

Human Resource Policies for Parish Employees

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Introduction

The parish is a certain community of Christ's faithful, stably established within a particular Church, whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor (Code of Canon Law, 515.1). As Pope Francis says:

'The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness to missionary creativity of the pastor and the community.'
(Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 28)

The mission of the parish, is to proclaim the word of God, to witness to the love and compassion of Jesus Christ, to nourish the lives of the faithful through the celebration of the sacraments and to celebrate the Mysteries of Jesus Christ. The parish should be characterised by harmonious relationships among its members, ministries and those entrusted with its pastoral care:

'The various components that make up the parish are called to communion and unity.'
(Congregation of the Clergy, *The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish Community in the Service of the Evangelising Mission of the Church*, 28).

Arising from its mission, therefore, the highest standards of behaviour are expected of all parish personnel who are obliged to act in accordance with the policies and guidelines of the parish.

Human Resource policies have been prepared to support the pastoral role of the parish by providing assistance in the management of day to day issues.

As outlined above, one of the primary purposes of this policy document is to provide information to parish employees about their legal rights and responsibilities. The references to 'manager' or 'management' throughout the document, currently refer, in most parishes, to the parish priest. Line management responsibilities are likely to evolve more to others in the future, hence these references.

These policies have been designed to provide information to parish staff members reinforcing their rights and responsibilities under Irish employment law, and supporting their wellbeing in the parish context. They also provide clear procedures to follow in challenging situations such as grievance or working relationship difficulties.

Where the title parish priest or the term parish is mentioned in this document, it refers to the priest in charge of the parish with juridical responsibilities. However, the title of the priest with these responsibilities may vary from time to time. Therefore, titles such as Administrator or Moderator also refer to priests who have the authority to act in the name of the parish.

Each staff member's commitment to the work of the parish is recognised. The parish aims to foster this commitment by ensuring that the Gospel is the inspiration for all that it does. The parish aims to be a good employer, promoting a safe and congenial working environment where all are treated with respect and dignity. The Church is committed to best practice so that we, as a parish, can share our efforts together and can give our best in the service of the Gospel and parish community.

The following set of documents constitutes the human resource policies for parish staff members in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

The policies may be amended from time to time to ensure best practice and to reflect any changes in legislation or applicable codes of practice.

Equal Opportunities

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the parish's commitment to equality of opportunity in line with the requirements of the Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2015. The policy also supports the rights of persons availing of good or services under the Equal Status Acts, 2000-2018.

The aim of the parish is to promote equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all employees, job applicants and other people with whom employees come into contact with in the course of their day- to-day work.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and applicants for employment.

Policy

The parish promotes a work environment free from unlawful discrimination. The Employment Equality Acts and the Equal Status Acts set out nine protected grounds in relation to which no discrimination should occur. These grounds are gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community.

The parish is committed to equality of opportunity and operates non-discriminatory practices in relation to access to employment, conditions of employment, access to training and experience, promotion or re- grading of posts, and classification of posts. Employment decisions will not be made with reference to these grounds unless these are legitimate criteria given the particular situation, as permitted by legislation.

Direct discrimination occurs where a person is treated less favourably than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation due to one of the nine grounds specified in this policy.

Indirect discrimination is taken to occur where an apparently neutral provision, requirement, policy or rule puts a person with one characteristic at a particular disadvantage compared with others without that characteristic.

Procedure

Access to Employment:

- All recruitment and selection competitions will be open to all suitably qualified applicants.
- Recruitment decisions will be made against specified criteria as required for the particular vacancy.
- The parish will seek to ensure that the recruitment process is free from any direct or indirect discrimination on any of the nine grounds.
- Every applicant, external or internal, will be assessed against fair and consistent criteria relating to the job. Where an applicant indicates that they have special needs, to facilitate their participation in the recruitment and selection process, reasonable accommodation will be provided, subject to this not imposing a disproportionate burden.

Access to Training and Experience:

- Training will be provided on the basis of individual needs and the requirements of the post held by the employee.
- Selection for training will not be based on any of the nine grounds.
- Where an individual's disability impedes their ability to fully participate and engage in training activities, reasonable accommodation will be provided subject to this not imposing a disproportionate burden.
- Although every effort will be made to arrange training to facilitate attendance by part-time employees, there is an expectation that part-time employees will make themselves available, from time to time, to attend training outside their normal hours of work.

Conditions of Employment:

- Terms and conditions of employment will be applied fairly to all employees, with no reference to any of the grounds in the Employment Equality Acts.
- The parish seeks to provide equal pay for like work. The parish endeavors to provide a work environment free from bullying, harassment or sexual harassment.

Promotion and Re-grading:

- There will be equality of opportunity at all stages of the promotions and/or re-grading process.
- Selection for promotion will be based on defined criteria related to the requirements of the post, and no reference will be made to the nine grounds in the selection process.

Classification of Posts:

Gender neutral job titles will be used and no reference will be made to any of the other eight grounds in classifying positions.

Reasonable Accommodation:

- Reasonable accommodation shall be provided in order to facilitate a person with a disability to apply for positions with the parish, to attend for interview, to engage in employment and to participate in training activities as applicable.
- This commitment is subject to such reasonable accommodation not presenting a disproportionate burden on the parish, unless otherwise deemed appropriate.

Equal Status:

- No person will be discriminated against or treated adversely while availing of goods or services provided by the parish, except where this is legally permitted and undertaken with a legitimate aim. No person availing of goods or services should be subject to harassment or sexual harassment while availing of these.
- Any complaints in this respect should be brought to the attention of your Manager.

Any employee who feels that there has been a breach of this policy or procedure may raise the matter through the parish's grievance procedure. No employee will be subject to adverse treatment as a consequence of raising a complaint in relation to this policy. The parish will monitor the workplace for incidents of victimisation following a complaint.

The parish will take appropriate disciplinary action towards an employee who fails to follow this Equal Opportunities Policy.

Anti-Harassment and Sexual Harassment

Purpose

This policy is designed to assist the parish in providing a work environment free from workplace harassment and/or sexual harassment. The complaints procedure is in place to ensure that any employee who feels that they have been subject to inappropriate behaviour, as defined in this policy, may raise the matter and have it resolved in an appropriate manner. This procedure is supported by the disciplinary procedure, which may be utilised where an accused employee is found to have a case to answer relating to behaviour constituting harassment and/or sexual harassment.

This policy sets out to ensure compliance with the relevant sections of the Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2015, which provide that every individual has a right to a work environment free from harassment or sexual harassment. In the development of this policy regard was had and due consideration given to the guidelines as set out by the Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment and Harassment at Work 2022; in order to ensure, in accordance with the principles of natural justice and fair procedures, best practice and protections were afforded to all parties involved.

Scope

This policy is in place to protect all employees from acts of harassment and/or sexual harassment perpetrated by other employees, members of management, or any other person with whom the employee comes into contact within the course of employment with whom the parish has a relationship. This policy applies where the unacceptable behaviour occurs in the course of employment or any other place attended in the course of employment e.g., an off-site training event, work related conferences and may extend to work-related social events and social media sites.

The protection against harassment and/or sexual harassment afforded under the Employment Equality Acts covers all public and private employees, whether full-time, part-time, permanent or temporary, working under a contract of employment, or through an agency. It also extends to persons providing personal services in another person's home. However, it does not extend to volunteers.

The parish has an expectation that all employees must respect the dignity of others in the workplace and must co-operate with management strategies in the application and promotion of a harassment free work culture.

Preventative measures

The parish commits to adopt preventative measures which reduce the likelihood of harassment and/or sexual harassment occurring in the first instance. Such measures include issuing a comprehensive policy, providing training to all employees upon induction and at appropriate awareness-raising initiatives, regularly monitoring harassment and/or sexual harassment in the workplace through complaints received or through other appropriate means.

The parish commits to training line managers and all staff on strategies to prevent harassment. Any such training will aim to identify the factors which contribute to a working environment free of harassment and to familiarise participants with their responsibilities and problems they are likely to encounter.

Allocation of Responsibilities

Management/parish priests

Management and others in positions of authority have a particular responsibility to ensure that harassment and/or sexual harassment do not occur and that complaints are addressed promptly. To support this, management will:

- provide good example by treating all in the workplace with courtesy and respect, promote awareness of the parish's policy and complaints procedures;
- be vigilant for signs of harassment and take action before a problem escalates;
- respond sensitively to an employee who makes a complaint of harassment;
- explain the procedures to be followed if a complaint of sexual harassment or harassment is made;
- ensure that an alleged perpetrator is treated fairly;
- ensure that an employee making a complaint is not victimised for doing so;
- monitor the situation after a complaint is made to prevent recurrence.

Employees

All employees must respect the dignity of others in the workplace and each and every employee in the parish contribute to a harassment and sexual harassment-free work culture by co-operating with management to eliminate harassment and/or sexual harassment from the workplace. Harassment and/or sexual harassment perpetrated by employees constitutes misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action.

Non-Employees

Harassment and/or sexual harassment by non-employees, volunteers, parishioners and others will not be tolerated by the parish and may lead to termination of contracts, suspension of services, exclusion from a premises or the imposition of other sanctions.

Policy

The parish is committed to providing a work environment free from harassment or sexual harassment. All employees are protected by this policy and are urged to raise any concerns in relation to harassment or sexual harassment through the complaints procedures outlined in this policy. If an employee is witness to harassing behaviour, the employee should make the recipient of the behaviour aware of this policy and urge them to raise the matter through the complaints procedures. An employee is also expected to bring the matter to the attention of management. The parish encourages all employees to challenge harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace in an appropriate and professional manner. The parish is committed to ensuring that those employees who make a complaint, support a complainant or who give evidence in proceedings will not be victimised. It should be noted that where the parish becomes aware of harassment or sexual harassment without a complaint being made (for example by way of exit interview) there remains a duty to act in the absence of a complaint.

The parish commits under this policy to regularly review the policy itself which will be undertaken by a competent person with the appropriate qualifications, training and experience in order to ensure that monitoring, training and reviews occur,

which may be provided by a competent person outside the parish.

What is Harassment?

Harassment is defined as any form of unwanted conduct relating to any of the discriminatory grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and/or 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.

A single incident may constitute harassment.

The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display, circulation of written words, pictures, or other material and/or may take place via social media platforms.

The intention of the alleged perpetrator of the harassment is irrelevant. The fact that the alleged perpetrator has no intention of harassing the employee is no defence, it is the effect of the behaviour on the employee is what is determinative.

The following list contains examples of harassing behaviour; however this is provided for illustrative purposes only and is not an exhaustive list of behaviours. All situations will be considered on their own merits:

- Verbal harassment – jokes, comments, ridicule or songs;
- Written harassment – including faxes, text messages, emails or notices;
- Physical harassment – jostling, shoving or any form of assault;
- Intimidatory harassment – gestures, posturing or threatening poses;
- Visual displays such as posters, emblems or badges;
- Excessive monitoring of work;
- Isolation or exclusion from social activities;
- Unreasonably changing a person's job content or targets;
- Pressure to behave in a manner that the employee thinks is inappropriate, for example being required to dress in a manner unsuited to a person's ethnic or religious background.

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual Harassment is defined as 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 creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

A single incident may constitute sexual harassment.

The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures, or other material.

The intention of the alleged perpetrator of the sexual harassment is irrelevant. The fact that the alleged perpetrator has no intention of sexually harassing the employee is no defence, it is the effect of the behaviour on the employee that is determinative.

