

Loreto College Swords
Dignity At Work Policy and
Code of Procedures

(Required under Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005)

Academic Year

2013/2014



Dear Staff Member,

Please find attached the Dignity at Work Policy.

The purpose of this document is to ensure:

- That the Board of Management of Loreto College Swords is compliant with current legislation in relation to the Health and Safety Act 2005 (hereafter to be referred to as The 2005 Act) and the Code of Practice on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying (May 2007).
- The objective of the policy is to ensure school management is compliant with their duties under section 8 (2) (b) of the 2005 Act as regards ‘managing and conducting work activities in such a way as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, any improper conduct or behavior likely to put the safety, health and welfare at work of the school employees’.
- It also applies to employees in relation to their duties under section 13 (1) (e) of The 2005 Act to ‘not engage in improper conduct or behavior that is likely to endanger his or her own safety, health and welfare at work or that of any other person’.

A copy of this document will be issued to each staff member of Loreto College Swords.

It is each employee’s responsibility to ensure that they become familiar with the contents of this document.

A copy of the Dignity at Work Policy will be displayed in a visible part of the school premises in order for management, staff, visitors and the general public to view and will also be available on the school website.

In the event of a complaint in relation to bullying, harassment or sexual harassment in the workplace in Loreto College Swords, the procedures contained within this policy, will be followed.

This document will be subject to periodic review.

Secretary, Board of Management

Academic Year 2013/2014

Dignity in the Workplace

Loreto College recognises that each student is unique and has different gifts as well as different needs. Our wish is to enable the release of this positive potential within each student by offering a relevant curriculum in a school community characterised by care and justice. We do not regard our school as just an education establishment but, rather, a truly Christian community where the total curriculum aims to promote the growth and development of each student.

In order to fulfill the school mission statement the following dignity in the workplace policy is adopted by the college.

All staff are valued for their professional experience, knowledge and expertise and for their contribution within the school community, whether inside or outside the classroom.

Teaching staff recognise each other as professional equals and acknowledge the equal importance of every subject on the curriculum.

Courtesy, helpfulness, co-operation, integrity, trust, generosity, kindness, friendliness and justice are among the qualities that are valued in the workplace.

All individuals who work at the College or who come into contact with its staff or students have a duty to uphold this charter and to promote its provisions.

Every person in this workplace has the right to be treated with respect and courtesy and to have his or her individuality valued. While we recognize that there may be personal differences between people who work at Loreto College Swords, these differences will not impinge upon good working relations in the school.

The Dignity in the Workplace Policy applies to all persons employed at Loreto College Swords. Trustees, management, teaching and support staff, students and parents value and affirm each other and aim to work together in a collaborative fashion. This network of relationships must be underpinned by a deep respect for persons and is characterized by courtesy, tolerance, loyalty and respect for the integrity of all as the school community works towards a common vision.

This policy seeks to ensure all employees feel confident and comfortable to raise concerns embodied by the policy.

The Board of Management of Loreto College Swords, recognises that all staff members have the right to a workplace free from bullying, harassment and sexual harassment and is fully committed to ensuring that every staff member will enjoy that right. Each and every member of the school community has a duty to uphold the right of every individual in the school to work in an environment that is free from bullying or harassment of any kind.

The following dignity in the workplace policy has also been informed by the JMB and ASTI.

The JMB and ASTI commit ourselves to working together to maintain a workplace environment that encourages and supports the right to dignity at work. All who work here are expected to respect the right of each individual to dignity in their working life. All will be treated equally and respected for their individuality and diversity.

Bullying in any form is not accepted by us and will not be tolerated. Our policies and procedures will underpin the principles and objectives of this Charter.

All individuals, whether directly employed or contracted by us, have a duty and a responsibility to uphold this Dignity of Work Charter.

School Management and Trade Union Representatives in the workplace have a specific responsibility to promote its provisions.

Definitions

Bullying

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 a safe and comfortable working environment. 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

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination on gender ground in relation to conditions of employment. The definition of sexual harassment includes any:

- Act or threatened act of physical intimacy
- Request for sexual favours
- Other act or conduct including spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures, texts, e-mails or other material that is unwelcome and could reasonably be regarded as sexually offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

Harassment.

