

# Dignity at Work

Padraig McCabe February  
2025

# Policy, Procedures & Culture

# Overview

Padraig McCabe  
February 2025

School Workplace.

Safety.

Values.

Conflict.

Raising & Responding

Dignity at Work

# The School Workplace

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- **Legislation**
- **Contracts**
- **Mandatory Policies & Procedures**
- **Agreed Procedures**

# Policies & Procedures Protect

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The Principal & Deputy Principal



The Board



Provide Strategies

*What's  
available*

***Working Together 2024 -  
Staff Relations, Grievance, Bullying  
or Harassment***

***Parental Complaints***

***Circ. 49/2018 / Circ. 72/2011***

***Professional Code of Conduct***

***Dignity at Work***

***[Grievance Vs Disciplinary Procedures.]***

## Universal Values – The Right to...

**Their good name / To earn a living**

**Be treated with dignity & respect.**

**Due process and fair procedures.**

**The presumption of innocence**

**Be heard**

***Anyone can 'have a bad day', - reflect and take appropriate steps***

Creating a  
Dignity at Work  
Culture

Need to talk about D.a.W.  
'Policies are no substitute  
for...

***Positive Relationships:***

➤ *Built on Trust*

➤ *And Shared Values*



What are our  
Workplace Values?

**Suggestion - Survey Staff:**

**What values are important in the  
workplace? ...**



# What values do you want to see reflected in your workplace?

101 responses



# Values: What Chat GpT says!

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The top three values that should be reflected in the workplace are:

1. **Integrity** – Ensuring honesty, transparency, and ethical behavior in all interactions.
2. **Respect** – Fostering a culture of inclusivity, fairness, and appreciation for all team members.
3. **Accountability** – Taking responsibility for actions, decisions, and outcomes to build trust and reliability.

# Where are Values Reflected?

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***Our values are: Our mission is to...***

***1.***

***2.***

***3.***

***4.***

***5.***

***Our Vision is ....***

**Shared values provide the reference point to evaluate behaviour.**



# *Safety & Dignity at Work*

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***Physical Safety***

***&***

***Psychological Safety***

# Psychological Safety



Psychological Safety Requires Trust

*Psychological Safety?*

*“...a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking.”*

*Amy Edmondson,  
Prof. Harvard  
Business school...*

***D.a.W & Staff  
Wellbeing.***

***Reducing Stress***

***Actions Build Trust: ...***

***Trust is a Feeling***

***'Feel safe'***

***Stressed when...***

***... Values not are respected***

***... Trust is absent:***

***I don't Feel safe***

***I Feel/Think I'm in danger***



*What Behaviours*

*In our school we expect everyone to be ....*

*Reflect our*

*Behaviours we promote in our school are ....*

*Values?*

# Top 5 Behaviours

The top five behaviors typically promoted in workplaces are:

1. **Collaboration** – Working effectively with others, sharing knowledge, and supporting team success.
2. **Professionalism** – Maintaining a positive attitude, being punctual, and demonstrating reliability.
3. **Adaptability** – Embracing change, being open to feedback, and staying flexible in a dynamic environment.
4. **Proactive Communication** – Clearly expressing ideas, actively listening, and addressing issues constructively.
5. **Accountability** – Taking responsibility for actions, meeting deadlines, and delivering on commitments.



**How I Think,  
Feel & Act...**

**Self-fulfilling  
prophecy...**

**Positive Behaviours  
→ Positive Culture**

**Negative Behaviours  
→ Negative Culture.**

**Positive Behaviours reflecting Values**

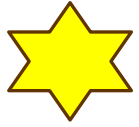
**...We 'Feel Safe.'**

**Negative Behaviours contrary to  
Values...**

**... We 'Feel Unsafe.'**

**CBT: 'How I THINK, affects how I FEEL, affects how I  
ACT.'**





# Conflict:

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Where do you stand?

“Organisations require Conflict.”