The following list contains examples of sexually harassing behaviours; however, this is provided for illustrative purposes only and is not an exhaustive list of behaviours. All situations will be considered on their own merits:

- Physical conduct of a sexual nature — This may include unwanted physical contact such as unnecessary touching, patting, or pinching or brushing against another employee's body, assault, and coercive sexual intercourse;
- Verbal conduct of a sexual nature — This includes unwelcome sexual advances, propositions, or pressure for sexual activity, continued suggestions for social activity outside the workplace after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome, unwanted or offensive flirtations, suggestive remarks, innuendos or lewd comments;
- Non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature — This may include the display of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures, objects, written materials, emails, text-messages, or faxes. It may also include leering, whistling, or making sexually suggestive gestures;
- Gender-based conduct — This includes conduct that denigrates or ridicules or is intimidatory or physically abusive of an employee because of his or her sex such as derogatory or degrading abuse or insults which are gender related.

An essential characteristic of the type of behaviour which constitutes sexual harassment is that it is unwanted by the recipient. This distinguishes it from behaviour which is welcome or reciprocated.

Sexual harassment is unacceptable whether from their employer, fellow employees, volunteers, parishioners including any person with whom the parish might reasonably expect the employee to come into contact in the course of employment.

It is important that all employees understand that the parish is obliged to investigate all complaints of sexual harassment whether or not it was the intention of the alleged harasser to engage in such behaviour. It is important to note that no assumptions will be made about the culpability of the alleged perpetrator during the course of any investigation.

The parish will ensure that reasonable accommodations are available should any party to a complaint require them due to a disability.

Procedure

There are both informal and formal procedures to deal with the issues of harassment and/or sexual harassment at work. Although issues can be addressed through the informal procedure in the first instance, it is acknowledged that this is not always suitable, therefore there is no requirement to exhaust the informal procedure before progressing an issue through the formal process.

Informal Procedure

It is often preferable for all concerned that complaints under this policy are dealt with and resolved informally between the parties whenever possible. This is likely to produce solutions which are speedy, effective and minimise embarrassment and the risk of breaching confidentiality, while also protecting the working relationship.

The objective of the informal approach is to stop the harassment or sexual harassment with minimum conflict and stress for the individuals concerned.

The informal process provides options for resolving disputes including mediation, where appropriate.

In many cases, the employee whose behaviour is

causing offence may be unaware that his or her actions are inappropriate, or it may be that his or her words or actions have been misinterpreted.

The informal procedure consists of a low key and non-confrontational approach by the recipient of the behaviour to the party causing offence to advise him/her of the impact of their behaviour and to ask them to cease behaving in this manner.

The employee who is being harassed should object to the conduct where this is practicable. In some cases, it may be possible and sufficient for the employee to explain clearly to the person engaging in the unwanted conduct that the behaviour in question is not welcome, that it offends them or makes them uncomfortable.

The approach should be made in private and should be non-confrontational. Advice in relation to this procedure should be sought from any manager in the parish.

In circumstances where it is too difficult for an individual to do this alone, an alternative approach would be to seek support from a neighbouring parish or the Vicar Forane. Support can be given to outline any relevant information relating to this policy and procedure and may assist in the resolution of any problems arising informally. For example, in some cases, for objective reasons, (the nature of the grievance may be personal or directly related to the parish priest), it would be unreasonable to expect an employee to bring a case up with the parish priest. In these cases the grievance can be referred directly to the Formal Procedure described below.

In this case the grievance should be dealt with by the Vicar Forane who may appoint an independent third party.

In the event that the parish priest also holds the position of Vicar Forane the complaint should be made to the Area Episcopal Vicar who may also appoint an independent third party.

Formal Procedure

It is acknowledged that it may not always be practical to use the informal procedure to resolve an issue. An employee may not feel comfortable to approach the other party, or the employee may feel

that the issue is too serious to be addressed through the informal procedure. In such circumstances, or where the informal process has failed to resolve an issue, or the sexual harassment and/or harassment continues after the informal procedure has been followed, the formal procedure set out in this policy should be followed.

To ensure procedural fairness, both the complainant and alleged perpetrator will be informed of the following:

- what the formal procedure entails and the relevant timeframe;
- that both parties have the right to be accompanied and/or represented by a colleague;
- that the complaint should be in writing and that the alleged perpetrator will be given full details in writing of the nature of the complaint, including written statements and any other documentation or evidence including social media communications, CCTV footage, witness statements, interview notes and records of meetings held with the witnesses;
- that the alleged perpetrator will be given time to consider the documentation and an opportunity to respond;
- that confidentiality will be maintained throughout an investigation to the greatest extent consistent with the requirements of fairness;
- that a written record will be kept of all meetings and inquiries;
- that the investigation, having considered all of the evidence before it and the representations made to it, will produce a written report to both parties outlining its findings and the reasons for its final decision;
- that a right of appeal exists for both parties and the time limits and procedures involved.

Investigation of any complaint will be handled with fairness, sensitivity and with due respect for the rights of both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator and the relevant data protection legislation will be adhered to throughout the investigation process.

A formal investigation of the complaint undertaken is with a view to determining the facts of the case.

In all cases there will be no inference of guilt against the alleged perpetrator, and they will be afforded a fair opportunity to respond to the allegation.

In order to make a formal complaint an initial approach may be made to any manager regarding the issue. Although the initial complaint may be provided verbally, it is a requirement that the complaint is lodged in writing to ensure that a fair process may be followed. Where assistance is required to put the complaint in writing, the employee should consult their manager or a designated member of management to arrange this.

The complaint should state:

- The name of the alleged perpetrator;
- The nature of alleged harassment i.e., the behaviours/conduct constituting harassment/sexual harassment;
- Dates/times and locations of where and when the alleged harassment/sexual harassment occurred; Names of witnesses to any alleged incidents;
- Details of any action already taken to stop the harassment/sexual harassment;
- Consent to your identity and the facts of the allegation being disclosed to the alleged perpetrator. This is required in order to allow the parish to investigate and to take action in appropriate circumstances.

The alleged perpetrator(s) will be notified in writing that a complaint has been made against him/her and provided with a copy of this complaint. The person investigating the complaint will indicate the relevant timeframe for investigation of the complaint, however such timeframes may be extended where necessary. The alleged perpetrator(s) will be given time to consider the documentation and shall be afforded a fair opportunity to respond to the allegation(s).

All employees involved in an investigation must respect the need for confidentiality; a failure to do so may represent a serious disciplinary offence. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout an investigation to the greatest extent consistent with the requirements of fairness.

The parish may deem it appropriate for interim arrangements to be put in place to facilitate all concerned parties, where possible, pending the outcome of the investigation. Depending on the circumstances of the case, this may include for example, alternative line management structure, change of workstations, or requesting the complainant and/or alleged perpetrator to stay at home on fully paid leave. It is important to note that any such measure does not amount to a penalisation or sanction on any of the parties concerned.

Investigation Procedure

The investigation will be conducted in accordance with the parish's Anti-Harassment & Sexual Harassment Policy and will be governed by Terms of Reference which will detail the likely time scale for its completion (an indicative timeframe will be outlined) and the scope of the investigation, indicating that the investigator(s) will consider whether the accused employee/ non-employee (i.e., alleged perpetrator) has a case to answer.

The investigation will be conducted by either an independent member of management or external assistance may be necessary to deal with complaints in some circumstances so as to ensure impartiality, objectivity and fairness.

Any investigating officer should have received appropriate training. While it is preferable that at least two people should investigate a complaint, it is acknowledged that this may not always be practicable. Such an investigation team, where appointed, should as far as practicable, have gender balance and ideally should seek to ensure diversity.

The investigation will be conducted thoroughly, objectively, sensitively and with due respect for the rights of both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator. Utmost confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation to the greatest extent consistent with the requirements of fairness. Due respect will be had for the rights of the complainant, the alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses involved in the process.

Following receipt of the complaint in writing, full details being provided to the alleged perpetrator

and the alleged perpetrator having been afforded the facility to respond initially in writing, the investigator(s) will meet with the complainant in the first instance to learn more regarding the complaint and to put the alleged perpetrator's responses to the complainant. Next, the alleged perpetrator will be invited to a meeting to explore their responses to the complaint and to put any relevant evidence to them. Evidence will be provided in advance of the meeting(s) in order to allow the alleged perpetrator to prepare their response to that evidence.

As many interviews as are necessary will be conducted until the investigator(s) is/are satisfied that all evidence has been collected and all parties have had a fair opportunity to state their case. Witnesses may also be interviewed with a view to establishing the facts surrounding the allegation(s).

Statements from the complainant, the alleged perpetrator and any witnesses will be recorded in writing.

All parties required to attend investigation meetings are entitled to be accompanied by a representative, whose role is to provide moral support, oversee the process and ensure that the parties are afforded a fair opportunity to respond and provide evidence at any investigation meetings.

Every effort will be made to carry out and complete the investigation as quickly as possible and preferably within an agreed timeframe.

All evidence and representations made in respect of the complaint will be considered and a written report will issue to both parties outlining its findings and the reasons for its final decision. Both parties will be given the opportunity to comment on the findings before any action is decided upon by management. On completion of the investigation the investigator(s) will submit a written report to a member of management, containing the findings of the investigation.

Investigation Outcomes

Where an accused perpetrator has a case to answer, both parties will be informed of this outcome, and the relevant level of management will also be advised. Management will take appropriate action

based on the outcome of the investigation. This may include formal disciplinary action in line with the parish's disciplinary procedure up to and including dismissal, and/ or training, or another appropriate intervention deemed necessary to prevent a recurrence of the behaviour.

The parish will also consider providing further supervision, and/or reallocation of work. Prior to any disciplinary action being taken, a fair disciplinary hearing will be held in line with the parish's disciplinary procedure. It is important that employees are aware that certain acts of harassment or sexual harassment may be deemed gross misconduct by the parish and may result in summary dismissal.

Where non-employees are a party to a complaint and the investigation concludes that they have a case to answer, then sanctions as deemed appropriate in the circumstances may be determined such as the termination of contracts, suspension of service, or exclusion from premises.

Where the investigative process determines that there is no case to answer, there will be no negative inference against any party to the complaint. All parties to the complaint will be expected to continue working as normal, and to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at work.

Where it is found that the complaint was malicious or vexatious, then a disciplinary hearing will be held with the complainant to explore this further. Only in this situation only may a disciplinary sanction be imposed on the complainant. Lodging a malicious or vexatious complaint is a serious disciplinary offence, and, depending on the seriousness of the issue, may be deemed gross misconduct by the parish and may result in summary dismissal.

In all cases, whether the investigation concludes there is a case to answer or otherwise, the workplace will be monitored to ensure that the parties to the complaint conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and do not engage in any improper conduct. Appropriate support will be made available to both parties. The parish will take such action as is required to eliminate the risk of that behaviour recurring or continuing and will keep records of interventions used for this purpose.

Appeal

The parish will ensure that the right to appeal of the initial decision is available to either party within a reasonable period and the grounds of appeal should be outlined in writing no later than 5 working days following receipt of the investigation outcome from a member of management. Such appeals will be heard by a manager not previously involved in the investigation and independent advice and support will be sought if required.

Victimisation

No person engaging in the procedures outlined here will be subject to unfavourable treatment for their role in the process, whether they are making a complaint in good faith, supporting a complainant, giving evidence in the proceedings, having opposed an act which is unlawful under the Employment Equality Acts or having given notice of intention to do any of the foregoing, except where they are found to have a case to answer under the policy.

Third Party Harassment/Sexual Harassment

The procedures outlined in this policy should be employed to deal with harassment or sexual harassment by a third party. Sanctions which may be imposed on a third party may include exclusion from the premises, termination of a contract, or other measures to prevent the recurrence of the inappropriate behaviour.

Review

The parish is committed to regularly reviewing the policy and procedures as well as a commitment to update the policy as appropriate to take account of changes in the law, relevant case law or other developments. Any review will be undertaken by a competent person with the appropriate qualifications, training and experience who will also ensure that monitoring, training and reviews occur in the workplace. Support for this role may be provided by a competent person outside the parish.

