

New Ross Educate Together National School



Dignity at Work Policy

At New Ross Educate Together National School, we are fully committed to upholding the Ethical Ethos of Educate Together and ensuring that our work environment reflects the principles of equality, respect, and fairness. Our school is founded on the four pillars of Educate Together, which guide all aspects of our community:

1. Equality-Based: We provide equal rights of access and participation to children irrespective of social, cultural, or religious background.
2. Co-Educational: We are committed to being a co-educational school, promoting equality of opportunity for both boys and girls.
3. Child-Centred: The welfare and development of our pupils are at the core of our decision-making.
4. Democratically Run: We involve all members of our school community—staff, parents, and students—in the decision-making process.

These principles are embedded in our approach to maintaining a positive work environment where every individual is treated with dignity and respect.

Core Principles

New Ross Educate Together National School is dedicated to creating and maintaining a workplace that is free from bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment. All employees have the inherent right to work in an environment that upholds their dignity. This policy applies to all staff members within the school premises, during school-related activities, and in any work-related interactions outside the school.

Respect and Collaboration: We foster a culture of mutual respect, where collaboration and open communication are encouraged among all staff members.

Fairness and Equality: All staff members are treated fairly and without discrimination. Opportunities for professional growth and promotion are provided based on merit.

Commitment to Well-being: We are committed to the well-being of our staff, ensuring that any issues of bullying or harassment are addressed swiftly and effectively.

Definitions

1. Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying is defined as repeated inappropriate behaviour, whether direct or indirect, verbal, physical, or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the workplace or during the course of employment. This behaviour must be such that it undermines the individual's right to dignity at work.

Examples include: Verbal abuse, undermining remarks, social exclusion, intimidation, excessive monitoring of work, or the deliberate withholding of work-related information.

Isolated incidents: An isolated incident of such behaviour may be distressing but is not classified as bullying under this policy.

2. Harassment

Harassment is any form of unwanted behaviour related to any of the nine grounds outlined by the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015. These grounds include gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race, and membership of the

Traveller community. The behaviour is considered harassment if it violates a person's dignity and creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

Examples include: Jokes or comments related to personal characteristics, ridiculing, isolation from workplace activities, or pressure to behave in a manner that contradicts one's beliefs.

3. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Examples include: Unwanted physical advances, suggestive comments or jokes, display of sexually explicit material, or any form of inappropriate touching.

Positive Work Environment

New Ross Educate Together National School is committed to ensuring that all staff members experience a positive work environment characterized by:

Supportive Atmosphere: We encourage a culture where staff feel supported in their roles and can rely on each other for help and guidance.

Open Communication: Regular staff meetings and open forums are held to ensure that communication channels remain open and effective, allowing for the sharing of ideas and concerns.

Interpersonal Behaviour: Appropriate and professional behaviour is expected from all staff members, fostering a culture of mutual respect and cooperation.

Conflict Resolution: Conflicts are addressed promptly and fairly, with a focus on finding mutually acceptable solutions through open discussion and mediation.

Recognition and Affirmation: Staff achievements are acknowledged, and constructive feedback is provided to support professional development.

Responsibilities of Staff Members

Every member of the school community has a responsibility to contribute to a positive work environment:

Personal Accountability: Each staff member must conduct themselves in a manner that respects the dignity of others and adheres to the school's policies on bullying and harassment.

Witnessing Inappropriate Behaviour: If a staff member witnesses behaviour that undermines the dignity of another, they have a responsibility to report it in a timely and appropriate manner.

Promotion of Positive Interactions: Staff are encouraged to actively promote positive and respectful interactions within the school community.

Procedures for Addressing Bullying and Harassment

1. Informal Resolution

In many cases, issues can be resolved informally. Staff members who feel they are being bullied or harassed should first attempt to address the issue directly with the individual involved. This conversation should be respectful, with the goal of reaching a mutual understanding and resolution.

- Steps in Informal Resolution:
- Clearly outline the behaviour that is causing distress.
- Request that the behaviour stops and suggest ways to avoid similar issues in the future.
- If needed, seek the assistance of a colleague to facilitate the discussion.

2. Formal Complaint Procedure

If the informal approach does not resolve the issue, or if the situation is more serious, a formal complaint can be lodged. This involves:

- Submitting a Written Complaint: The complainant should document the incidents in detail and submit this to the Principal or Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- Investigation: The Principal or an appointed mediator will conduct a thorough investigation, gathering information from all parties involved while maintaining confidentiality.
- Mediation and Resolution: The aim of the investigation is to mediate between the parties and find a resolution that is acceptable to all involved. If mediation fails, the complaint may be escalated to the Board of Management.

3. Escalation to the Board of Management

If the issue is not resolved at the earlier stages, it may be escalated to the Board of Management. The Board will:

- Review the Case: The Board will review all documentation and may request additional information or hold hearings with the involved parties.
- Decision Making: The Board will make a determination on the issue, which may involve disciplinary actions if necessary. Decisions will be communicated in writing to all parties within a specified timeframe.

4. Disciplinary Actions

Depending on the severity of the situation, disciplinary actions may range from a formal warning to suspension or dismissal, in line with relevant disciplinary procedures.

Support Services

New Ross Educate Together National School recognizes the potential impact of bullying and harassment on staff well-being. Therefore, we encourage all staff to make use of the Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme. This free and confidential service is available 24/7 and offers support on a wide range of issues.

Monitoring and Review

The Dignity at Work policy is a living document and will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. The school management is committed to monitoring the work environment and making necessary adjustments to maintain a positive and respectful workplace.

Conclusion

At New Ross Educate Together National School, we are committed to fostering an environment where every staff member feels respected, valued, and supported. By adhering

to the principles set out in this policy, we aim to ensure that our school remains a positive and dignified place to work for all.

Ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Chairperson: _____

Principal: _____