



WORK PLACEMENT POLICY



Work Placement Policy Jonah Special School

Introduction

The Board of Management of Jonah Special School affirms its commitment to the dignity of all employees and adopts this policy in line with the Health and Safety Authority Code of Practice Detailing Procedures for Addressing Bullying in the Workplace (SI No 17/ 2002) and Employment Equality Act 1998 (Code of Practice) (Harassment) Order 2012 (SI No 208/2012).

The Board of Management affirms its commitment to ensuring that any complaints by employees will be treated with fairness, sensitivity and in as confidential a manner as possible.

Workplace bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more person(s) against another or others, at the place of work 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.

Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted 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.

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a person's gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, religious belief or membership of the travelling community 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.

Informal Procedure

1. Any employee who believes that he or she is being bullied, harassed or sexually harassed 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. In this situation, the contact person should listen patiently, be supportive and discuss the various options open to the employee concerned.
2. 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.
3. A complainant may decide, for whatever reason, to bypass the informal procedure. Choosing not to use the informal procedure should not reflect negatively on a complainant in the formal procedure.



Formal Procedure

If an informal approach is inappropriate, or after the informal stage, the behaviour persists, the following formal procedures should be invoked –

1. The complainant should make a formal complaint in writing to the Principal. The complaint should be confined to the precise details of the actual incidents of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment. If the complaint refers to the Principal, the complaint is made to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, in an individual capacity.
2. The alleged perpetrator(s) should be notified in writing that an allegation of bullying or harassment has been made against them. They should be given a copy of the complainant's statement and advised that they shall be afforded a fair opportunity to respond to the allegation(s).
3. The Principal should obtain background details including details of what occurred at the previous stage, consider the patterns of behaviour and timescale, hear the parties and seek to resolve the matter confidentially and with regard to the principles of due process.
4. The Principal then determines an appropriate course of action. An appropriate course of action at this stage, for example, would be exploring a mediated solution or a view that the issue can be resolved informally. Should either of these approaches be deemed inappropriate or inconclusive, a formal investigation of the complaint should take place by the Board of Management with a view to determining the facts and the credibility or otherwise of the allegation(s).

Investigation by the Board of Management

1. Either of the parties, the Principal or the Chairperson of the Board of Management may refer the matter to the Board of Management for investigation. Referral should be in writing, dated and include a copy of the written complaint.
2. The investigation should be conducted thoroughly, objectively, with sensitivity, utmost confidentiality and with due respect for the rights of both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator(s) and the principles of due process.
3. The investigation should be governed by terms of reference, preferably agreed between the parties in advance.
4. The Board of Management or the Chairperson of the Board should meet with the complainant and the alleged perpetrator(s) and any witness or relevant persons on an individual, confidential basis or request an oral hearing before the Board in each other's presence, with a view to establishing the facts surrounding the allegation(s).
5. The Board of Management may request written submissions.
6. Every effort should be made to carry out and complete the investigation as quickly as possible and within the agreed timeframe.

Outcome

1. A decision will be made by the Board of Management not later than 20 school days after receipt of the referral. Should the Board of Management decide that the complaint is well founded; the alleged perpetrator(s) should be given a formal interview to determine an appropriate course of action.



2. Action may include a clear warning that the behaviour is unacceptable, a demand that the behaviour cease, an instruction to apologise or give an assurance that the behaviour will not reoccur, and/or a commitment to attend counselling. More serious disciplinary sanctions may be appropriate such as an oral warning, written reprimand, written warning, final written warning, suspension, or dismissal. The Board of Management should monitor the situation and should put systems in place to ensure that it is kept informed that the resolutions are implemented and should keep matters under review.
3. If the complaint is not well founded, and made in good faith, no further action is required.
4. If the complaint is not well founded and malicious, then this may be treated as misconduct and treated accordingly.

Confidentiality

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

Jonah Special School

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This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Jonah Special School at its meeting held on:

Ratified by the Jonah Board of Management on: _____

Date

Signed: _____

Principal

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Next Review Period: *September 2026*