Complaint to the Workplace Relations Commission

Using the procedure as set out by the parish will not affect an employee's right to make a complaint under the Employment Equality Acts. Should an employee decide to make a complaint to a third party under these Acts then statutory time limits will apply. A complaint of harassment or sexual harassment to a third party (i.e., the Workplace Relations Commission) must be made within 6 months of the alleged occurrence, or most recent occurrence, of such harassment. The time limit of six months may be extended by up to a maximum period of 12 months for reasonable cause. It is important to note that statutory time limits will not be paused pending the outcome of the investigation and shall continue to run.

Anti-Bullying

Purpose

This policy is designed to assist the parish in providing a work environment free from workplace bullying. The complaints procedure is in place to ensure that any employee who feels that they have been subject to inappropriate behaviour, as defined in this policy, may raise the matter and have it resolved in an appropriate manner. This procedure is supported by the disciplinary procedure, which may be utilised where an employee is found guilty of engaging in behaviour constituting bullying.

This policy sets out to ensure that the parish fulfils its legal responsibilities under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, with regard to workplace bullying. This policy also complies with the requirements set out in The Industrial Relations Act 1990 (Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work) Order 2020, SI No. 674 of 2020.

Scope

This policy is in place to protect all employees from acts of bullying perpetrated by other employees, members of management, or any other person with whom the employee comes into contact in the course of employment e.g. a supplier or contractor. This policy applies where the unacceptable behaviour occurs in the workplace, or any other place attended in the course of employment e.g. an off-site training event.

Policy

The parish is committed to providing a work environment free from bullying and ensuring that all employees are treated with dignity and respect.

All employees are protected by this policy and are urged to raise any concerns in relation to workplace bullying through the complaints procedures outlined in this policy. If you are a witness to bullying behaviour, you should make the recipient of the behaviour aware of this policy and urge them to raise the matter through the complaints procedures. You are also expected to bring the matter to the attention of management.

All employees have a responsibility in creating and contributing to the maintenance of a work

environment free from bullying or conduct likely to contribute to bullying. Employees will not be victimised for involvement in complaints.

What is Workplace Bullying?

Workplace 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 in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but, as a once off incident, is not considered to be bullying.

Bullying activities involve actions and behavioural patterns spoken and/or written and could include the use of cyber or digital means for the goal of bullying. The following list contains examples of bullying behaviours; however, this is provided for illustrative purposes only and is not an exhaustive list. All situations will be considered on their own merits:

- Exclusion with negative consequences; verbal abuse/insults;
- Being treated less favourably than colleagues in similar roles;
- Belittling a person's opinion;
- Disseminating malicious rumours, gossip or innuendo;
- Socially excluding or isolating a person within the workplace;
- Intrusion – pestering, spying or stalking;
- Intimidation/aggressive interactions; excessive monitoring of work;
- Withholding information necessary for proper performance of a person's job;
- Repeatedly manipulating a person's job content and targets;
- Blaming a person for things beyond their control;
- Use of aggressive and obscene language;
- Other menacing behaviour.

What is Not Bullying?

Behaviours that do not amount to bullying include:

- Objective criticism and corrections that are intended to provide constructive feedback to an employee and/or are intended to assist the employee with their work;
- Expressing differences of opinion strongly;
- 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 parish or manager relating to the management and direction of employees (for example managing a worker's performance, taking reasonable disciplinary actions, or assigning work);
- Workplace conflict where people disagree or disregard the others' point of view;
- Actions taken which may be justified on health and safety grounds will also not be considered to be bullying.

Procedure

There are both informal and formal procedures to deal with the issue of bullying at work. Although the parish would prefer that issues are addressed through the informal procedures in the first instance, it is acknowledged that this is not always suitable, therefore there is no requirement to exhaust the informal procedure before progressing an issue through the formal process.

In all instances the parish will act reasonably to prevent workplace bullying patterns forming and where a complaint is made, they will respond reasonably, assess the complaint, record the actions taken and initiate a suitable response on a case-by-case basis.

Informal Procedure

It is often preferable for all concerned that complaints under this policy are dealt with and resolved informally between the parties whenever possible. This is likely to produce solutions which are speedy, effective and minimise embarrassment and the risk of breaching confidentiality, while also protecting the working relationship.

The objective of the informal approach is to stop the bullying with the minimum conflict and stress for the individuals concerned.

In many cases, the employee whose behaviour is causing offence may be unaware that his or her actions are inappropriate, or it may be that his or her words or actions have been misinterpreted. In such cases, every attempt should be made to clear up any misunderstanding quickly, on an informal basis.

The informal process provides options for resolving disputes including mediation, where appropriate.

Initial Informal Procedure

The informal procedure consists of a low key and non-confrontational approach by the recipient of the behaviour to the party causing offence to advise him/her of the impact of their behaviour and to ask them to cease behaving in this manner. The approach should be made in private and should be non-confrontational.

If suitable, the individual who perceives that they are the recipient of the behaviour should put their concerns in writing, focusing on the offending acts and their effects on them.

Where an employee perceives that the concerns relate to a parish priest, the employee may wish to discuss the matter informally with a neighbouring parish or the Vicar Forane.

In the event that the parish priest also holds the position of Vicar Forane the complaint should be made to the Area Episcopal Vicar who may also appoint an independent third party.

A brief written record, in line with relevant data protection legislation, should be kept of the matter and agreed outcomes and dates noted by the relevant person responsible for managing the complaint.

The employee may wish to avail of the support of a Contact Person (where applicable) or someone who acts in a confidential, supportive capacity for the complainant, who offers guidance on the various options in line with the parish's policies and procedures, but who is not involved in the investigation of the complaint. Advice in relation to this procedure should be sought from the parish.

Secondary Informal Procedure

If the initial informal procedure is unsuccessful, or if the employee or parish deem it inappropriate for the seriousness of the issues, a secondary, more protracted, informal procedure should then be initiated.

The parish will appoint someone to hear the employee's allegations. The complaint may be verbal or written. If verbal, a written note of what is complained of should be taken by the appointed person and a copy given to the employee.

The person (who may be a manager) appointed to manage the complaint will then establish the facts, the context, and the next course of action in dealing with the matter under the informal procedure.

If the complaint concerns alleged bullying as defined and includes concrete examples of inappropriate behaviour, the person(s) complained against should be presented with the complaint and their response established. Thereafter, a method will be agreed to progress the issue to resolution so that both parties can return to a harmonious working environment without bullying being a factor.

If the behaviour complained of does not concern alleged bullying as defined, an alternative approach will be put in place and a rationale recorded. If no concrete examples are available, it will be deemed that there is no complaint to be answered by the person(s) complained of as they have no recourse to repudiating an accusation that does not include specifics.

Where bullying behaviour has been partly or fully identified, steps to stop the behaviour and monitor the situation along with specified lines will be implemented with both parties. This may involve a direct or indirect approach and possible resolution through a programme to change behaviour, including mediation.

Enough time needs to be allowed for any ongoing monitoring process to be successful. Where appropriate, it may be necessary to consider if other working arrangements are required in the interim.

The person appointed for managing the complaint

should keep a nominal record of all stages in line with relevant data protection legislation.

Information disclosed in the course of mediation must remain within the mediation process and must not be given by the mediator to anyone or to an investigator if there is a subsequent investigation at formal stage.

Confidentiality is crucial for this stage to be effective and breaches of confidentiality may be addressed in line with the parish's disciplinary procedure.

Formal Procedure

It is good practice that all informal resolution avenues - as set out above - should be contemplated and where appropriate, exhausted before the formal procedure is invoked. Proceeding to a formal process should not be viewed as automatic and it is important that it is recognised that it is the reasonable evidence-based decision of management.

In order to make a formal complaint an initial approach may be made to any manager regarding the issue. Although the initial complaint may be provided verbally, it is a requirement that the complaint is lodged in writing, signed and dated, to ensure that a fair process may be followed. Where assistance is required to put the complaint in writing, the employee should consult their manager to arrange this. The complaint should state:

- The name of the person(s) complained of (alleged bully);
- The nature of alleged bullying i.e. the behaviours/conduct constituting bullying;
- Dates/times and locations of where and when the alleged bullying occurred;
- Names of witnesses to any alleged incidents;
- Details of any action already taken to stop the bullying;
- Consent to your identity and the facts of the allegation being disclosed to the alleged bully. This is required in order to allow the parish to take action in appropriate circumstances.

If the behaviour complained of does not concern bullying as defined, an alternative approach may be put in place and a rationale recorded. If there

are no concrete examples given, it will be deemed that there is no complaint to be answered by the person(s) complained of as they have no recourse to repudiating an accusation that doesn't give any specifics.

Where an alternative approach is not deemed appropriate, the person(s) complained of will be notified in writing that a complaint has been made against him/her and provided with a copy of this complaint. The person investigating the complaint will indicate a timeframe for the resolution of the complaint, however such timeframes may be extended where necessary. They shall be afforded a fair opportunity to respond to the allegation(s), normally five working days.

All employees involved in an investigation must respect the need for confidentiality – failure to do so may represent a serious disciplinary offence.

Confidentiality is assured in so far as it is reasonably practicable. Both parties may be suspended with pay, without any negative inference, pending the outcome of an investigation, where deemed appropriate by management. However, where this is not possible, the parties to the complaint will be expected to maintain a positive working relationship.

Investigation Procedure

The investigation will be conducted in accordance with the parish's Anti-Bullying Policy and will be governed by Terms of Reference which will detail the likely time scale for its completion (an indicative timeframe will be outlined) and the scope of the investigation, indicating that the investigator(s) will consider, based on the facts before them whether the behaviour(s) complained of, on the balance of probabilities, have occurred.

The investigation will be conducted by an independent member of management or external assistance may be necessary to deal with complaints in some circumstances so as to ensure impartiality, objectivity and fairness. The investigation will be conducted thoroughly, objectively and with sensitivity. Utmost confidentiality will be protected in so far as it is reasonably practicable. Due respect will be had for the rights of the complainant, the person(s) complained of and any witnesses involved in the process.

The investigator(s) will meet with the complainant in the first instance to learn more regarding the complaint and to put the responses of the person(s) complained of to the complainant. Next, the person(s) complained of will be invited to a meeting to explore their responses to the complaint and to put any relevant evidence to them. Evidence will be provided in advance of the meetings in order to allow the employee to prepare their responses to that evidence.

As many interviews as are necessary will be conducted until the investigator(s) is/are satisfied that all evidence has been collected and all parties have had a fair opportunity to state their case. Witnesses may also be interviewed with a view to establishing the facts surrounding the allegation(s).

Statements from the complainant, the person(s) complained of and any witnesses will be recorded in writing.

All parties required to attend investigation meetings are entitled to be accompanied by a representative, whose role is to provide moral support, oversee the process and ensure that the interviewee is afforded a fair opportunity to respond and provide evidence at any investigation meetings.

Every effort will be made to carry out and complete the investigation as quickly as possible and preferably within an agreed timeframe. On completion of the investigation, the investigator(s) will submit a written report to a member of management, containing the findings of the investigation. Both parties will be given the opportunity to comment on the findings before any action is decided upon by management.

The complainant and the person(s) complained of will be informed in writing of the findings of the investigation, i.e. whether the behaviour complained of occurred, did not occur, or whether the complaint is deemed to be malicious or vexatious.

Investigation Outcomes

Where a complaint is upheld, both parties will be informed of this outcome, and the relevant level of management will also be advised. Management will take appropriate action based on the outcome of the investigation. This may include formal disciplinary

action in line with the parish's disciplinary procedure, or training, or another appropriate intervention deemed necessary to prevent a recurrence of the behaviour. Action (if any) taken under the disciplinary procedure will be kept confidential.