Harassment is a form of discrimination based on the following grounds:

- marital status
- family status
- sexual orientation
- religion
- age
- disability
- race

Non-Workplace Bullying, Sexual Harassment and Harassment.

The scope of the sexual harassment and the harassment provisions extend beyond the workplace, for example, to conferences and training that occur outside the workplace. It may also extend to workplace social events.

Forms of Bullying/Harassment

Bullying/Harassment may manifest itself in a variety of behaviors including the following:

- Humiliation
- Intimidation
- Verbal abuse
- Victimization
- Exclusion and isolation
- Invasion of privacy through pestering, spying or stalking
- Assignment of unreasonable tasks and/or deadlines
- Implied threats.

This list is not exhaustive.

Bullying/harassment may take the form of:

- Physical contact
- Verbal abuse
- Implied threats
- Jokes, offensive language, gossip, slander, offensive songs
- Posters, cartoons, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, bunting and emblems
- Isolation or non co-operation or exclusion from social activities
- Coercion for sexual favours
- Vandalism of personal property.

This list is not exhaustive.

Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Bullying/Harassment among

Staff Stage One: Informal

- If the behaviour of one or more members of staff towards another is found to be unacceptable by the latter, (s)he has the right to explain to the former that

(s)he is being made to feel uncomfortable at work or is being offended in some way. If, as a result of this informal conversation, the offending words, behaviour or demeanor change so as to make the environment comfortable for the person who had experienced the unwelcome behaviour, the matter will be closed.

- Should the offended party feel unable to approach the person(s) who is (are) causing offence, (s)he may approach a contact person, for help or advice on a confidential basis. This contact person could be: a work colleague, a member of management, an employee/trade union official.
- The role of the contact person at this informal stage will be to support and advise the person who has contacted him/her as to what steps might be taken to resolve the situation informally. He or she will act as an impartial mediator but will have no direct role in the grievance procedure. He or she may be trained in counselling skills and will at no stage divulge any information about the particular case without the consent of the staff member who has sought advice from him or her.
- As soon as any member of staff is made to feel uncomfortable to the extent to which she or he feels bullied or harassed, she or he should keep detailed notes of incidents including times, dates and particulars of incidents. If other members of staff witness any of the incidents, they may be asked, without prejudice to themselves, to provide a report to the Principal/Contact Person.
- If despite the above actions, the issue is not resolved and the unacceptable conduct continues, the staff member who is the victim will bring the matter to Stage Two.

Stage Two: Formal

- Should the complainant find that the informal procedure outlined does not

bring about a resolution of the problem, (s)he should approach the contact person, Principal or other person who can represent his or her case to either the Principal or representative of the Board of Management. The nature of the complaint may be outlined orally or in writing.

- On receipt of the complaint, the Principal or person acting on behalf of the Board of Management will investigate the complaint in the following way:
 1. By interviewing the complainant to ascertain the details of the complaint, finding out who was involved; when the incident(s) occurred; where the incident(s) occurred; whether there were witnesses to the event(s) and possible solutions to the problem. A written record of the meeting will be kept and a written statement provided by the complainant. Confidentiality of the complainant will be maintained at this stage in the investigation.
 2. The alleged bully/harasser will now be advised of the complaints brought against him/her; given an opportunity to be heard; allowed representation if requested; be assured of confidentiality where possible. (S)he will be given the opportunity to read the written statement(s) of the complainant and will be offered the opportunity to reply in writing.
 3. Copies of all written records will be kept in the school files.
 4. If, following the investigation into the complaints, the latter are found to be valid, prompt action will be taken by the Principal or Board of Management to stop the bullying or harassment up to and including disciplinary action. (See *Disciplinary Procedure JMB/ASTI*) Action may involve some or all of the following:
 - A verbal warning
 - A written warning
 - Suspension with pay of the alleged harasser and in special circumstances the complainant to facilitate a full investigation.
 - The incident may be reported to the Garda Síochána.

5. If it is found that the perpetrator's behaviour has been misinterpreted and that (s)he was genuinely unaware of the effects of his or her demeanor, words or actions but on being made aware, makes every effort to put the situation right for the complainant, no further action will be taken and the investigation will be closed.

This policy is subject to periodic review.

Signed _____ Date _____

(for and on behalf of the Board of Management)