

Diocese of Elphin – HR Policy Handbook

Document Name: Communications Policy
Document No: 8.1.1 (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 Communications. 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).

Introduction

"The employer" values all our staff members and acknowledges that awareness and involvement is crucial to the ongoing success of the activities and mission of the Diocese. Therefore, we will continue to endeavour to give staff members the opportunity to receive relevant information on activities within the diocese, and also to facilitate situations whereby staff members may offer feedback through various means of upwards communication, with the aim of continually improving the channels and quality of communication.

The purpose of this charter is to ensure that communication with all staff members is effective, meaningful, appropriate and timely. This charter applies to all staff members, without exception, at all locations.

This charter sets out the following:

- subject matter for information and consultation;
- communication channels;
- communication framework;
- participation and involvement;
- review arrangements.

Subject matter for information and consultation

"The employer" aims to provide staff members with relevant and current information, using the most appropriate channel, and to engage in consultation as appropriate on the following areas:

- mission and strategy;
- diocesan office updates
- parish updates
- changes which may affect staff numbers;
- training and development;
- health and safety;
- working environment.

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Information will be provided through normal communications channels. "The employer" welcomes feedback from staff and is committed to responding to issues and concerns raised. This agreement does not apply to matters of individual concern, including salary, entitlements, individual disciplinary matters, or grievances, which should be addressed under the grievance policy. Support in dealing with individual staff member matters and in raising grievances, under the grievance policy, is available from the HR Advisor.

This agreement does not prevent "the employer" from using existing or new channels of communication and/or consultation not referred to here.

Communication channels

"The employer" aims to use the most effective and appropriate media for communicating with staff members, which will include some or all of the following

- group presentations from Bishop, Diocesan personnel:
 - forums;
- team meetings:
 - interdepartmental meetings;
- email:
 - updates;
 - newsletter;
 - vacancy lists;
- one to one sessions:
 - performance review;
 - regular feedback;
- the internet:
 - Diocesan website;
 - Parish website;

Communication framework

It is our commitment to you that we will establish and maintain the following framework and continuously strive to improve our processes. All staff members will have access to some or all of the following:

Pastoral Messages
 Annual Financial statements

Performance appraisal

Every staff member will receive a formal performance review on a regular basis. At the appraisal, your performance over the previous period will be reviewed, and objectives set for the next period. The appraisal will be conducted by your direct line manager.

Team meetings

Team meetings should take place as required. Team meetings will cover topics relevant to the particular team, such as current workload, deadlines, issues and also as a means to discuss developments.

Internet

Every staff member will have access to diocesan and parish websites through their work computer.

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Written communication

This format will be utilised when correspondence is direct to the staff member and in relation to specific matters relevant to individual staff members.

Participation and involvement

"The employer" welcomes the ideas and opinions of all staff members, and thus, undertakes to provide a participative environment whereby staff members can comfortably express their opinion through feedback.

We undertake to respond to any such feedback. Whereas all views will be considered when decisions are being made, it is impractical to assume that all views will be implemented. To this end, there will be a period of four weeks where open issues should be discussed, and ongoing feedback should be provided to facilitate resolution. Once this period has lapsed the issue will be deemed to be closed.

Review of arrangements

The above arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis, with the feedback of staff members of any changes.

Staff members' commitment to confidentiality

Staff members will use the consultation process in good faith, cooperate with "the employer", and will not attempt to use it for any ulterior purpose. "The employer" has an absolute discretion not to disclose information under this agreement that it considers would be harmful to "the employer" or any of its staff members.

Staff members will keep all information provided to them under this agreement confidential and not disclose it to anyone who is not a staff member, unless it is already in the public domain, or "the employer" has already given its authorisation for the information to be disclosed. Some information provided to staff members may constitute confidential information under their employment contract. Breach of these or other confidentiality requirements may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the disciplinary policy.

For further information please contact:

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