The parish will also consider providing further supervision or re-assignment of work. Prior to any disciplinary action being taken, a fair disciplinary hearing will be held in line with the parish's disciplinary procedure. It is important that employees are aware that certain acts of bullying may be deemed gross misconduct by the parish and may result in summary dismissal.

Where an investigation is inconclusive, and therefore not upheld, there will be no negative inference against any party to the complaint. All parties to the complaint will be expected to continue working as normal, and to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at work

Where it is found that the complaint was malicious or vexatious, then a disciplinary hearing will be held with the complainant to explore this further. Only in this situation may a disciplinary sanction be imposed on the complainant. Lodging a malicious or vexatious complaint is a serious disciplinary offence, and, depending on the seriousness of the issue, may be deemed gross misconduct by the parish and may result in summary dismissal.

In all cases, whether the complaint is upheld or otherwise, the workplace will be monitored to ensure that the parties to the complaint conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and do not engage in any improper conduct. Appropriate support will be made available to both parties. The parish will take such action as is required to eliminate the risk of that behaviour recurring or continuing and will keep records of interventions used for this purpose.

Appeal

Either party may appeal the decision, outlining in writing to management the reason for the appeal. Such appeals will be heard, normally within five working days, by a manager not previously involved in the investigation and independent advice and support will be sought if required.

Responsibilities

Management will endeavour to ensure that this policy is communicated to all employees and will ensure that the policy is maintained and updated in line with legislative changes and any amendments to the relevant Code of Practice. Management will act appropriately and in line with this policy in order to eliminate any workplace bullying.

Management has a particular responsibility to prevent workplace bullying and is expected to lead by example, promote awareness of this policy, be vigilant for signs of bullying, tackle problems before they escalate, deal sensitively with employees involved in a bullying complaint and monitor the situation in the workplace so that bullying does not occur or reoccur.

Employees are expected to comply with this policy and to raise issues of concern through the procedures outlined in the policy.

Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Purpose

This policy deals with annual leave and public holidays. Annual leave is leave provided for rest and recreation and to facilitate employees to reconcile their work and family responsibilities. This policy demonstrates compliance with the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997-2015 in relation to annual leave and public holidays. It also sets out employee rights and obligations in relation to these forms of leave.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

Policy

Annual Leave

All employees are entitled to avail of annual leave, details of which are provided in the statement of terms and conditions of employment. Employees are encouraged to avail of their annual leave during the leave year to which it relates. Employees may apply to take their annual leave in any pattern which they feel is appropriate to their own personal needs, however the approval of leave lies at the discretion of management. Applications for leave of 2 weeks or more at any one time will be considered in light of parish requirements and may be approved or otherwise at the discretion of management.

Pay for annual leave will be provided at the normal daily rate. Payment in lieu of statutory annual leave is not permitted other than on termination of employment. Where, on termination of employment, an employee has availed of more annual leave than has been accrued in the leave year, a deduction may be made from the employees final pay.

All applications for annual leave must be made in writing. Annual leave is granted subject to management approval in advance of the leave being taken.

Taking of Leave

Annual Leave must be taken within the leave year to which it relates, or with the parish's consent, within 6 months of the next leave year.

Taking into account the need for the employee to reconcile work and family responsibilities and

to minimise the impact on the parish, employees should take their leave in the following format:

- January - March - One full week;
- April - August - two consecutive weeks;
- September - December – One full week.

Leave Carry Over

Employees are requested in-so-far as is possible, to take their Annual Leave entitlement in the year to which it relates. Where this is not possible, a request may be made to the line manager to carry forward a maximum of _____ days. These must be taken within the first 6 months of the following leave year.

Notice of Annual Leave

Employees must request Annual Leave at least _____ weeks in advance from their manager using the agreed procedure for requesting leave. Exceptions may be granted where Annual Leave is being requested at short notice for specific reasons.

Public Holidays

It is the policy of the parish to provide a benefit in respect of ten public holidays, namely;

- January 1st
- First Monday in February, or 1 February if the date falls on a Friday (from 2023 onwards)
- March 17th
- Easter Monday
- First Monday of May
- First Monday of June
- First Monday of August
- Last Monday of October
- December 25th
- December 26th

In respect of each public holiday, an employee is entitled to either:

- A paid day off on the holiday; or
- A paid day off within a month; or
- An extra day's annual leave; or
- An extra day's pay as the parish may decide.

If the public holiday falls on a day on which the employee normally works, the employee is entitled to 1 of the benefits outlined above in respect of the day.

There is no qualification requirement in respect of public holidays for employees working fulltime.

If the public holiday falls on a day on which the employee does not normally work, the employee is entitled to one fifth of his/her normal weekly wage as a benefit in respect of the day.

Where the public holiday falls on a normal working day for a part-time employee, the benefit will be one of those outlined above for full-time employees, calculated on the basis of the normal hours last worked by the part-time employee.

In order for a part-time employee to qualify for a benefit in respect of a public holiday they must have worked at least 40 hours during the five weeks ending on the day before the public holiday.

Holy Days

In addition to the above public holiday entitlements, the parish will allow _____ as a paid/unpaid parish day.

The parish reserves the right to retract or add to these non-statutory parish days.

Pay in Lieu of Leave

Employees will not be paid in lieu of untaken statutory leave. At the parish's discretion, employees may be paid in lieu of untaken non- statutory leave.

Sick Leave and Fitness to Work

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all employees are aware of their rights and obligations in relation to absence from work due to sickness.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

Policy

The parish has an expectation of regular attendance at work by all employees. However, it is acknowledged that employees may, from time to time, be absent from work due to illness. It is the policy of the parish to treat all such absences in a fair and consistent manner, while weighing up the impact of such absences on the ability of the parish to function effectively.

The parish expects acceptable levels of attendance from employees in fulfilling their statement of terms and conditions of employment. To this end, management retain the right at any time during employment to refer an employee to a suitable medical practitioner nominated solely and exclusively by the parish and to seek a full medical report in order to make reasonable decisions in relation to the employee's capacity to fulfil their terms and conditions of employment.

Circumstances which are likely to give rise to such a report being sought are where absence is excessive, there are patterns of absence leading to a suspicion of abuse of sick leave or where it is felt that employee's health is having a negative impact on work performance. The parish is committed to encouraging employees to return to work following periods of absence. However, persistent and/or excessive absenteeism may result in disciplinary action or possible termination of the employee's contract of employment.

The parish is committed to protecting the rights of any employee who has a disability and will engage with such employee in considering whether there are appropriate measures which they could reasonably take to support the person to carry out the required duties of their role. All cases of disability will be dealt with in a fair and consistent manner.

Short-Term Absence Procedure

Any employee who is unable to attend work through illness must notify the parish in advance of their normal start time on the first day of absence. The employee is required to contact their manager directly by phone. A message should only be left with a colleague of the employee at the same level in exceptional circumstances and all efforts should be made to contact the manager.

It is the responsibility of the employee to notify the parish of their absence personally. Notification from a friend, other family member etc. will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances. When notifying the parish of the absence it is important to provide details of the expected duration of absence.

Where an absence extends beyond this expected return to work date, there is a requirement that the employee will again notify the parish of their ongoing absence in advance of their normal start time. Medical certificates must be provided as per the parish policy.

Records will be retained of employee sick leave and where this is deemed excessive, or where patterns of leave are identified, the employee will be notified of the parish's concerns and the steps that will be taken. Such matters may be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure where appropriate.

Longer -Term Absence

An employee absent on longer term sick leave is still expected to adhere to the short-term sick leave reporting procedures during their initial period of absence including the requirement to submit a medical certificate in respect of such absences as per the parish's policy.

In the case of longer-term absence, medical certificates must be forwarded to your manager at the beginning of each week. Where absence is expected to be of a duration exceeding one month, an employee may make an arrangement to forward certificates less frequently than this, e.g. monthly. However, such an arrangement may only be initiated subject to prior approval by management. Where approval is not expressly provided, a failure to provide weekly certificates in respect of absence on sick leave may constitute a serious disciplinary offence.

Attendance Management

All employees are expected to attend work each day as agreed in their statement of terms and conditions of employment. A failure to comply with this requirement may lead to a frustration of the contract, or the need to initiate the disciplinary procedure. Where exceptional circumstances exist, such as an employee developing a disability, the parish may attempt to facilitate that employee through the provision of reasonable accommodation.

Following each period of absence an employee is required to meet with their manager to explain the reason for their absence, and to outline whether they have now returned to full health. An employee should bring any difficulty at work impacting on attendance to the attention of their manager, in order that appropriate steps may be taken to resolve the issue. The meeting will also be used as a catch-up to update the employee on developments at work during their absence. This is subject to specific parish guidelines.

Statutory Sick Pay Scheme Benefit

An eligible employee is entitled to avail of statutory sick pay in line with the statutory sick pay scheme. A rate of payment for statutory sick leave of 70% of the employee's normal wages will be paid by the parish (up to a maximum €110 per day).

To qualify for the statutory sick pay scheme an employee must be in employment for a minimum of thirteen weeks' continuous service. An employee seeking to avail of statutory sick pay must provide their manager with a certificate from a registered medical practitioner stating they are unfit to work due to illness or injury to cover each day of absence.

The first day in a calendar year that an employee is incapable of working due to illness or injury shall be the employee's first statutory sick leave day, and any subsequent statutory sick leave days shall be construed accordingly.

Employees must comply fully with the notification requirements set out above and you must submit any relevant medical certificates in line with this policy. Backdated or amended medical certificates will not be accepted.

Parish Sick Pay Benefit

The parish operates a discretionary sick pay scheme as an occupational benefit, this benefit is inclusive of statutory sick pay and not in addition to.

To be eligible to receive payment under the scheme colleagues must have completed _____ months of continuous service.

Employees must comply fully with the notification requirements set out above and you must submit any relevant medical certificates in line with this policy. Backdated or amended medical certificates will not be accepted.

For any continuous instances of greater than 3 days sick leave there will be a deduction applied by payroll from the fourth day, this deduction is equivalent to the illness benefit claimable from the Department of Social Protection (DSP). This deduction will be made in the payroll following the illness, i.e. employees will be paid in full and then the social welfare payment will be recovered in the next payroll.

As part of the parish benefit, eligible employees may receive occupational sick pay up to a maximum of _____ instances per calendar year, January to December. Parish sick pay applies from day 1 of an absence.

Unused sick pay benefit does not carry over into the new calendar year.

Employees will be ineligible to receive parish sick pay during any period where the employee is within their notice period, having tendered their resignation.

Employees are not permitted to undertake paid or unpaid employment while on certified sick leave and/or in receipt of parish sick pay benefit.

The parish reserves the right to withdraw payment at any time from any employee who is found to be abusing the scheme or who fails to comply with the eligibility requirements set out above.

Maternity Leave

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the parish's compliance with the Maternity Protection Acts, 1994 and 2004, and associated regulations as issued, whilst also protecting the rights of employees under this legislation.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and provides protection and leave entitlements for expectant employees. The policy also outlines the entitlement of an expectant father to paid time off to attend ante-natal classes.

Policy

Maternity Leave

All eligible employees are entitled to avail of up to 26 weeks' basic maternity leave. Leave must commence at least 2 weeks before the end of the expected week of confinement and at least 4 weeks' leave must be taken following the birth of the child.

Additional Maternity Leave

An additional period of up to 16 weeks' leave may be taken at the discretion of the employee immediately following the initial maternity leave period.

Premature Birth

In the event of a premature birth, the employee may be entitled to an extended maternity leave for premature birth. Maternity leave will still commence on the day of the premature birth, and the 'Relevant Department' should be notified so the maternity leave can commence immediately.

The employee will benefit from an extension of their leave after 26 weeks' have expired. The additional period to be added will be the number of weeks from the baby's actual date of birth up to two weeks before the expected date of confinement which would have been the 37th week of the pregnancy, at which point the current entitlement to 26 weeks' leave and benefit would normally begin.