<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Agree	Strongly Disagree



# Considerations

## Workplace

- Diversity
- Personalities
- Emotional & Cognitive
- Styles
- Opinions, Beliefs, Convictions

## Society

- Unrest
- Populism & Individualism
- Sense of Entitlement
- Incivility & Aggression

## Reforms, Increasing Demands & Responsibilities



# Conflict

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‘We feel others have, or intend to, frustrate or ignore our interests or concerns’

Dr. Joe O’Connell

## Conflict Styles

(Thomas  
Kilmann)

### *Different Conflict Styles:*

**Avoid – Leave Well Enough Alone**

**Accommodate – Kill with Kindness**

**Compromise – Split the Difference**

**Collaborate – Two Heads Better than One**

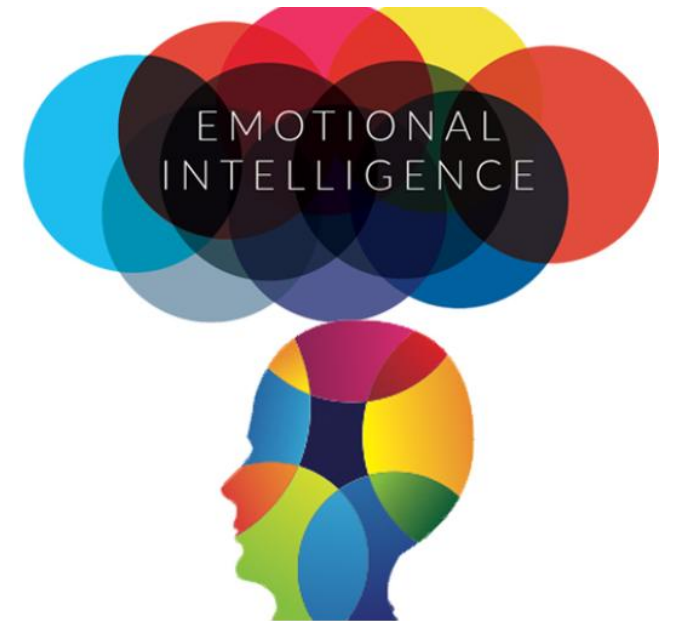
**Compete – Win**

**Conflict can be Constructive or Destructive**

# Emotional Intelligence

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- Know yourself
- Know your triggers
- Empathise
- Be aware of / Own your emotions
- Listen to your body





***Dignity at Work***

***Behaviours***

***Contrary to***

***Our Values...***

***What (adult) Behaviours are  
Unacceptable our school ....***

The top five unacceptable behaviors in the workplace are:

1. **Harassment & Discrimination** – Any form of bullying, racism, sexism, or inappropriate conduct that creates a hostile work environment.
2. **Dishonesty & Lack of Integrity** – Lying, fraud, theft, or unethical behavior that damages trust and credibility.
3. **Poor Work Ethic** – Consistently missing deadlines, lack of effort, or failing to meet responsibilities.
4. **Gossip & Toxicity** – Spreading rumors, engaging in office politics, or creating a negative atmosphere.
5. **Disrespect & Unprofessionalism** – Being rude, dismissive, or behaving in a way that disrupts teamwork and cooperation.



# *Emphasise That...*

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***Criticisms or complaints that are ...  
aired publicly or  
shared on-line.***

