

Diocese of Elphin – HR Policy Handbook

Document Name: Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy
Document No: 5.1.1 (original)
Effective Date: 15th February 2019
Written By: Frank Mitchell, HR Advisor
Approved By: +Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin



Operating under the patronage of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, the Diocese of Elphin aims to provide staff members with a safe, caring and supportive Christian environment in which to carry out their work. Work objectives are to be advanced with due regard to the needs and dignity of each staff member and with due regard for the individuals and communities the diocese serves.

This document outlines the Diocesan policy on Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work. It is applicable to parishes, offices, agencies and any entity operating under the governance of the Diocese of Elphin (hereafter referred to as "the employer"). Line Managers (Bishop, Priests, Deacons, Religious, Lay Personnel who supervise staff members) are responsible for communicating this policy and having it signed off by their staff member(s).

"The employer" is committed to creating an environment that promotes equality and dignity at work. We are committed to treating all staff members, clients, visitors, contacts and contractors equally and in full compliance with current legislation. See also HR Policy 5.1.2 'Dignity at Work Charter'.

"The employer" believes that embracing equality and diversity in the workplace benefits not just "the employer" but also individual staff members, contacts and visitors. All our staff members bring their own background, work style, distinct capabilities, experience and characteristics to their work. We recognise that our talented and diverse workforce reflects the diversity of our community and we want to utilise the widest range of skills, knowledge and experience in our work while complying with legislation.

As well as treating people with dignity and respect, "the employer" strives to create a supportive environment in which all staff members can flourish and reach their full potential, regardless of differences, experience or education. Harnessing the wide range of perspectives this diversity brings, promotes innovation and helps make us more creative and competitive.

Commitment to equality and diversity

"The employer" will formulate and implement policies and practices that value diversity, provide equality of opportunity and ensure that no job applicant, staff member, or contact receives less favourable treatment on grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race, or membership of the Travelling Community. We will also ensure that other policies and practices reflect our commitment to treating people fairly, promoting an integrated way of working and respecting the dignity of staff members at all times.

Managers are expected to promote an integrated workplace and proactively eliminate any potential inequities that may run counter to this policy.

Our recruitment policy reflects our belief that diversity in all areas, including cultural, generational, language and national backgrounds, is necessary in helping us succeed.

"The employer" will not discriminate against any prospective staff member during the recruitment process. Interviews will be carried out objectively and individuals will be judged on merit and their ability to do the job. It is our policy to ensure that as much accommodation as possible is carried out to facilitate the participation of individuals with special needs in the recruitment process and in the workplace.

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Performance appraisals and feedback will be carried out in a sensitive, non-discriminatory manner. "The employer" will offer the same development and training opportunities to all staff members to achieve high standards of performance. "The employer" rewards excellence and staff members will be promoted on the basis of merit.

Respect and dignity at work

All staff members have the right to work in an environment that is free from sexual harassment, harassment and bullying and where each individual is respected. Any individual who experiences sexual harassment, harassment or bullying will be supported by "the employer" in bringing such unlawful behaviour to a close.

All staff members will be expected to comply with this policy and management will take appropriate measures to ensure that bullying/harassment does not occur. Appropriate disciplinary action, including dismissal for serious offences, will be taken against any staff member who violates this policy.

The policy applies to staff members both in the workplace and at work-associated events such as meetings, conferences and work-related social events, whether on the premises or off-site.

The policy applies to bullying/harassment not only by fellow staff members but also by a client, parishioner or other contacts with whom a staff member might reasonably expect to come into contact in the course of his or her employment. *See HR Policy 5.1.3 Complaints Procedure.*

Definitions

Workplace bullying is defined as "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".

Bullying is more than a single occasion and can include conduct offensive to a reasonable person, for example oral or written slurs, physical contact, gestures, jokes, displaying pictures, flags/emblems, graffiti or other material that state/imply prejudicial attitudes that are offensive to fellow staff members.

Other examples of bullying behaviour include:

- personal insults and name-calling;
- persistent unjustified criticism and sarcasm;
- shouting at staff in public and/or private;
- sneering;
- unfair delegation of duties and responsibilities;
- setting impossible deadlines;
- unnecessary work interference;
- aggression;
- not giving credit for work contribution;
- continuously refusing reasonable requests without good reasons;
- intimidation and threats in general.

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Harassment on the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race, or membership of the traveller community is defined as any unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

Sexual harassment is any form of verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. This includes same-sex sexual harassment. The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

Examples of sexual harassment include:

- sexual gestures;
- displaying sexually suggestive objectives, pictures, calendars;
- sending suggestive and pornographic correspondence, including e-mails or text messages;
- unwelcome sexual comments and jokes;
- unwelcome physical conduct, such as pinching, unnecessary touching, etc.

The examples stated in this policy are not an exhaustive list and "the employer" reserves the right to take action against these and other inappropriate behaviours.

For further information please contact:

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