Maternity Leave Applications and Notification of Pregnancy/Breastfeeding

A pregnant employee should advise the parish of their pregnancy as soon as possible in order that measures may be taken to protect their health and safety at work and that of their developing child. In addition, employees who are breastfeeding for up to 24 months following the birth of their child should also notify the parish.

A minimum of 4 weeks' notice is required from an employee intending to avail of maternity leave and/or additional maternity leave prior to the leave commencing. A medical certificate confirming the pregnancy and the expected date of confinement must be provided at this time.

Notification of leave must be made on the appropriate form which may be obtained from the employee's manager.

Ante-Natal and Post-Natal Care

A pregnant employee is entitled to paid time off to attend ante-natal medical care appointments, and for post-natal medical appointments for up to 14 weeks after the birth of their child. The entitlement to paid time off or for a reduction in working time for post-natal care is extended to 24 months where the employee is breastfeeding. At least 2 weeks written notification must be provided to the parish, except in the case of the first appointment. Where possible, appointments should be scheduled at the beginning or at the end of the working day. If the appointment finishes during the working day, the employee is expected to return to work.

Time Off for Ante-Natal Classes

Eligible pregnant employees are entitled to paid time off to attend 1 complete set of ante-natal classes (other than the last 3 classes in a set). An expectant father is entitled to paid time off to attend the last 2 ante-natal classes in a set. This is a once off entitlement in respect of one pregnancy only. However, where an employee is unable to attend a class through no fault of their own, they may be permitted to attend that class on a subsequent birth. At least 2 weeks' notice of the intention to avail of this leave must be provided before the class and appropriate documentation submitted.

Return to Work

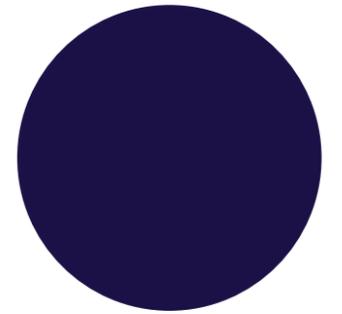
Employees are required to provide at least 4 weeks written notice of their intention to return to work following leave. This notice should confirm the intended return to work date. Where possible employees will return to the position held immediately prior to the commencement of leave (provided this was their normal position), however where this is not feasible, they may return to work to suitable alternative employment that is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

Breastfeeding on Return to Work

Should an employee be breastfeeding on return to work, and their child is under 24 months old, the parish may facilitate a temporary reduction of working hours, without loss of pay, for the purposes of breastfeeding. The employee must provide notification of their intention to avail of this entitlement at least 4 weeks before the proposed return to work date.

Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Annual leave and public holiday benefits will continue to accrue during the period of maternity leave and additional maternity leave.



Adoptive Leave

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the parish's compliance with the Adoptive Leave Acts, the Family Leave and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, and associated regulations as issued, whilst also protecting the rights of employees under this legislation.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and provides protection and leave entitlements for all qualifying adopters in the circumstances outlined. This policy also applies to an employee who is a surviving parent in whose care a child has been placed or is to be placed with a view to the making of an adoption order, or to the effecting of a foreign adoption, where his or her spouse, civil partner or cohabitant was the qualifying adopter in relation to the child and the qualifying adopter concerned has died.

'Qualifying adopter' is the member of the couple who is chosen by the couple to be the qualifying adopter for the purposes of Family Leave and Miscellaneous Provisions Act.

An employee may not avail of adoptive leave where the person avails of paternity leave under the Paternity Leave and Benefit Act.

Policy Adoptive Leave

In line with current legislation, all employed qualifying adopters are entitled to avail of up to 24 weeks' adoptive leave. Leave commences on the actual date of placement.

Additional Adoptive Leave

An additional period of up to 16 weeks' leave may be taken at the discretion of the employee immediately following the initial adoptive leave period.

Adoptive Leave Applications Procedure

A minimum of 4 weeks' notice is required from an employee intending to avail of adoptive leave and/or additional adoptive leave prior to the expected date of placement. In the case of an Irish adoption a certificate of placement should be forwarded within 4 weeks of the date of placement. In the case of a foreign adoption, a declaration of eligibility and

suitability must be produced as soon as reasonably practicable, with a certificate of placement to be forwarded as soon as it is received by the employee.

Notification of leave must be made on the appropriate form which may be obtained from the employee's manager.

Leave to Attend Classes and Meetings in Advance of the Adoption

Any employee involved in the adoption process is permitted to avail of paid time off to attend pre-adoption classes and meetings which they are obliged to attend, provided the meetings are held within the State. Two weeks' written notice of the first request must be provided. Evidence of the requirement to attend the class or meeting may be sought by the parish.

Leave in Advance of Foreign Adoptions

In the case of a foreign adoption, qualifying adopters may avail of some of their additional leave before the placement of the child for the purposes of familiarisation with the child in advance of the adoption. Four weeks' written notice of this intention must be provided, and a declaration of suitability and eligibility must also be supplied. This entitlement is in addition to the time permitted to attend classes and meetings in the State.

Return to Work

Employees are required to provide at least 4 weeks' written notice of their intention to return to work following leave. This notice should confirm the intended return to work date. Where possible the employee will return to the position held immediately prior to the commencement of leave (provided this was their normal position), however where this is not feasible, the employee may return to work to suitable alternative employment that is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Annual leave and public holiday benefits will continue to accrue for the period of adoptive leave and additional adoptive leave.

Parental Leave

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide unpaid leave to qualifying parents in order to facilitate them to care for their child. This policy demonstrates the parish's compliance with the Parental Leave Acts, the Family Leave and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, and subsequent amendments. This policy is designed to protect the rights of employees under this legislation.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees who are natural parents, qualifying adopters (or a surviving parent) and their spouse, civil partner or cohabitant or who are acting in loco parentis to a child under the relevant age.

Policy

All qualifying employees who are natural parents, qualifying adopters (or a surviving parent), or who are persons acting in loco parentis to a child under the relevant age have an entitlement to avail of up to 26 working weeks' parental leave in respect of that child over a defined period of time.

Parental leave is unpaid leave. However, employees should note that where a block of leave is taken with the result that no PRSI contributions will be made by the parish or employee in that week, then the 'Relevant Department' may make PRSI contributions on the employee's behalf. This is subject to the employee notifying the 'Relevant Department' of the fact that they are on leave.

Who is a qualifying employee?

In order to qualify for parental leave an employee must meet the following criteria:

- he/she must have completed 12 months' service with the parish to qualify for 26 working weeks leave, or
- where the child is about to go over the relevant age, and the employee has completed more than 3 months service but less than 12, he/she will be entitled to avail of 1 working week of leave per completed month of service.

Qualifying Child?

The relevant age of the child in respect of whom leave may be taken may vary depending on certain factors. Parental leave is allowed in respect of a child:

- aged under 12 years of age, or
- within two years of an adoption order where the child is adopted between the ages of 10 and 12 years, or aged under 16 years in the case of a child with a disability/ long term illness.

Applications Procedure

Applications for parental leave must be made in writing setting out the commencement of parental leave proposed to be taken at least 6 weeks prior to the intended commencement of leave. A response to this application will be issued by the parish 4 weeks before the intended commencement of leave indicating whether the leave can be approved, or whether it is necessary to postpone the leave.

Postponement of leave will not exceed 6 months except where this is permitted by legislation and necessary for operational reasons. In all cases discussion will be held to establish a suitable new timing for the leave. Where the leave is approved, a confirmation document will be produced for signature and filing.

Any leave not taken from the previous entitlement of 18 weeks due to the fact that the child in question reached the previous limit of 8 years of age may now be taken in addition to the increased entitlement provided that the child is under the age of 12.

If both parents are employees of the parish, employees may request that a portion of the leave (not more than 14 weeks) be transferred to the other parent or qualifying adopter, approval of such a transfer of leave will be at the discretion of the parish.

Patterns of Leave Permitted

Leave may be availed of as a continuous period of 6 weeks or greater at any one time. Periods of leave of a lesser duration are entirely at the discretion of management, and it may not be possible to permit these. Consult your manager for further information.

Sickness During Parental Leave

Should an employee fall ill during parental leave, and as a result is unable to care for their child, they may suspend their parental leave and the time may be treated as certified sick leave. This is subject to the employee complying with normal sick leave reporting procedures and submission of a doctor's certificate confirming the illness irrespective of the number of days of sickness. This certificate should confirm that the employee is incapable of caring for the child in respect of whom leave is being taken.

Abuse of Leave

An employee must use parental leave for the purpose of caring for the child in respect of whom it is taken. Employees may not work in alternative employment while on this leave. Abuse of parental leave may be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Annual leave entitlements continue to accrue and public holiday benefits will continue to be provided during the period of an employee's parental leave.

Returning to Work

Employees are entitled to return to work to the same job and under the same terms and conditions of employment following parental leave. Where this is not reasonably practicable, the parish will provide suitable alternative employment that is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

Employees may request a change in working hours/ patterns, or both, to apply for a set period of time following their return from Parental leave. Such requests must be submitted not later than 6 weeks prior to the proposed commencement of this set period. The parish will consider all requests having regard for the parish's needs, and the employee's needs at the time and will respond within 4 weeks of receiving the request.

Records

In respect of parental leave records shall be retained by the parish for a period of 12 years.

Force Majeure Leave

Purpose

Force majeure leave is leave provided for employees to deal with emergency situations arising from the illness or injury of a person named in this policy. The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate compliance with the provisions of the Parental Leave Acts 1998 and 2006 in relation to force majeure leave, and to protect employee rights in this regard.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the parish.

Policy

It is the policy of the parish to provide short-term paid leave for employees where, due to the illness or injury of one of the following persons, the presence of the employee at the location of that person is indispensable.

Force majeure leave is permitted in respect of the illness or injury of one of the following persons:

- a child or adoptive child of the employee;
- a spouse or partner of the employee;
- a person to whom the employee is acting in loco parentis;
- a brother or sister of the employee;
- a parent or grandparent of the employee;
- a person with whom the employee is in a relationship of domestic dependency, including, but not limited to, same sex partners.

Entitlement to force majeure leave is limited to circumstances:

- where the immediate presence of the employee is indispensable;
- where the employee is present at the place where the ill or injured person is situated.

Force majeure entitlement is a maximum of 3 days' paid leave in a 12 month period, or a maximum of 5 days' in a 36 month period.

An employee who is on force majeure leave for part of a working day shall be deemed to have taken 1 force majeure day.

Procedure

Where possible, an employee should contact their manager, or another manager where their own manager is not available, to notify the parish of their absence as soon as possible. In all cases, the employee will be required to complete a formal force majeure leave notification form detailing the duration of, and the reasons for, the leave on their return to work. This form may be obtained from the employee's manager.

The parish will inform employees if their application for force majeure leave has been successful and will hold records of all force majeure leave taken by employees.

Carer's Leave

Scope

This policy applies to all employees with at least 12 months' service.

Policy

It is the policy of the parish to permit employees to avail of unpaid leave from employment to fulfil their caring responsibilities where appropriate as determined in conjunction with the 'Relevant Department'. Carer's leave of at least 13 weeks and up to 104 weeks may be applied for. This may be extended to 208 weeks in respect of two persons in need of care in certain circumstances.

To be eligible for leave the employee must have completed 1 year of service and be approved by the 'Relevant Department' to provide full-time care to the relevant person. The 'Relevant Department' also determine whether the person is deemed a relevant person.

Carer's leave may be taken as a continuous block of leave, or broken into shorter periods of leave. Where the leave is broken down, the employee may not commence a subsequent period of leave until 6 weeks have elapsed since the termination of the previous period of leave.

