



Equality and Anti-Harassment Policy

The Board of Management of Boher National School has adopted this policy on 22/10/25 following consultation with all staff members.

This policy is formulated in light of the **Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work (S.I. No. 674/2020)**, the **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005**, and the **Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment and Harassment at Work (S.I. No. 208/2012)**. In addition, the Board of Management affirms its commitment to the procedures outlined in *Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations*, specifically **Procedure 2: Bullying and Harassment**, which provides a staged framework for addressing and resolving such issues within schools. The Board also acknowledges the continued relevance of **DES Circular 61/2017 (Assaults on Teachers/School Employees)** and **DES Circular 62/2017 (Assaults on Special Needs Assistants)**, which remain applicable in cases involving assaults on staff members and will be applied in conjunction with this policy where appropriate.

A. Core Principles of Policy

Boher National School is committed to fostering a positive working environment where staff collaborate in a spirit of respect, openness, and equality.

Bullying, harassment, or victimisation of staff will not be tolerated. All employees have the right to dignity and respect in the workplace. The Board of Management is committed to intervening promptly and appropriately—utilising the agreed procedures under *Working Together*—to investigate and resolve any allegations of bullying or harassment. Where cases involve assaults on teachers or SNAs, the provisions of DES Circulars 61/2017 and 62/2017 will be applied, as appropriate.

Complaints of bullying or harassment may arise among work colleagues but may also involve visitors to the school. In all cases, the school's commitment to a positive workplace, where dignity at work is respected, prevails.

C. A Positive Work Environment

We agree to work together to make Boher National School a good place to work. A positive work environment is characterised by:

- A supportive atmosphere
- Good and open communication (e.g. 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. Witnesses or bystanders also have a clear responsibility to raise concerns about dignity at work in an appropriate and timely manner.

The Safety Statement—mandated under the **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005**—includes a commitment to a positive work environment, in light of the employer's obligations under Section 8 of the 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.

The adoption of this policy will be accompanied by 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 repeated at appropriate intervals. Actions may include identification, assessment, implementing strategies, and monitoring.

D. 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 *Working Together: Procedure 2 – Bullying and Harassment*, are in 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 emphasise confidentiality.

B. What is Workplace Bullying and Harassment?

Adult 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 above may be an affront to dignity at work but, as a once-off incident, is not considered bullying.

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

Examples of behaviour that may constitute bullying (non-exhaustive):

- Verbal abuse/insults, undermining remarks
- Exclusion with negative consequences
- Intimidation
- Aggression
- Humiliation, ridicule, belittling efforts
- Excessive monitoring of work
- Withholding work-related information

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

- i. Gender
- ii. Civil status
- iii. Family status
- iv. Sexual orientation
- v. Religious belief
- vi. Age
- vii. Disability
- viii. Race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin
- ix. 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. 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.

The **Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**, a free and confidential counselling service, is available to all teachers, SNAs and other school staff. The Freephone number is 1800 411 057 and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

E. Summary

Management has a duty of care towards employees. Similarly, employees have a duty of care towards one another. This policy sets out the principles, practices and procedures to support 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 safe and supportive workplace where every individual's dignity is respected.

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Boher N.S. on 22/10/2025

Signed: Patricia Malone
Chairperson, Board of Management