

Anti-Harassment Policy for Staff

The Board of management of Ennis National School recognises that all employees have the right to a workplace free from harassment of any nature including bullying and sexual harassment and is fully committed to ensuring that all employees are able to enjoy that right. Harassment and sexual harassment is prohibited in Ennis National School. There is a responsibility on all employees to ensure a workplace free from harassment and bullying for all other employees, and to be aware of this policy. Any complaint of 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. This policy applies also to isolated incidents of harassment, verbal and/or physical by members working within the school and/or by others within and outside the community of the school.

What is Harassment?

Harassment is where one person subjects the victim to any unwelcome act, request or conduct, including spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material which could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating to the victim.

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.

What is Adult Bullying?

“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” (Health and Safety Authority).

Adult Bullying/harassment/isolated incidents 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.

Steps to prevent harassment occurring

Ennis National School through its website will ensure all members of the school community – including parents and staff – are made aware of the code of behaviour and that harassment and sexual harassment are prohibited.

Making a complaint of harassment/sexual harassment/ adult bullying

Any employee who feels he or she has been or is being harassed or bullied by another employee of the Board of Management or by a parent or member of the school community should ask the perpetrator to stop. Where this form of action is unsuccessful the employee may report the matter to the Principal or to the Chairperson of the Board of Management of Ennis National School.

If the harassment takes place while children are outside in the school yard the offender will be invited to the principal's office and a staff member on yard will immediately alert the principal. If this is not successful, one of the staff on yard will immediately alert the teachers on break and the class teachers will go to the yard and bring the children in their classes to their classrooms. If the harassment takes place inside the building a staff member will immediately alert the principal. Whether the harassment takes place in or outside the building the principal and or deputy/assistant principal will immediately go to the scene and if deemed necessary will ask the person being harassed/bullied to move away from the scene while the principal and or deputy/assistant principal elicit from the perpetrator the reasons for his/her behaviour. The principal may ask a staff member to contact the Gardaí.

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. The complaint will be investigated with minimum delay as confidentially as possible by two individuals named by the Board of Management. If the case is one of sexual harassment the Board of Management will ensure that one of the named individuals is of the same sex as the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.
2. Both parties may be accompanied/represented at all interviews/meetings held by one accompanying person per party, and these shall be recorded.
3. Where a complaint is found to be substantiated, the extent and the nature of the harassment will determine the form of action to be taken. These actions may include a verbal warning, a written warning, suspension from some duties with or without pay, suspension from full duties with or without pay or dismissal based on the severity of the outcome. If an employee is harassed by a parent/ member of the school community or any individual/group, the Board of Management may seek, on health and safety grounds, to have the person/group barred from the school grounds.
4. No employee will be victimised as a result of invoking or participating in any aspect of the complaints procedure, including acting as a witness for another employee. Such victimisation 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. Any record of complaint in an employee's file should also record the findings of any enquiry.

It is the policy of the school that where possible issues of 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.

Policy Ratification

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Ennis National School at its meeting held on March 12th, 2012.

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management