



Dignity at Work Policy

Introductory Statement

The Board of Management of Rathcormac NS adopted this policy on the 10th of February 2026 following consultation with all staff members.

The policy is formulated in light of a number of background documents, including the Health and Safety Authority's Code of Practice For employers and Employees on the Prevention and resolution of Bullying at work (2007, the equality Authority's Code of Practice, given legal effect in the Statutory Instruments entitled Employment Equality Act 1998 (Code of Practice) (Harassment) Order 2002 (SI No 78 Of 2002) and Working Together Ag Obair Le Chéile 2024.

Rationale

Rathcormac N.S. is committed to protecting the dignity of all those who work within the school. In particular, we are committed to ensuring that our school is free from any form of bullying or harassment at work and that our work environment is conducive to providing a high-quality education in an atmosphere of respect, safety, and equality. Bullying behaviour or lack of respect for others' dignity, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of work and imposes psychological damage. As such, it is an issue which must be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies through which all members of the school community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with this behaviour. Both the school's management and its employees have responsibilities for creating and contributing to the maintenance of a work environment free from bullying and harassment. Employees also have an obligation to cooperate with the investigation of complaints of bullying or harassment in the school.

Aims of Policy

The Dignity at Work policy aims to:

- Create and maintain a positive working environment in Rathcormac N.S. whereby the right of the individual to dignity at work is recognised and protected.
- Provide awareness regarding the steps which individuals may take if they believe that they have been bullied, harassed, or sexually harassed.
- Encourage the use of informal resolution methods and the use of mediation as often and as early as possible during disputes.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of and committed to the principles outlined in this policy.

Commitment to Dignity & Respect

Rathcormac NS 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.

Core Principles of Policy

Adult bullying and harassment will not be tolerated by this school. All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Management is committed to intervening in an appropriate manner - utilising one of the accepted Management/INTO procedures - to investigate and deal with allegations of bullying or harassment. The provisions of DES Circulars 61/2017 and 62/2017 with respect to the assault of teachers and SNA will be applied, as appropriate.

What is Workplace Bullying and Harassment?

The Board of Management defines adult bullying 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.

A key characteristic of bullying is that it usually takes place over a period of time, it is regular and persistent inappropriate behaviour, which is specifically targeted at one employee or a group of employees.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of types of behaviour that may constitute bullying:

- Verbal abuse/insults, undermining remarks
- Exclusion with negative consequences
- Intimidation
- Aggression
- Blaming a person for things beyond their control
- Use of aggressive or obscene language.
- Humiliation, ridicule, belittling efforts
- Excessive monitoring of work
- Withholding work-related information

When considering the definition of bullying, it is also important to note.

Bullying is not.

- Strongly expressing of opinions
- Offering constructive feedback, guidance or advice about work related behaviour, which is not of itself welcome.
- Ordinary performance management
- Reasonable corrective action taken by the principal/employer which may involve monitoring of work of the employee.
- Workplace conflict where people disagree with or disregard the others' point of view.
- Appropriate workplace engagement
- Objective criticism and corrections that are intended as to provide constructive feedback to an employee. They are intended to help the employees with their work.

The above list is not exhaustive.

Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the following grounds:

- Gender
- Civil status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religious belief
- Age
- Disability
- Race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin.
- Membership of the Traveller community

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. Unlike bullying, a single incident may constitute harassment.

Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and/or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for the person.

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

A Positive Work Environment

It is agreed that we will all work to make this school a good place to work. A good place to work has a positive work environment characterised by:

- A supportive atmosphere
- Good and open communication (e.g., through opportunities at regular staff meetings)
- Appropriate interpersonal behaviour
- 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 agreed procedures)

Every person has a responsibility to play his/her part in contributing to a positive work environment. In this regard, a person who is a witness or bystander has a clear

responsibility to raise concerns about dignity at work and threats to this, in an appropriate and timely manner.

The Safety Statement - as mandated under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 – will also include a commitment to a positive work environment, in light of the employer’s obligations as outlined at Section 8 of that Act, including the duty to manage work activities in such a way as to prevent “*improper conduct or behaviour*” likely to put health and safety at risk.

It is agreed that the adoption of this policy in our school will be accompanied by a number of steps to examine our work environment and, as necessary, to agree changes which reflect a commitment to dignity at work. These steps will be initiated by Management and be repeated by way of review at appropriate intervals. The actions to be undertaken may generally be described as Identification, Assessment, Implementing Strategies and Monitoring.

What Happens if there is an Allegation of Bullying or Harassment?

Without prejudice to an individual’s right to take such advice or steps as he/she may decide, the Board of Management will take seriously any allegation of workplace bullying or harassment.

Supportive and effective procedures, in accordance with nationally agreed procedures (Working together 2024) are in the place in this school. These procedures to address and investigate allegations will focus on the earliest possible resolution, will proceed as necessary from informal to formal stages and will have a stress on confidentiality. See Working together document for steps, procedures and recording templates.

The Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme (formally called Carecall), a free and confidential counselling service, is available for teachers, SNAs and other staff. The Freephone number is 1800 411 057 and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Summary

The management of Rathcormac NS has a duty of care towards employees. Similarly, employees have a duty of care towards one another. This policy seeks to set out principles, practices, and procedures 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.

In summary, we are committed to having a good and safe place to work, where every individual's dignity is respected.

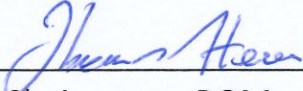
Roles and Responsibility

All members of the school community, under the positive and supportive leadership of the Board of Management and Principal, have both a role and a responsibility in successfully implementing this policy.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community as required or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Ratification and communication

This policy was formally approved by the Board of Management of Rathcormac NS on the 10th of February 2026

Signed 
Chairperson BOM

Date 10/2/2026