Applications Procedure

An employee is required to give 6 weeks' notice of their intention to avail of carer's leave. This application should set out the manner in which it is proposed to take the leave and confirm that an application has been made to the 'Relevant Department' for approval to be deemed a carer for the relevant person.

A response will be issued in respect of the application at least 2 weeks prior to the proposed commencement of the leave. Where the leave is approved a confirmation document will be produced for signature by the employee and this will be retained by the parish.

Notification of leave must be made on the appropriate form which may be obtained from the employee's manager.

Working while on Carer's Leave

Employees can work for up to 18.5 hours a week while they are on carer's leave, as long as they earn less than €350 a week. (This is an employee's take-home pay after deductions such as tax, PRSI and union dues).

Alternatively, employees can attend an educational or training course or do voluntary work for a maximum of 18.5 hours a week.

Employees must notify the 'Relevant Department' before they start work or training.

Termination of Carer's Leave

Carer's leave shall terminate on the pre-agreed date in the confirmation document, or in the following circumstances, whichever is the sooner:

- on an alternative date agreed between the employee and management;
- where the person in respect of whom carer's leave is taken ceases to qualify as a relevant person, or the employee ceases to qualify as a carer;
- where a deciding officer from the 'Relevant Department' determines that it should end;
- where the relevant person dies during a period of carer's leave. In such circumstances the employee should return to work on a date within 6 weeks of the date of death, or as agreed in the initial confirmation document, whichever is the sooner.

Employment Rights

An employee availing of carer's leave will be regarded as still being in employment, and none of their rights relating to employment shall be affected, with the exception of remuneration, annual leave (after 13 weeks), public holidays (after 13 weeks), pension benefits or any obligation to pay contributions in, or in respect of, the employment. Such absence will be reckonable for redundancy purposes. Existing PRSI rights will be protected by the award of credited contributions during the period of carer's leave by arrangement with the 'Relevant Department'.

Return to Work

An employee on carer's leave must provide at least 4 weeks written notice of their intention to return to work. This notice should confirm the intended return to work date. Where possible the employee will return to the position held immediately prior to the commencement of leave (provided this was their normal position), however where this is not feasible, they may return to work to suitable alternative employment that is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

Jury Service Leave

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the parish's commitment to permit employees to fulfil their civic duty to attend as a jury member where summonsed by the court in line with the relevant provisions of the Jury's Act, 1976.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees summonsed to attend court for jury service.

Policy

The parish is committed to providing paid leave for any employee required to attend court for jury service. Jury service leave is provided for the period that an employee is required to attend court for possible selection as a juror, and for the duration of the case on which they will sit if they are selected to sit on a jury.

Procedure

In order to avail of this leave, an employee must present the summons for jury service to their manager as soon as they receive this notification.

Their manager will then approve the leave. In exceptional circumstances the parish may seek to have an employee excused from jury service, however this will only occur where parish requirements are such that it is not feasible to permit the employee to avail of the leave.

Where leave is granted, an employee will generally be required to attend the court for a period of each day for selection as a juror, usually for a few hours in the morning each day. Where the employee is not selected as a juror, he/she must return to work for the remainder of the day. A certificate of attendance will be produced by the clerk of the court on request, and this should be presented to the employee's manager on return to work each day for record keeping purposes.

Where an employee is called for jury service, he/she should also obtain daily certificates of attendance from the Clerk of the Court confirming attendance at court. Again, where an employee is excused from the court for part of the day, he/she is expected to return to work, where appropriate.

Employment rights, including remuneration, are protected during this leave.

Paternity Leave

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the parish's compliance with the Paternity Leave and Benefit Act, the Family Leave and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, and associated regulations as issued, whilst also protecting the rights of employees under this legislation.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees who are relevant parents to a child:

- The father of the child;
- The spouse, civil partner or cohabitant of the mother or qualifying adopter of the child;
- A parent of a child where the child is a donor conceived child.

Policy

A relevant parent is entitled to avail of 2 weeks' paternity leave from employment, to enable him or her to provide or assist in the provision of care to the child or to provide support to another relevant parent. The period of leave comprises a single period of 2 continuous weeks. Only one person who is a relevant parent in relation to a child is entitled to paternity leave in respect of that child. Where a child is part of a multiple birth, or a person adopts 2 or more children at the same time, the relevant parent is only entitled to one period of paternity leave.

An employee may be entitled to claim paternity benefit from the 'Relevant Department', subject to qualification criteria. In order to claim this benefit, an employee is required to submit a form (Form PB2) to certify that an employee is entitled to paternity leave for the dates provided. This form is available from the 'Relevant Department'. The relevant parent must have a Public Services Card to apply for Paternity Benefit.

Notification Procedure

Paternity leave can begin at the time of the birth/ adoption or within 26 weeks of the birth/ placement of the child.

Entitlement to paternity leave shall be subject to an employee, who is a relevant parent, notifying his or her parish in writing of his or her intention to take paternity leave:

- As soon as reasonably practicable but not later than 4 weeks before the expected week of confinement of the expectant mother concerned;
- In the case of a child who is/ is to be adopted, as soon as reasonably practicable but not later than 4 weeks before the expected day of placement.

At the time of notification, or as soon as reasonably practicable, an employee must provide the parish with a medical certificate confirming the pregnancy of the expectant mother concerned and specifying the expected week of confinement. An employee who has not given a notification to his or her parish in line with the requirements set out above, or who revoked such notification, may notify the parish of his or her intention to take paternity leave not later than 4 weeks before the commencement of such leave.

Commencement & Postponement of Leave Commencement

The period of paternity leave shall commence on such a day as the relevant parent selects in his or her notification to the parish of their intention to take paternity leave, being not earlier than the date of confinement or day of placement, and not later than 26 weeks after such date or day. Where the employee intends to take paternity leave, the employee must notify the parish of the length of leave that the employee intends to take.

Early Confinement

Where the date of confinement occurs in a week that is 4 weeks or more before the expected date of confinement, the relevant parent will be deemed to have complied with the requirements in terms of notification to the parish if the notification required is given in the period of 7 days commencing on the date of confinement.

Postponement

Where, as the case may be, the day of placement is postponed or the date of confinement occurs after the date selected by a relevant parent in his or her notification, the relevant parent shall be entitled to select another date on which the paternity leave shall commence.

Sickness during Paternity Leave

Where a relevant parent who has complied with the notification procedures becomes sick prior to the commencement of his or her paternity leave and wishes to postpone the paternity leave, he or she may, by notice in writing given to his or her parish as soon as reasonably practicable after becoming sick and accompanied by the relevant evidence in respect of the sickness, postpone the taking of the leave to such time as the relevant parent is no longer sick.

Abuse of Leave

Where the parish has a reasonable belief that an employee who is on paternity leave is not using the leave for the purpose outlined, the parish may, by provision of notice in writing to the employee, terminate the leave. The notice shall summarise the grounds for terminating the leave, and the day by which the employee must return to work.

Employee Rights

During a period of paternity leave, an employee shall be deemed to have been in the employment of the parish, and be treated as if he or she had not been absent from work. Availing of paternity leave shall not affect any right related to the employment, other than the right to remuneration during the absence. Where an employee is on probation, undergoing training, or employed under a contract of apprenticeship, the parish may require that the probation, training or apprenticeship shall stand suspended during the period of leave.

Return to Work

Employees are entitled to return to work to the same job and under the same terms and conditions of employment following paternity leave. Where this is not reasonably practicable, the parish will provide suitable alternative employment that is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

Parent's Leave

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the parish's compliance with the Parent's Leave and Benefit Act, the Family Leave and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, and associated regulations, whilst also protecting the rights of employees under this legislation.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees who are relevant parents to a child:

- The parents of the child;
- The spouse, civil partner or cohabitant of a parent of the child;
- A parent of the child where the child is a donor-conceived child;
- The adopting mother or sole male adopter of the child;
- The spouse, civil partner or cohabitant of the adopting mother or sole male adopter of the child;
- Each individual in the couple where the child is, or is to be, adopted jointly by a married couple of the same sex or a couple that are civil partners of each other, or a cohabiting couple of the same sex.

Policy

A relevant parent is entitled to avail of 9 weeks' parent's leave from employment which must be taken within the first 2 years of the birth or placement of the birth/adoption of the child. A relevant parent can take one week at a time, blocks of more than 1 week or take the 9 weeks together. Parent's leave is non-transferrable between relevant parents except in specified circumstances, e.g. the death of one of the parents or qualifying adopters.

Parent's leave is applicable where the date of confinement in respect of the child falls on or after the 1st November 2019, or where a child is or is to be adopted and the date of placement in respect of the child falls on or after the 1st November 2019.

Parent's Leave entitlement increased from 7 weeks' to 9 weeks' in August 2024. A relevant parent who has previously availed of their 7 weeks' parent's

leave entitlement are eligible to take a further 2 weeks before the relevant child turns 2.

No payment is made by the parish in respect of absence by an employee during parent's leave. However, an employee may be entitled to claim parent's leave benefit from the 'Relevant Department', subject to qualification criteria. In order to claim this benefit, the employee is required to apply directly to the Relevant Department.

Notification Procedure

The parish must be notified in writing by the employee at least 6 weeks before the employee intends to take the leave.

At the time of notification, or as soon as reasonably practicable, an employee must provide the parish with a medical certificate confirming the pregnancy of the expectant mother concerned and specifying the expected week of confinement. An employee who has not given a notification to his or her parish in line with the requirements set out above, or who revoked such notification, may notify the parish of his or her intention to take parent's leave not later than 6 weeks before the commencement of such leave.

Commencement & Postponement of Leave Commencement

The period of parent's leave shall commence on such a day as the relevant parent selects in his or her notification to the parish of their intention to take parent's leave, being not earlier than the date of confinement or day of placement, and not later than 2 years after such date or day. Where the employee intends to take parent's leave, the employee must notify the parish of the length of leave that the employee intends to take.

Early Confinement

Where the date of confinement occurs in a week that is 4 weeks or more before the expected date of confinement, the relevant parent will be deemed to have complied with the requirements in terms of notification to the parish if the notification required is given in the period of 7 days commencing on the date of confinement.

Postponement

Where, as the case may be, the day of placement is postponed or the date of confinement occurs after the date selected by a relevant parent in his or her notification, the relevant parent shall be entitled to select another date on which the parent's leave shall commence.

Sickness during Parent's Leave

Where a relevant parent who has complied with the notification procedures becomes sick prior to the commencement of his or her parent's leave and wishes to postpone the parent's leave, he or she may, by notice in writing given to his or her parish as soon as reasonably practicable after becoming sick and accompanied by the relevant evidence in respect of the sickness, postpone the taking of the leave to such time as the relevant parent is no longer sick.

Abuse of Leave

Where the parish has a reasonable belief that an employee who is on parent's leave is not using the leave for the purpose outlined, the parish may, by provision of notice in writing to the employee, terminate the leave. The notice shall summarise the grounds for terminating the leave, and the day by which the employee must return to work.

Postponement of Parent's Leave

In certain limited circumstances the parish may need to exercise its right to postpone for up to 12 weeks their employee's intended parent's leave commencement date. Circumstances may arise where the parish is satisfied that the taking of the parent's leave at the time specified in the notification would have a substantial adverse effect on the operation of the parish by reason of

- seasonal variations in the volume of work concerned;
- the unavailability of a person to carry out the duties during the period of the leave;
- the nature of your duties;
- the number of other colleagues availing of parent's leave during the period.

If this postponement results in the child reaching 2 years before the leave has been drawn down, the 2 years cap will be extended by up to 12 weeks.

Employee Rights

During a period of parent's leave, an employee shall be deemed to have been in the employment of the parish, and be treated as if he or she had not been absent from work. Availing of parent's leave shall not affect any right related to the employment, other than the right to remuneration during the absence. Where an employee is on probation, undergoing training, or employed under a contract of apprenticeship, the parish may require that the probation, training or apprenticeship shall stand suspended during the period of leave.

