



## **School Policy on Sexual Harassment**

**The Board of Management of St. Peter's College Secondary School is committed to maintaining an environment which is free from sexual harassment and which promotes personal integrity and dignity**

**This is in keeping with our school ethos, which strives to create "A school community of equality, fairness and care"**

**The Board recognises that sexual harassment can seriously damage working and social conditions for both staff and students. The Board also recognises that sexual harassment undermines the confidence and dignity of individuals, can cause increased tension, stress, low morale, sickness and absenteeism.**

**The Board further recognises that all employees have a right to a workplace that is free from sexual harassment, and are fully committed to ensuring that all employees and students enjoy that right.**

**Complaints of sexual harassment will always be treated seriously, and in a sensitive confidential manner**

- Sexual harassment of a staff member by another staff member is contrary to this policy and will not be tolerated.**
- Sexual harassment of one student by another student is contrary to this policy and will not be tolerated. (See note 1.)**
- Sexual harassment of a staff member by a student is contrary to this policy and will not be tolerated. (See note 1.)**
- Sexual harassment of a student by a staff member is contrary to this policy, is an abuse of authority and will not be tolerated**

**All employees have a clear role to play in the creation of an environment at work in which sexual harassment is unacceptable. Every individual's responsibility extends to an awareness of the impact of personal behaviour that could cause offence to other staff members and make them feel uncomfortable or threatened. In addition to ensuring that their own behaviour is not in any way offensive, employees should make clear to others that sexual harassment is unacceptable and should support colleagues suffering such harassment**

**This policy is not intended to stifle normal healthy relationships among staff, rather to promote a healthy respectful working environment for staff and students**

**Definition:**

**Sexual harassment is unwanted, unsolicited conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on a person's sex, which is offensive to the recipient and which affects his/her dignity.**

**Non –Verbal Sexual Harassment:**

- **Unwelcome uses or display of sexually suggestive/pornographic pictures**
- **Leering or suggestive gestures**
- **Written communications of an unwelcome sexual nature**
- **Electronic communications of an unwelcome sexual nature**

**Verbal Sexual Harassment:**

- **Unwelcome sexual advances/comments**
- **Unwelcome suggestive jokes/remarks/innuendo**
- **Offensive telephone calls of a sexual nature**
- **Unwelcome comments about personal appearance/sexual orientation**
- **Demands for sexual favours**

**Physical Sexual Harassment:**

- **Unwelcome physical contact/touching**
- **Groping/pinching/petting/fondling/kissing**

## **PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

### **INFORMAL PROCEDURES:**

**A staff member who feels that he/she is being sexually harassed should ask the person responsible to stop. The staff member concerned should explain clearly to the person engaged in the conduct, that the behaviour in question is unwelcome, offensive and interferes with their work.**

**If the complainant feels that he/she cannot directly address the issue with the person responsible an alternative might be to ask a sympathetic colleague to make an initial approach**

**It is important that a complainant keep notes detailing times and dates of all incidents of sexual harassment**

**If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or if it is inappropriate to resolve it informally then the matter should be raised through the Formal Procedures**

### **FORMAL PROCEDURES:**

**If the matter cannot be resolved informally, then a staff member who is subjected to sexual harassment should make a formal complaint in writing to the Principal. The Principal will be responsible for investigating such complaints on behalf of the Board of Management.**

**The investigation will be carried out with a minimal delay, in a sensitive and confidential manner, respecting the rights of both the complainant and the alleged harasser. The responsibility for disciplinary action lies with the Board of Management.**

**Should the Principal be either the complainant or the alleged harasser, then the matter should be brought directly to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.**

**The formal investigation will be carried out by the Principal and one other person of his choosing, who should be the same gender as the complainant.**

**The alleged sexual harasser will be informed that a formal complaint has been made, that it is being investigated on behalf of the Board of Management and be given a copy of the said formal written complaint.**

**The Principal shall arrange interviews/meetings with both parties to the complaint, separately and/or jointly, with a view to resolving the issue.**

**The complainant and the subject of the complaint may be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union rep at all meetings/interviews, which should be recorded.**

**If the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved, the Principal shall convey this in writing to all parties and to the Board of Management.**

**If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved the Principal shall notify the Board of Management of the outcome of the investigation, whether the complaint was upheld, unfounded or malicious. This report will also be furnished to all parties involved in the investigation**

**Where a complaint is substantiated, the extent and nature of the sexual harassment will determine the disciplinary action taken by the Board**

**These might include**

**A verbal warning**

**A written warning**

**A Final warning**

**Suspension from duties with or without pay**

**Other disciplinary action short of dismissal**

**Dismissal**

**Where disciplinary action is proposed following an investigation of sexual harassment, the person in question retains the right of appeal and the right of natural justice.**

**The Board will endeavour to protect all staff members from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination, in the event of a complaint being made or while they may be involved in the process of investigation.**

**Malicious complaints of sexual harassment will be treated very seriously by the Principal and the Board of management**

**Every effort will be made to provide counselling for both the victims and the perpetrators of sexual harassment.**

**Note 1: Students**

- 1. Students subjected to sexual harassment shall report the incident to either the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head, Class Tutor, Guidance Counsellor, or any class teacher, who will report the complaint to the Principal for investigation**
- 2. Where the complaint of sexual harassment is made by a student against a member of staff, the complaint will be dealt with under the Formal Procedures outlined above.**
- 3. Where a complaint of sexual harassment is made by a staff member against a student, the complaint will be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour**
- 4. Where a complaint of sexual harassment is made by one student against another student, the complaint will be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour**