships. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while to be condemned, should not be described as bullying. In the workplace environment there can be conflicts and interpersonal difficulties. Many of these are legitimate industrial relations difficulties, which should be dealt with through the appropriate industrial relations channels. Only aggressive behaviour which is systematic and on going should be regarded as bullying".

In summary, Adult Bullying can take many different forms, which usually include:

- Intimidation or harassment;
- Aggression;
- Verbal abuse;
- Humiliation;
- Undermining;
- Dominance or abuse of power;
- Different or unfavourable treatment;
- Exclusion or isolation.

Key factors of Adult Bullying are that the behaviour is generally:

- Persistent;
- Unwanted;
- Subtle ;and non-physical.

### **Making a complaint of sexual harassment/adult bullying**

Any employee who feels he or she has been or is being sexually harassed or bullied should ask the perpetrator to stop. Where this form of action is unsuccessful the employee may report the matter to any of the following- the Principal, INTO staff representative or teacher/member of the Board of Management of Saint Joseph's National School. Attempts will be made to resolve the matter informally, if appropriate. If it is not possible to resolve the matter informally, a formal complaints procedure shall be applied incorporating the following steps:

1. A written report to the Board of Management should be made by the complainant or an authorised person to whom the complaint is being made and signed by the complainant.
2. The complaint will be investigated with minimum delay as confidentially as possible by two individuals named by the Board of Management, one of whom shall be the same sex as the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.
3. Both parties may be accompanied/represented at all interviews/meetings held, and these shall be recorded.
4. Where a complaint is found to be substantiated, the extent and the nature of the sexual harassment will determine the form of action to be taken. These actions may include a verbal warning, a written warning, and suspension from some duties with or without pay, suspension from full duties with or without pay or dismissal.
5. Where an employee is victimised as a result of invoking or participating in any aspect of the complaints procedure, including acting as a witness for another employee, such behaviour will also be subject to disciplinary action.

No record of any complaint will be registered on an employee's file unless the formal procedure outlined above has been invoked.

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

### **This Policy will be subject to periodic review**

Prepared by representatives of the B.O.M., in consultation with teachers and ancillary staff.