



Our Lady of Good Counsel BNS

Respect and Dignity In Our Work Keeping our Workplace Positive and Effective

A Commitment to Dignity & Respect.

Our Lady of Good Counsel Boys National School is a school which is committed to creating, maintaining and constantly striving to enhance a positive work environment where work is done in an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, openness and equality.

As a team, we believe that all employees have the right to be treated with **dignity and respect**. As a team we recognise that we all have our part to play in **modelling and promoting good behaviour**, and that in the unlikely event of experiencing unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour, we can choose to address the behaviour and explain why we feel it is unacceptable and/or inappropriate.

Adult bullying and harassment are behaviours that will not be tolerated in OLGCBNS and we, as a staff, will actively seek to prevent.

Accepted procedures will be used to investigate and deal with allegations of harassment, bullying and other inappropriate behaviour. It is accepted that the procedures used will depend on the context. We have identified such appropriate procedures to be those outlined in the IPPN document **'Supporting each other'**, the INTO document **'Working Together'** and **'DES Circular 40/97 – Assaults on Staff in Primary Schools'**.

Definition of what we consider Bullying & Harassment in our Community.

Our School Team has adopted the definition of adult bullying as set out by the Task Force (2001).

'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 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.'

We view harassment as *'unwanted conduct' which 'has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person'*.

Forms of Harassment:

There are many forms of harassment including:

- Verbal -Harassment: jokes, comments, ridicule or songs
- Written Harassment including text messages (WhatsApp, Viber), emails, social media postings and hand-written notices
- Physical Harassment such as jostling, shoving or any form of assault
- Non-Verbal Harassment including gestures, posturing or threatening poses • Visual Displays such as posters, emblems or badges;
- Isolation or exclusion from workplace social activities;
- Pressure to behave in a manner that the employee thinks is inappropriate -e.g. being required to dress in a manner unsuited to a person's ethnic or religious background.

We recognise that bullying and harassment complaints may arise among work colleagues, but may also arise in relation to visitors to the school. In either case, our commitment to a positive workplace where dignity at work prevails.

A Positive Work Environment.

We agree that we will all work to make this school a positive and open place to work. Our Lady of Good Counsel BNS is a good place to work and we will strive to keep it that way, through

- A supportive atmosphere
- Good and open communication (e.g. through opportunities and regular staff meetings)
- Appropriate interpersonal behaviour
- Professional collaboration
- Open discussion and resolution of conflict
- Recognition, feedback and affirmation as appropriate
- Fair treatment of all staff (including fair systems of selection and promotion in line with agree procedures)
- Mutual respect

Every person in the school community of OLGCBNS has a responsibility to play his/her part in contributing to our positive work environment, including a team member who may witness behaviour that is not nice. We each have a clear responsibility to raise concerns about dignity at work and threats to this, in an appropriate and timely manner.

Reflecting our commitment to respect and dignity, our Safety Statement has been amended to include a commitment to a positive work environment.

In developing and adopting this policy OLGC BNS, we have taken a number of steps to examine our work environment. We have open discussions at staff meetings, survey staff and have an open door policy.

Our Wellbeing Committee will actively organise and promote events throughout the year on a regular basis to promote and encourage positive relationships and enjoyment amongst the staff. The Social Committee will continue to organise social events and celebrate achievements. These steps will be initiated both by the team generally and supported by management.

Reflecting our commitment to a positive workplace, we have agreed to review this policy each year.

Staff in OLGC BNS also recognise that staff/parent relations are of utmost importance and an agreed procedure needs to be in place in the event of a complaint. We agree to adhere to the INTO Complaints Procedure.

<https://www.into.ie/help-advice/staff-parent-relations/into-management-complaints-procedure/?cb=-83654745147932385001642625569>

Adult Bullying, Harassment & Being Unkind Can Be a Problem.

Our Lady of Good Counsel BNS recognises that adult bullying and harassment are problems if they occur in any workplace. These behaviours generally amount to psychological abuse which causes serious pain and suffering.

Bullying may include behaviours such as:

- Verbal abuse/insults, undermining remarks
- Excessive monitoring of work
- Withholding work-related information
- Exclusion with negative consequences

Such behaviour need not and should not be part of the workplace. Our policy aims to ensure that we maintain a positive environment which will prevent such behaviours from occurring. Where bullying or harassment does occur, we will deal with it through the agreed procedure below.