Return to Work

Employees are entitled to return to work to the same job and under the same terms and conditions of employment following parent's leave.

Leave for Medical Care Purposes

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate compliance with the provisions of the Parental Leave Act 1998 as amended by the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 in relation to Leave provisions for employees regarding significant care or support for a serious medical reason to a specified person, and to protect employee rights in this regard.

Scope

This policy applies to all qualifying employees of the parish.

Policy

Employees shall be entitled to up to five days' leave in any period of 12 consecutive months, without pay where, for serious medical reasons, the employee is required to provide personal care or support to any of the below:

- a child or adoptive child of the employee;
- a spouse or civil partner of the employee;
- a cohabitant of the employee;
- a person to whom the employee is acting in loco parentis;
- a brother or sister of the employee;
- a parent or grandparent of the employee;
- a person with whom the employee is in a relationship of domestic dependency, including, but not limited to, same sex partners.

Procedure

Where possible, an employee should contact their manager, or another manager where their own manager is not available, to notify the parish of their absence or intended absence as soon as possible.

In all cases, the employee will be required to complete a form which can be obtained from their manager, outlining the date of commencement, duration and a statement of facts outlining the reasoning for the leave and evidence of the same. The parish may require you to provide the relationship with the relevant person, the nature of the care or support required by the person and a medical certificate of the serious medical issue of the person.

The leave shall consist of one or more days on which the employee would typically be scheduled to work. This leave shall not be taken in periods of less than one day even in cases whereby the leave requested is part of a working day.

On receipt of this form, which will be retained by the parish, the employee will be provided with a written acknowledgment of the receipt of the confirmation of the leave, which shall be retained by the employee.

Domestic Violence Leave

Purpose

This policy details the parish's approach to leave for employees who have been, or are being or are at risk of being subjected to domestic violence and abuse, or where the employee is supporting a relevant person. It is designed to promote a workplace culture that facilitates disclosures of domestic abuse, and support employees subjected to domestic violence and abuse in maintaining employment and promote a safe work environment for all staff. This policy demonstrates compliance with the provisions of the Parental Leave Act 1998 as amended by the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees within the parish.

Domestic violence and abuse is defined as violence, or threat of violence, including sexual violence and acts of coercive control committed against an employee or a relevant person by another person who is:

1. a spouse or civil partner of the employee or relevant person;
2. a cohabitant of the employee or relevant person;
3. has been in or is in an intimate relationship with the employee or relevant person;
4. is a child of the employee or relevant person who is of full age and is not, in relation to the employee or relevant person, a dependent person.

Relevant person means, in relation to an employee is:

1. the spouse or civil partner of the employee;
2. the cohabitant of the employee;
3. a person with whom the employee is in an intimate relationship;
4. a child of the employee who has not attained full age, or
5. a person who, in relation to the employee, is a dependent person.

Domestic violence and abuse can occur within any relationship, although women are affected disproportionately. This policy is applicable in all cases regardless of sex, gender or sexuality.

Access to the Provisions of this Policy

While there is no obligation on an employee to disclose that they are currently or have in the past been subjected to domestic violence, an employee who may benefit from the parish's support under this policy is encouraged to raise the issue with an appropriate person (see allocation of responsibilities section).

There is no minimum service required to qualify for statutory domestic violence leave. Such leave may be availed of by an employee directly experiencing domestic violence and abuse, or where an employee is supporting a 'relevant person' as outlined above. The domestic violence to which the supports relate includes experiences that are ongoing, as well as past experiences.

Allocation of Responsibilities

The person responding to a disclosure will:

- Listen and respond in a non-judgmental and compassionate manner;
- Support the employee in making their own decisions;
- Provide practical support as appropriate.

Management

Aligned with effective management principles, it is the responsibility of a manager to be mindful and attentive to the well-being of their team members. Should concerns arise regarding well-being, the manager may, if suitable:

- Consider asking open questions in a private and suitable setting to afford the employee the option to disclose their experiences voluntarily;
- In cases where a disclosure is made, offer or facilitate access to relevant support as deemed appropriate;
- Seek assistance from their own line manager, all the while being cautious about preserving confidentiality.

It is very important for managers to remain vigilant about the well-being of remote workers. Efforts will be made to support and accommodate requests from employees where possible.

Work Colleague

If an employee shares information with a colleague, the colleague is required to handle the disclosure with support, non-judgment, and confidentiality. The colleague should bring this policy to the attention of the disclosing employee. The disclosing employee's consent should be obtained before the colleague shares any information, including with managers or other designated personnel, unless there are specific circumstances allowing otherwise.

Policy

It is the policy of the parish to permit relevant employees to avail of one or more paid leave days, up to a maximum of five days' within a consecutive twelve-month period, during which the employee would typically be scheduled to work. The purpose of this leave is to assist the employee, or allow the employee to assist a relevant person in any of the below:

- to seek medical attention;
- to obtain services from a victim services organisation;
- to obtain psychological or other professional counselling;
- to relocate temporarily or permanently;
- to obtain an order under the Domestic Violence Act 2018;
- to seek advice or assistance from a legal practitioner;
- to seek assistance from the Garda Síochána; to seek or obtain any other relevant services.

Where an employee avails of domestic violence leave, they shall, as soon as reasonably practicable, either in advance or thereafter, complete a prescribed form, confirming that they have taken such leave and specify the dates on which the leave was taken.

This leave shall only be taken on a day that the employee would have normally been in work.

The rate of pay for such leave will be paid at the employee's normal rate of pay that would be due for any planned work day/shift. The leave shall consist of one or more paid days on which the employee would typically be scheduled to work.

Procedure

Where possible, an employee should contact their manager to notify the parish of their absence as soon as possible.

In all cases, the employee will be required to complete a form which can be obtained from their manager to outline the date of commencement and duration of the leave and whether the leave was in relation to themselves or a relevant person.

It is essential to note that employees are never obligated to disclose experiences of current or past domestic violence.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is paramount, and information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis ideally with the employee's consent. Details of approved leave will be securely stored for the necessary duration.

Confidentiality may be breached only in specific situations, such as legal requirements, court orders, or when sharing information is crucial for the safety of employees and/or the public. In such cases, employees will be informed of the reasons for the breach, and they will be encouraged to seek support from a specialised domestic abuse service. Colleagues to whom a disclosure is made (initial or as part of risk management) are required to keep confidentiality. Improper disclosure of information may be subject to disciplinary action.

Confidentiality & Record Keeping

Information may be shared with colleagues, ideally with the employee's consent, who for example need to administer the domestic violence leave. Only information necessary to carrying out those roles/tasks will be shared.

The following records may be retained in the employee's personnel file by the parish:

- Details of agreed workplace safety plan;
- Administrative data such as approval of domestic violence/special leave;
- Details of abuse occurring in/near the workplace or using workplace equipment (recorded at the employee's request).

The above records will be stored securely, kept strictly confidential, and retained only for as long as necessary.

Workplace Safety

After a disclosure, a manager will consult with the employee on their safety needs to address safety concerns in and around the workplace. Safety measures may include temporary (subject to a review) adjustments to work duties, location, contact details, hours, and/or working patterns, a risk assessment of the workplace, improved security measures, and providing information on specialist support services. This workplace safety plan will be treated as confidential and shared on a need-to-know basis only.

Referrals

A list of domestic abuse specialist organisations is available on the HSE website. This list can also be obtained from a manager or designated person. Where appropriate, the employee will be supported to access a safe physical space and/or method of communication from which to contact these services.

Workplace supports

Financial assistance

Relevant financial support for employees may be considered, such as speedy change of arrangements and/or method for payment of salary (e.g., banking details)

Employment protections and records

Employment protections are in place to address the impact of domestic violence on work attendance and performance. Employees disclosing domestic abuse will receive temporary protection from dismissal or adverse actions if they face difficulties in performing tasks at work, and subsequent performance reviews will consider the effects of abuse. Additionally, records of workplace abuse, including stalking or harassment, can be crucial for seeking redress through the justice system, and employees will be supported in retaining such records upon request, ensuring strict confidentiality and secure storage by the parish.

Conduct in the workplace

Employees will be held responsible for their behaviour in the workplace, in work time, or through work equipment. Disciplinary procedures, up to and including potential dismissal, may be applied for workplace domestic violence abuse. If individuals knowingly facilitate domestic violence abuse, for example by providing access to equipment or information in respect of another employee, such as contacts/location/shift pattern, they may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Domestic abuse may be reported to have occurred, or be occurring, where both parties are employees of the same parish, or employees of different entities but sharing a work location. In such cases, particular arrangements need to be put in place. Safety and well-being are paramount, while recognising that all individuals have a right to fair process and procedure.

Awareness Raising and Training

Training sessions and awareness events covering how to recognise, respond to and refer domestic abuse cases will be conducted if required. All required resources will be made available as appropriate. Regular monitoring of the number, gender, and distribution of persons who have accessed training will occur to ensure any expertise lost through staff turnover is replaced.

Policy Review

This policy will be kept under review to include any changes in legislation and good practice.

Compassionate Leave

Purpose

This policy details the parish's approach to leave for employees in the unfortunate event of bereavement or other situations where Compassionate Leave may be requested.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

Policy

It is the policy of the parish to permit employees to avail of ----- days paid/unpaid leave in the unfortunate event of the death of one of the persons listed below:

- Partner or Spouse;
- Child of an employee;
- Parent or parent in-law of an employee;
- Grandparent living with the employee;
- Brother or sister of an employee;
- Relative residing in the employee's home.

An employee is permitted to avail of _____ day's paid/unpaid leave in the unfortunate event of the death of one of the persons listed below:

- Cousin;
- Nephew or Niece;
- Aunt or Uncle;
- Close non-family member.

In the event of the serious illness or injury of the above persons, the parish may permit an employee to avail of short-term paid/unpaid Compassionate Leave.

Each situation will be assessed on its own merits, taking consideration of the employees individual circumstances and the requirements of the parish at the given time.

Probation

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the parish's approach to managing the probation process.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees during their probation period.

Policy

It is the policy of the parish to use a probationary period at the commencement of employment in order to assess the suitability of newly appointed employees, and to assist their integration into their role and the parish. The period is used to ensure that the new hire is performing in their new role, and that they are settling into the parish. The duration of probation is outlined in the individual statement of terms and conditions of employment and may be extended at the discretion of management.

Procedure

During probation there should be dialogue between the manager and the employee with regard to performance, conduct, attendance and any other issues impacting on the new employee's ability to settle into the role and the parish. Issues may also be addressed formally by way of probation review meeting(s).

Where an employee successfully completes probation, this will be confirmed to them by their manager.

Where there are issues which affect an employee's ability to successfully complete probation, then probation may be extended at the discretion of management.

Where there are serious misgivings with an employee's fit in the parish or their role, then the employment relationship may be terminated at the end of the probation period.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to terminate employment during probation, due to the nature of the issue(s) arising. Dismissal may arise without application of the full rigours of the disciplinary process during probation.

Disciplinary Procedure

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that the parish operates a fair disciplinary process which has regard to the rights of employees under both the Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and the Unfair Dismissals Acts (1997-2015). The policy is to be applied in order to assist and encourage employees to achieve and maintain acceptable standards of conduct, attendance and performance where shortcomings are identified. The policy and procedure aim, where appropriate, to be corrective rather than punitive.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

Policy

The primary objective of this procedure is to ensure that employees are made aware of any shortcomings in their performance/conduct/attendance and provided with an opportunity to resolve this situation. To this end, issues will generally be addressed through the informal procedure whereby the manager will raise the issue with the employee and agree a corrective action plan in order to resolve the situation without recourse to the formal procedure. However, where this fails to resolve a situation, or the informal process is deemed inappropriate in the given circumstances, then the formal process may be initiated.

