

## Diocese of Elphin – HR Policy Handbook

**Document Name:** Building Resilience Policy  
**Document No:** 10.1.8 (original)  
**Effective Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> 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 Building Resilience. 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

Resilience, the ability to adapt and thrive in a fast-changing and uncertain world, is now recognised as an important success factor in the workplace. The pace of change in today's world is more rapid than ever before. This, along with declining numbers attending Church, can create uncertainty and negatively affect performance and productivity at work. The "employer" believes that a resilient 'diocese' with resilient staff stands the best chance of thriving even in turbulent times.

We are committed to developing the culture and interventions to build resilience to deal with both sudden shocks and gradual changes and remain focused at all times. We want a 'diocese' that can, on a sustainable basis, build the versatility and capacity for innovation to adapt to changing circumstances, engage the full range of staff members' skills, creativity and commitment, and work towards healthy and satisfying jobs for all.

### Achieving our goals

One of the "employer's" key assets is the talents and skills of its staff members. The "employer" will endeavour to provide staff members with work opportunities and challenges that allow them to keep growing and to continue using their personal talents and skills to accomplish new goals.

As part of achieving the "employer's" goals, we will ensure that all staff members are clear about performance expectations, have the skills and knowledge to do the job and know how their role contributes to our survival and growth.

The "employer" places great emphasis on recognition and on the importance of thanking and acknowledging staff members' contributions to team goals. The "employer" is mindful of the particular need to maintain the flow of positive feedback in times of change.

### Key elements of the building resilience policy

In addition to helping staff members understand the link between their own work and outcomes we believe that we can strengthen the resilience of staff members by promoting the following interrelated strategies:

- caring and supportive Christian environment
- encouraging innovation;
- work life balance;
- strengthening communication and connection networks;
- building a sense of purpose;
- promoting well-being;
- engaging staff members;
- managing stress.

## Diocese of Elphin – HR Policy Handbook

**Document Name:** Building Resilience Policy  
**Document No:** 10.1.8 (original)  
**Effective Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019  
**Written By:** Frank Mitchell, HR Advisor  
**Approved By:** +Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin



### **Caring and supportive Christian environment**

Every staff member working in the Diocese of Elphin has the privilege of contributing significantly to the continuous and frequently silent work of the building up of God's kingdom. The time each staff member spends engaging in diocesan work and related communication is precious. We will do everything possible to ensure the work environment is personally enriching. It is our commitment that every staff member who works for the Diocese of Elphin will find their place of work a place where they experience a caring and supportive Christian environment and contribute to the workplace being such for others.

### **Encouraging innovation**

The "employer" is committed to creating an atmosphere where issues are debated openly and where new ideas are encouraged. We advocate an atmosphere where staff behave respectfully towards each other, value each other and work in teams which provide places of mutual support. The "employer" acknowledges that encouraging and empowering staff members to advocate new ideas and approaches supports both personal and 'diocesan' resilience.

### **Work-life balance**

The "employer" is fully committed to encouraging work-life balance initiatives to support staff members in achieving a balance between work and personal life - see Policy No. 10.1.5.

We understand that people work best when they can balance their work responsibilities with their personal life. "The employer" makes every reasonable effort to try to accommodate work-life balance requests, taking into account the needs of the business and the individual. Arrangements available include:

- part-time work;
- job-sharing;
- flexitime;
- career breaks;
- personalised hours;
- time off in lieu;
- e-working;

### **Strengthening communication and connection networks**

Times of rapid change require stronger and better communication and connection networks. Resilient organisations are characterised by multiple forms of communication. For this reason, "the employer" will continue to communicate with staff members on a regular basis regarding changes and challenges facing "the employer" and encourage feedback on how we can manage same.

"The employer" will continue to support cross-team projects and initiatives as well as lending as much support as it can to opportunities for social connections eg, through organising events to promote faith and friendship. "The employer" understands that support networks at work, in the form of both professional relationships and friendship, are invaluable in building an environment in which ideas and concerns can be debated and in which cooperative and supportive behaviour will flourish.

## Diocese of Elphin – HR Policy Handbook

**Document Name:** Building Resilience Policy  
**Document No:** 10.1.8 (original)  
**Effective Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019  
**Written By:** Frank Mitchell, HR Advisor  
**Approved By:** +Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin



### Building a sense of purpose

"The employer" believes that staff members whose values are aligned with those of "the employer" will be more committed to "the employer". "The employer" will continue to communicate its values and goals to staff members and the required behaviours that are needed to support these values and goals.

### Promoting well-being

A workplace that supports healthy lifestyles offers an enormous benefit to staff members. Given the length of time that people spend in the workplace, it is recognised as an appropriate setting for health promotion. Appropriate diet and physical activity both while at work and during breaks can serve to improve the health status of staff members.

"The employer" participates in the cycle to work scheme. Cycling as a means of commuting to work is kinder to the environment than using the car and improves the health and fitness of participating staff members.

### Engaging staff members

Staff members are encouraged to put forward ideas about how we could improve the way we work. Managers are required to show commitment to their staff through regular one-to-one meetings and through team briefings that enable problems to be identified early and resolved promptly. Managers are required to communicate changes in a timely manner, giving the reasons behind them, and explaining how they will affect people. In order to sustain levels of motivation, "the employer" welcomes feedback from staff members on key factors that help or hinder performance, and why they work for "the employer".

We welcome feedback regarding any concerns you may have in relation to internal communications, and goals. In addition, we will regularly review 'diocesan' policies and practices and make any necessary changes when policies become outdated or no longer appropriate. Employee development initiatives are an important mechanism used to engage staff members.

### Managing stress

"The employer" is keenly aware that stress can cause staff members to become distracted, inattentive and also cause presentism (where staff members put in their time but are not fully engaged). Managers are committed to providing direction and positive feedback to staff members in order to enable staff members to stay on task, meet objectives and remain motivated and resilient. We are aware that demonstrating appreciation for staff members can go a long way to strengthening morale and self-esteem.

### Reviewing our resilience policy

"The employer" is committed to reviewing the building resilience policy and what constitutes good practice in the area at regular intervals.

*For further information please contact:*

HR Advisor  
 Elphin Diocesan Office  
 St. Mary's  
 Temple Street  
 Sligo F91 KTX2  
 Email: [hr@elphindiocese.ie](mailto:hr@elphindiocese.ie)  
 Mobile: 087 240 4882