In the unlikely event that an allegation of bullying or harassment is made, the steps we will take are:

Supportive and effect procedures, in accordance with nationally-agreed practice, are in place in Our Lady of Good Counsel B.N.S. These procedures to address and investigate allegations focus on the earliest possible resolution and will proceed as necessary from informal to formal stages and will be held in the strictest of confidence.

Mechanism for conflict resolution.

A.

Step 1: Identify the issue.

- Having identified the issue be aware of **context and sensitivity** to demands being made on other persons.
- Assess possible impact against your actual intent.

Step 2: Choose a good time and place.

Step 3: Bring the issue to the person.

- Don't "gossip" about approaching the person or the situation either before or after the conversation.
- We need to be careful about what is/isn't our/others' business. However, it is okay to seek advice from a trusted colleague who respects confidentiality.

Step 4. Strategies/Openings suitable or recommended

- Can we have a chat about something that is bothering me?
- Remember what happened yesterday, it's been on my mind ... could we have a chat about it?
- I am worried/a bit concerned about something, can we discuss it?
- There is an issue I'd like to discuss.

B.

Responsibilities of the Speaker.

Recommendations include

- Start with a positive comment, e.g. "thanks for taking the time to meet with me" or "I like working with you/this team/class ..."
- Use "I" statement, e.g. "when this happens...I feel uncomfortable ..." or "it upset me a bit when I heard you say ..." (don't blame).
- Be reasonable, e.g. "I know you have a lot to do but I have noticed that ..."
- Stick with one issue and be specific.
- Stay curious ... 'help me understand'.

Responsibilities of Listener/Responder.

- Listen actively – do not interrupt.
- Ask clarifying questions – 'do you mean'?
- Avoid becoming defensive.
- Reflect back ... 'are you saying..'
- Stay open to the fact that the other person has an issue and it has taken courage to address it.

C.

Joint Responsibilities of Speaker and Listener:

- Accept the other person's point of view – "just because you think something is true, doesn't mean it always is true".

- Try and separate the issue from the personality.
- Be willing to compromise – an incomplete resolution may be the only possibility.
- Agree to disagree.
- Try to settle on a solution that allows for a ‘win-win’ on both sides – if one person leaves the discussion feeling dissatisfied, the issue will continue to be an issue.
- Remember this might be the first time that the responder was made aware of the issue and she/he might need a little time to process what has been said. Sometimes it is best to say “maybe we should think about this and come back to it again”.
- Watch your body language.
- Watch your tone.
- Stay respectful.
- End with a positive comment.
- Depending on the issue – make note of resolution and date it and agree a date to discuss it again.
- If no resolution can be found, the issue should be brought to the Principal, who will decide on how best to proceed, depending on the context, and in consultation with the relevant parties. The Principal may need to seek advice on some matters.

If you feel the issue has not been resolved, you can seek further information from our Adult Bullying Policy. Appendix 1

In Conclusion.

The policy has been formulated in response to a number of background documents including IPPN document *‘Supporting each other’* the INTO document *‘Working Together’* and *‘DES Circular 40/97 Assaults on Staff in Primary Schools’*, the Health & Safety Authority’s *‘Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work (2007)’*, and the Equality Authority’s *‘Code of Practice’*, given legal effect in the Statutory Instrument entitled *‘Employment Equality Act 1998 (Code of Practice) (Harassment) Order 2002 (S.I. No. 78 of 2002)’*.

As members of the Our Lady of Good Counsel BNS community, we all have a **duty of care** to ourselves and each other. Management has a duty of care towards employees. Similarly, employees have a duty of care towards one another. In formulating this policy, we sought to set out principles and practices to support the exercise of that duty in our school.

Together we are **committed to building and maintaining a work environment where respectful, open and equal relationships are the norm. We are committed to having a positive place to work where openness, inclusion, equality and respect prevails.**

Ratification:

Following consultation with all staff members, the Board of Management of Our Lady of Good Counsel BNS has adopted this policy at its meeting.

Implementation:

Immediate

Review:

June 2025

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson Board of Management

Principal

Date: 16th September 2024

Date: 16th September 2024



DIGNITY AT WORK CHARTER

"We at Our Lady of Good Counsel BNS 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 to each individual to dignity in their working life. All will be treated 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 employed or contracted here at Our Lady of Good Counsel BNS have a duty to uphold this Dignity at Work Charter".