***....Breach Dignity at Work.***

# *Addressing an Issue*

## *Checklist.*



**Is there a clear and appropriate way to raise issues?**



**Is there a clear and appropriate way to respond to issues raised?**

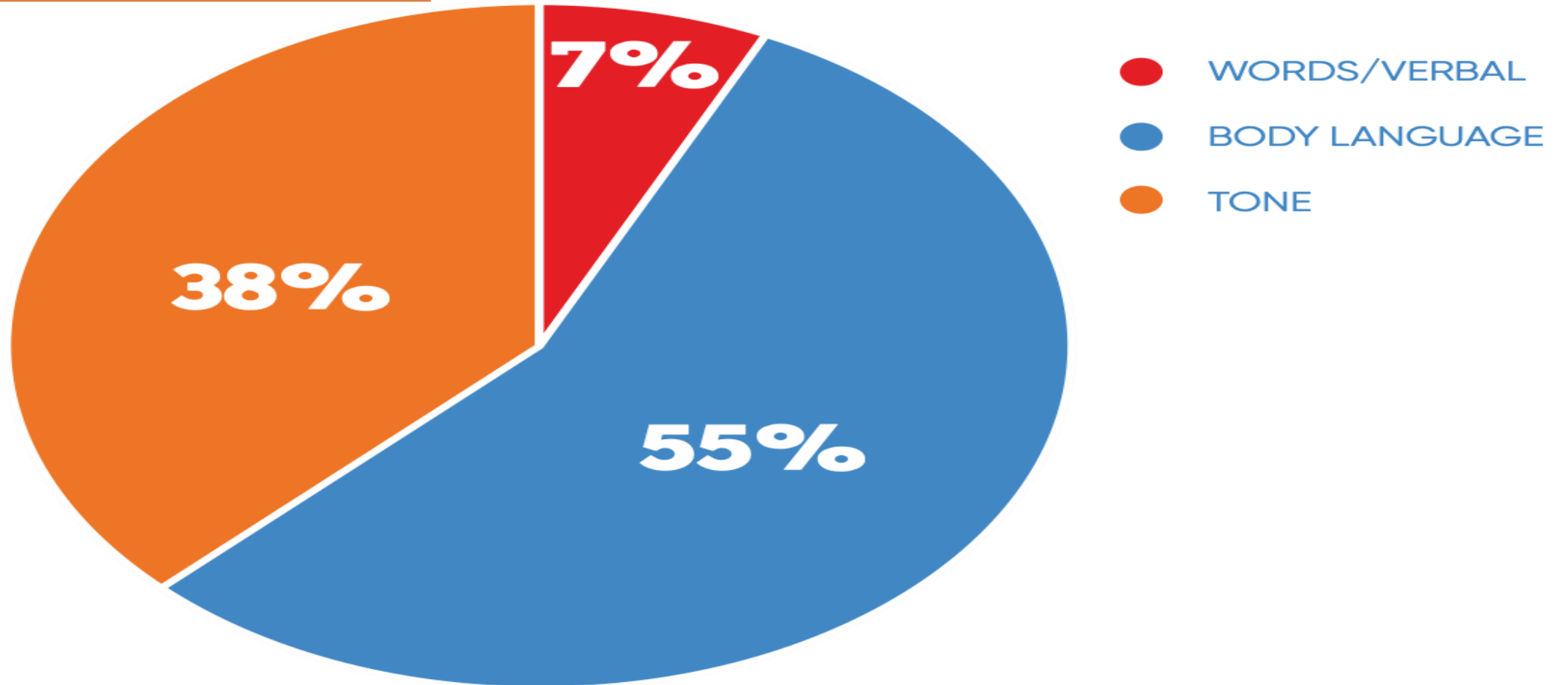


**Is there a Relevant Policy or Procedure?**



**Is there a Contract?**

# Elements of Communication



# Communication Essentials

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Right People

Right  
Information

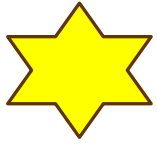
At the right time

Be Clear

Be Concise

Be Complete





# RAISING ISSUES

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- **Professional Space**
- **Language & Tone**
- **Avoid emotive language**
- **Don't Personalise**
- **Be Clear & Concise**
- **Listen**

**Identify the Issue**  
**Early & Constructive**  
**Right Time / Place**  
**Right Person & 1:1**  
**Use 'I statements....'**

# RESPONDING

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- **Listen to understand / Source?**
- **Acknowledge & Restate Position**
- **Avoid Emotive Language**
- **Errors: Acknowledge & Accept**
- **Ask what can be done to Resolve**
- **Outcome both can live with.**

