

Seoil Ghormáin Naofa

Castletown, Gorey, Co. Wexford.

Single Manager
Anthony Byrne

*Policy on Complaint/
Grievance Procedure*

School Principal:
Lisa Dempsey

Seoil Ghormáin Naofa

Policy on Complaint / Grievance Procedure

The Manager of Scoil Ghormáin Naofa is responsible for safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of persons working in the school. This responsibility extends not only to pupils and teachers but also all other persons working in the school, both during school hours and outside school hours, and employed directly or indirectly by the Manager. The Manager recognises that all relationships in the workplace have the potential to create stress for those working there and that such stress may amount to an illness requiring medical treatment. In particular, the Manager recognises that bullying and sexual harassment can cause stress, as can the calling into question of a worker's personal and / or professional reputation or skills by the making of a complaint about their conduct.

The Manager **will not condone bullying or harassment of any type in the workplace.**

The Manager has a responsibility to safeguard workers, in so far as possible, against stress and stress related illnesses.

The Manager is of the view that the achievement of this objective requires:

1. That the Manager's policy in relation to workplace relationships be clearly stated and communicated to all those having an interest in same.
2. That adequate mechanisms and procedures for dealing with and resolving difficulties which may arise from workplace relationships (including complaints by and about workers) are put in place.
3. That the existence and nature of such mechanisms and procedures are communicated to all those having an interest in same.

Existing Procedures for Good Practice:

A key asset to working in any school is where **positive staff relations are promoted**. The principal management bodies of primary schools and the INTO are of the view that it is incumbent on the staff and management of each school to promote a culture of positive working relations at all times. Where such a culture prevails, instances of adult bullying or harassment or staff conflict rarely occur. In the event of difficulties in the workplace, clear and specific procedures are vital. With this in mind the Church of Ireland Board of Education, the Catholic Primary School Managers' Association, the National Association of Boards of Management of Special Schools, Educate Together and the Irish National Teachers' Organisation have recommended good practice.

These guidelines are published in the **C.P.S.M.A. Management Board Members' Handbook - Revised 2007**. Each Board member has a copy of this document and the principal's copy is available in the school.

Relevant Procedures:

- Appendix 20 – Pages 198: Positive Staff Working Relations
- Appendix 21 – Pages 204: Bullying / Harassment
- Appendix 22 – Pages 208: Grievance Procedure (*Staff Issues*)
- Appendix 50 – Pages 318: Complaints Procedure (*Complaints by Parents*)

The principal, deputy principal, and manager should ensure that they are up to date with current guidelines and procedures and should always refer to the appendices listed above.

The appropriate procedures to be adopted in relation to the difficulties experienced in a workplace relationship will necessarily vary depending on the relationship in question. Accordingly, it is necessary to deal with the various relationships separately.

Pupil / Staff:

The Manager recognises that a pupil has a right to complain of the manner in which he / she is being treated by a staff member in the school. Ordinarily one would expect such complaints to come via the pupil's parents or guardians. However if the pupil is capable of articulating a complaint then the fact that his / her parents have not become involved does not justify disregarding it. In such circumstances arrangements should be made for the pupil to discuss the matter with the principal, whether the pupil seeks such an opportunity or not. Another adult (staff member, manager, the child's parent) may be invited to be present at this discussion.

The staff member about whom the complaint is being made should not be present during such a discussion. However he / she should be informed as soon as possible thereafter of the nature of the complaint. The staff member will be invited to respond to the allegation. He / she will be informed of the steps which the principal proposes to take, whether by way of further investigation or otherwise. In the event of a pupil making a complaint about the principal the deputy principal and / or the Manager will discuss the matter with the pupil and investigate further if necessary.

A record should be maintained of the complaint made and of the staff member's response to the complaint. He / she should be entitled to inspect this record and should be entitled to furnish an explanation thereof in writing, which should be added to the record. The pupil's parents or guardians should be kept fully informed of the complaint and the steps taken.

Staff / Pupil:

Where a teacher has a complaint about a pupil which he / she has been unable to deal with as a matter of routine classroom discipline, the complaint should be referred to the principal. This also applies to complaints by non-teaching staff about pupils.

The teacher / staff member is entitled to be kept informed by the principal of the steps, which are taken in relation to any such complaint. The principal should advise the member of staff of any contact which he / she has with the parents or guardians in question in relation to the said complaint.

Parent / Teacher:

(Refer to CPSMA Handbook: Appendix 50 – Page 318: Complaints Procedure)

Parents are always expected to address complaints they may have with the teacher in question. Where an issue remains unresolved and a parent has a complaint to make about a teacher the complaint should be made in the first instance to the principal unless of course the teacher in question is the principal.

Where any complaint is made about a teacher directly to the Manager, without first being raised with the principal, the parents should be advised as to the appropriate procedure and the Manager should take no steps in relation thereto.

Where, by reason of the seriousness of the complaint or for any other reason, the principal feels unable to deal with same, he / she may refer the matter to the Manager who shall deal with the matter.

Where the parent is dissatisfied with the manner in which his / her complaint is being or has been dealt with by the principal, the parents should be advised to write to the Manager outlining the reasons for his / her dissatisfaction whereupon the Manager will consider the matter.

Staff / Staff:

(Refer to CPSMA Handbook: Appendix 22 – Pages 208: Grievance Procedure)

Where a member of staff has made a complaint about another staff member (other than the principal) the complaint should be made to the principal. The other member of staff concerned is entitled to be informed as soon as practical of the nature of the complaint being made and to be offered an opportunity to be heard in relation thereto. The principal should not require the complaint to be made in the presence of the member of staff about whom the complaint is being made, nor should he / she require the last mentioned teacher to offer an explanation or defence of his / her behaviour in the presence of the complaining member of staff.

If the principal, by reason, of the seriousness of the complaint or for any other reason feels unable to deal with the matter, he / she should refer to the Manager who will to consider the matter.

If the principal proceeds to deal with the matter and either of the parties involved is dissatisfied with the manner in which it is dealt with by the principal, then either party should be entitled to raise the matter with the manager who will deal with the matter.

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 a relationship in the workplace.

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.

Sexual Harassment

The Manager of Scoil Ghormáin Naofa 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.

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:

- Unwanted physical or verbal advances
- Unwanted touching or physical gestures
- Comments and remarks of a sexual or discriminatory nature
- Unwelcome comments about personal appearance
- Demands of sexual favours
- Displays of pinups and pornographic material
- Innuendoes of a sexual nature or based on a person's sex
- Bullying

This list is not exhaustive.

Making a complaint of sexual harassment or 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:

- Principal
- Manager
- INTO staff representative

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 Manager 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 Manager, 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, 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.

Ratification & Communication

The Manager officially ratified this policy in June 2015.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually

Signed: _____
Manager

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____