



Adult Anti-Bullying/ Sexual Harassment Policy

Definition

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.

(As defined in the Report of the Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying - published by the Stationery Office, March 2001)

The Board of Management and staff of St. Nicholas' NS commit themselves to working together to maintain a workplace environment that encourages and supports dignity at work. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated and appropriate steps will be taken should a bullying problem occur.

Bullying manifests itself as various types of behaviour, including behaviour which may:

- Humiliate
- Intimidate
- Verbally abuse
- Physically abuse
- Victimise
- Exclude and isolate
- Intrude through pestering, spying, stalking
- Give repeated unreasonable assignments to duties which are obviously unfavourable to one individual
- Give repeated impossible deadlines or impossible tasks
- Imply threats.

When any of the above is repeated or targeted at one person or group, it may be considered 'bullying'.

Areas where bullying might be a problem

Bullying from:

1. Pupils to staff members
2. Members of staff to other members of staff or pupils, parents or visitors
3. Parents/visitors to pupils or staff members

Procedure for dealing with a complaint of bullying

Informal Procedure

While in no way diminishing the issue or the effects on individuals, an informal approach can often resolve matters. As a general rule therefore, an attempt will be made to address an allegation of bullying as informally as possible by means of an agreed informal procedure. The objective of this approach is to resolve the difficulty with the minimum of conflict and stress for the individuals involved.

- (a) Any employee who believes he or she is being bullied should explain clearly to the alleged perpetrator(s) that the behaviour in question is unacceptable. In circumstances where the complainant finds it difficult to approach the alleged perpetrator(s) directly, he or she should seek help and advice, on a strictly confidential basis, from a contact person. A contact person could, for example, be one of the following:
 - Chairperson of the Board of Management
 - INTO Staff Representative
 - Principal
 - Deputy Principal
 - Assistant Principal

In this situation the contact person should listen patiently, be supportive and discuss the various options open to the employee concerned.

- (b) **All reported incidents will be recorded in written form.** The importance of factual information is emphasised.
- (c) Having consulted with the contact person, the complainant may request the assistance of the contact person in raising the issue with the alleged perpetrator(s). In this situation the approach of the contact person should be by way of a confidential, non-confrontational discussion with a view to resolving the issue in an informal low-key manner.
- (d) A complainant may decide, for whatever reason, to bypass the informal procedure. Choosing not to use the informal procedure will not reflect negatively on a complainant in the formal procedure.

Outcome

- (e) Should management decide that the complaint is well-founded, the alleged perpetrator(s) will be given a formal interview to determine an appropriate course of action. Such action could, for example, involve counselling and/or monitoring or progressing the issue through the disciplinary and grievance procedure of the employment.
- (f) If either party is unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, the issue may be processed through the normal industrial relations mechanisms.

Formal Procedure

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 Chairperson of the Board of Management of *St. Nicholas' N.S.*

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 with due respect shown for the rights of both 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. This should involve counselling and/or monitoring or progressing the issue through the disciplinary and grievance procedure of the employment. 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.
6. If either party is unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, the issue may be processed through the normal industrial relations mechanisms.

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.

Confidentiality

All individuals involved in the formal procedures referred to above should maintain confidentiality on the subject.

Training/Awareness-raising

It is considered that all personnel who have a role in both the informal and formal procedure - e.g. designated members of management, worker representatives, union representatives etc. - should be made aware of appropriate policies and procedures which should, if possible, include appropriate training.

This Policy will be subject to periodic review.

Drafted by Middle Management on 18th September 2012

Approved by Staff on 20th September 2012

Approved by Board of Management - September 2012

Reviewed - October 2015

Updated and reviewed by BOM - November 2021