# RELEVANT POLICIES OR PROCEDURES

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- **First: Have you spoken with... ???**
  - **Dignity at Work**
  - **Working Together**
  - **Complaints Procedure**

**Clarify Procedures are there TO RESOLVE CONFLICT.**

# Useful Strategies

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**Be Prepared / Have a Script**

**Avoid emotive language / Be Mindful**

**Checklists**

**- Restorative Practice Questions.**

- What happened?
- Thinking at the time?
- Thought about since?
- Who has been affected?
- What to do to make things right?
- How could you behave differently next time?



# Preparation

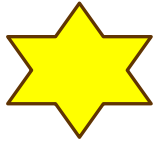
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- Define Our Values
- Have a Policy and Charter
- Define Acceptable/Unacceptable Behaviours
- Revise Regularly –Sept and at Appointment
- Support Everyone – Guidelines / Charter

# Preparation

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- Demo: Raising, Respond & Record.
- Clarify: Roles & Responsibilities.
- Clarify: Expectations
- Remind: ‘We Resolve Conflicts.’
- Deal with it or let it go.



# More Serious Issues

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- Seek Support
- IPPN -LST /INTO / CPSMA / Patron
- Legal Advice / HR Advice
- Don't Just do Something. Stand There!

# *Dignity at Work Policy May Include*

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**Values, Mission & Ethos**

**Guidance on Communication**

**Expectations re Behaviours**

**Clarity re: Decision making**

**Unacceptable Behaviours.**

**Appropriate Procedures**

**Rights, Roles & Responsibilities**

- **Working Together**
- **Circulars**

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

**The school is a workplace  
...We recognise that:**

- **Conflict is Inevitable**
- **Address Destructive Conflict early**
- **First: 'Informal Stage'?**
- **Outcome 'both can live with'.**

# Deal with it or 'LET IT GO!'

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*Raising an Issue?*

*Yes? .... Use skills & Then Procedures*

*NO? ... Then 'Let it Go'*

# *Addressing Actions, Behaviours or Practices?*

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- ✓ **Due Process and Fair Procedures**
- ✓ **Don't make assumptions**
- ✓ **Listen for Facts, Emotions & Perspectives**
- ✓ **Be Empathetic**
- ✓ **Address Behaviour / Not the Person**
- ✓ **Be Respectful & Confidential**
- ✓ **Respond Appropriately**
- ✓ **Record as Necessary**

# Summary

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- *Shared Values*
- *Agreed Policies & Procedures*
- *Agreed Behaviours*
- *Statutory / Non-Statutory Obligations*
- *Roles & Responsibilities*
- *Decision Making*
- *Effective Communication*
- *Training & Supports*



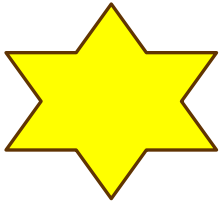
# Sample Charter – HSE Hospital

AS AN INDIVIDUAL...	WITH COLLEAGUES...	WITH PATIENTS...
Am I putting myself in other people's shoes?	Acknowledge the work of your colleagues	Use my name and/or your name
Am I aware that my actions can impact on how patients feel?	Ask your colleagues how you could help them	Keep patients informed – explain the now and the next
Am I aware of my own stress and how I deal with it?	Challenge toxic attitudes	Do an extra, kind thing

*'I-Statements'*

"I feel **[emotion]** when  
**[specific situation]**  
because **[reason]**."

I would like **[desired  
outcome]**."



## SAMPLE 'I – STATEMENTS'

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### *Clarifying Intentions – Want a calm meeting*

"I would like if we discuss this calmly so we both feel understood."

### *Addressing Specific Behaviours – 'The dishes'*

"I feel frustrated when dishes are left in the sink because I value a clean space."

GO RAIBH MAITH AGAIBH  
GO DTÉ SIBH SLÁN!

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Thank You!

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