During the formal stages of the procedure, employees have the right to be accompanied by a representative at a meeting. The role of this representative is to provide support, to ensure that the procedures followed are fair, and, if appropriate, to help the employee present their case. However, it should be noted that the contractual relationship exists between the employee and the employer. Therefore, questioning will be directed to the employee, and where possible the employee must speak on their own behalf. The stage at which any employee enters the disciplinary procedure depends upon the severity of the issue being dealt with.

At all formal stages of the procedure the employee is entitled to be made aware of the case against him/her, and to be provided with any evidence to be used against him/her. The employee will

be afforded an opportunity to respond to any allegations and evidence, and management will give due consideration to all responses received. An employee may bring a colleague to any disciplinary hearing. The employee is also permitted to appeal the findings of any formal disciplinary investigation, or any sanction imposed under the procedure.

Misconduct

The following behaviours may be considered to be misconduct and may result in disciplinary action being initiated under the disciplinary procedure. Note that these examples are provided for illustrative purposes only, and this list is not exhaustive. All cases are considered on their own merits:

- Minor breach of a workplace policy or procedure;
- Poor timekeeping;
- Abuse of sick leave policy;
- Insubordination;
- A refusal to carry out a reasonable request;
- Minor breaches of health and safety regulations;
- Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, victimisation, or any act of discrimination;
- Downloading, display or distribution of pornography or other inappropriate material;
- Bringing the parish into disrepute;
- Misuse of parish property.

Gross Misconduct

The following behaviours may be considered to be gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal, depending on the circumstances of the case. Note that these examples are provided for illustrative purposes only, and this list is not exhaustive. All cases are considered on their own merits:

- Serious harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, victimisation or other acts of discrimination;
- Serious abuse of sick leave;
- Theft or other fraudulent behaviour;
- Serious breaches of health and safety rules or endangerment of another person in the workplace;
- Serious breaches of confidentiality;

- Being under the influence of an intoxicant at work or in the course of employment;
- Possession, sale or distribution of a controlled substance in the workplace;
- Violent or threatening behaviour;
- Refusal to participate in a workplace investigation or other action;
- Serious failure to adhere to an agreed workplace procedure or other agreed terms of employment.

Informal Procedure

In general, where there is an allegation of poor performance, attendance or conduct, the direct manager of the employee concerned will address the issue informally with him/her. This may be done by way of an informal counselling meeting, or through the normal performance management process. The objective of the informal discussion is to correct the issue of concern in a frank and constructive manner.

The informal discussion will:

- focus on helping the employee to understand how their performance/conduct/attendance has fallen short of the acceptable level; and
- suggest possible solutions and timeframes for improvement.

After the discussion, brief notes will be taken and held by the manager who led the informal discussion. Provided the employee achieves and sustains the necessary level of improvement, no further action will be taken. If the necessary improvements have not been made within the agreed timeframe the formal disciplinary procedure will commence.

Formal Procedure

In all cases where an employee's standards of performance, attendance and/or conduct fall below those expected by the parish, the formal disciplinary procedure may be initiated. In all cases in which the formal procedure is initiated, a hearing will be held with the employee to put the allegation to him/her, and to hear his/her responses to the issue. It may be necessary to formally investigate the facts surrounding a case and this may occur prior to the hearing, but in the majority of cases a hearing will suffice to ensure that the employee is afforded

a fair opportunity to respond. Where there is a dispute of the facts of a case, and an investigation is necessary, the investigation procedure will be explained to the employee by management.

Disciplinary Hearing Process

Prior to any formal disciplinary sanction being decided upon and imposed a fair disciplinary hearing will be held with the employee. The purpose of this meeting is to put the complaint to the employee and to hear the reasons behind the issue from the employee's perspective. An employee will always be treated in a fair manner at a disciplinary hearing. The following principles will apply to a disciplinary hearing:

- Advance notification of the requirement to attend a disciplinary hearing will be provided together with the fact that the outcome of the meeting may be disciplinary action;
- Throughout the hearing, the employee will be permitted to have a representative present;
- The employee will be notified of the complaint in advance of the meeting in order to have an opportunity to prepare his/her responses;
- The employee will be afforded an opportunity to respond to any allegations/evidence at the meeting, and to present any other relevant factors including any mitigating circumstances;
- Further meetings may be held with the employee as necessary;
- Conclusions will only be formed following a fair hearing where the employee is allowed to respond to complaints and these responses are considered in the given circumstances;
- An employee may be suspended on full pay at any stage during the disciplinary process, even before any allegation is presented to the employee. This is done with no inference of guilt or otherwise against the employee. Suspension will be for a reasonable period only and will often depend on the duration of the disciplinary investigation process;
- Due consideration will be given to all responses received. In order to ensure that management have the time to fully consider the facts, there will always be an adjournment at the end of any disciplinary hearing in order to allow time to consider the facts of the case, and to make a fair decision on the next steps;

- The decision on what level of disciplinary sanction, if any, is to be imposed will be taken during the adjournment. A follow up disciplinary meeting will be held with the employee where this decision will be communicated to the employee. The employee may have a representative present at this meeting. Formal disciplinary action will be confirmed in writing.

Disciplinary Sanctions

Where the informal process fails to resolve an issue, or where it is deemed inappropriate given the particular circumstances of a situation, then the following sanctions may be imposed by management. Disciplinary action, if required, will normally follow an incremental warning process as set out in this policy. However, in appropriate circumstances, the parish reserves the right to initiate the process at any particular stage, or to move to any particular stage in the process, where the matters of concern are deemed sufficiently serious. The decision on what level of sanction to be imposed will only be taken following a formal disciplinary hearing having considered the circumstances of the particular situation.

Stage 1. Formal Verbal Warning

Where the informal procedure fails to resolve an issue, or where more serious disciplinary action is deemed appropriate given the particular circumstances of the case, a formal disciplinary hearing will be arranged and held as outlined in this procedure.

Following the meeting a formal verbal warning may be issued by the appropriate manager. An action plan will also be agreed in order to attempt to resolve this issue in the future. A copy of the notes from the meeting, the agreed action plan and a copy of the verbal warning, along with any other relevant documentation, will be placed on the employee file.

The verbal warning will expire following a period of satisfactory performance, conduct or attendance, as outlined in the formal verbal warning document. A formal verbal warning may be appealed through the appeals procedure outlined in this policy. Failure to achieve the requirements set out in the corrective action plan may result in further disciplinary action.

Stage 2. First Written Warning

Where a formal verbal warning fails to resolve an issue, or where more serious disciplinary action is deemed appropriate given the particular circumstances of the case, a formal disciplinary hearing will be arranged and held as outlined in this procedure.

Following the meeting a first written warning may be issued by the appropriate manager. An action plan will also be agreed in order to attempt to resolve this issue in the future. A copy of the notes from the meeting, the agreed action plan and a copy of the first written warning, along with any other relevant documentation, will be placed on the employee file.

The first written warning will expire following a period of satisfactory performance, conduct or attendance, as outlined in the first written warning document. A first written warning may be appealed through the appeals procedure outlined in this policy. Failure to achieve the requirements set out in the corrective action plan may result in further disciplinary action.

Stage 3. Final Written Warning

Where a first written warning fails to resolve an issue, or where more serious disciplinary action is deemed appropriate given the particular circumstances of the case, a formal disciplinary hearing will be arranged and held as outlined in this procedure.

Following the meeting a final written warning may be issued by the appropriate manager. An action plan will also be agreed in order to attempt to resolve this issue in the future. A copy of the notes from the meeting, the agreed action plan and a copy of the final written warning, along with any other relevant documentation, will be placed on the employee file.

The final written warning will expire following a period of satisfactory performance, conduct or attendance, as outlined in the final written warning document. A final written warning may be appealed through the appeals procedure outlined in this policy.

Failure to achieve the requirements set out in the corrective action plan may result in further disciplinary action.

Stage 4. Dismissal

There are two ways in which dismissal may occur. Generally, the employee will have been notified of concerns and have been provided with an opportunity to improve through one or more stages of the disciplinary procedure.

The other form of dismissal is a summary dismissal, which normally results from an act of gross misconduct. An act of misconduct will be considered as gross misconduct where the act is so serious that the parish cannot reasonably be expected to retain the employee in employment. Summary dismissal occurs without recourse to the earlier stages of the disciplinary procedure.

In all cases an appropriate and fair hearing, which adheres to the principles set out in this procedure, will be undertaken, and careful consideration given to the decision on whether or not dismissal is the appropriate sanction given the circumstances of the case. In cases of alleged gross misconduct, an in-depth investigation may be necessary, and an employee will be suspended on pay pending the outcome of this investigation. Suspension on pay is not deemed a disciplinary sanction, and there will be no negative inference against an employee as a consequence of any such suspension.

Where there is an allegation of gross misconduct or gross incompetence it may be appropriate after a formal investigation to initiate the procedure at stage 4. In such circumstances, there is no obligation on the parish to provide advance notice of dismissal. Decisions to dismiss in such circumstances may only be taken by the parish priest, or a nominated officer, following a full and fair investigation and hearing process. The decision will be confirmed in writing to the employee.

Alternative Disciplinary Sanctions

In addition to the sanctions outlined in stages 1 to 4 of the disciplinary procedure, the parish also retains the right to impose alternative disciplinary sanctions as outlined in this section. This will only occur where deemed appropriate. Such action is an optional stage of the procedure, rather than a required stage. Where deemed appropriate, alternative sanctions which may be imposed may include a transfer, demotion, suspension without pay, or withholding of a salary review for a period or removal of another benefit.

Note on Probation

During the period of an employee's probation, including extended probation, the full rigours of the disciplinary process may not apply, and the parish retains the right not to exhaust the disciplinary procedure during probation.

Appeals

All disciplinary sanctions may be appealed within five working days of being issued to an employee. The details of whom the appeal should be made to will be included in the warning document, or letter of dismissal. A finding will be issued within a reasonable timeframe, generally 10 working days. This may be extended where necessary to facilitate a full and fair appeals process.

All timeframes in this policy assume employees are attending work. If employees have had time out of work, the duration of the disciplinary steps may be extended.

Grievance Procedure

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that the parish operates a fair grievance procedure which has regard to the rights of employees as set out in the Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. The policy is to be applied in order to assist and encourage employees to raise any issues of concern to them in order that the parish may take appropriate action to resolve these concerns.

Scope

This policy applies to the individual grievances of all employees. The policy is not appropriate for dealing with issues of harassment, sexual harassment or bullying, which should be addressed through the appropriate separate policies set out by the parish.

Policy

It is recognised that from time to time in all employment situations, grievances may arise. A grievance is a formal expression of dissatisfaction with workplace relationships, the work environment or a term or condition of employment. It is the policy of the parish to recognise that situations of this nature may arise, therefore this procedure is in place to assist employees to resolve such matters. It is acknowledged that grievances which are not raised and addressed may escalate and become serious distractions in the workplace. Therefore, all employees are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have through the procedure set out here.

Management are responsible for listening and responding to all employee concerns raised through this procedure. In all cases, matters will be dealt with in as confidential a manner as possible. Employees may utilise the procedure whenever they feel it is required. An employee will not be treated adversely for raising a grievance.

Initially the process allows for the employee to submit their grievance to their manager to consider the issue or concern and respond to it. Both the manager and employee are expected to engage on the grievance with a view to resolving it. Most grievances are expected to be resolved at the informal stage. During the formal stages of the procedure, employees have the right to be

accompanied at a meeting by a representative. The role of the employee's representative is to ensure that the employee is afforded a fair opportunity to raise their issue and afforded fair consideration.

Procedure

Informal Discussion

Employees are encouraged to approach their manager in the first instance to discuss issues and attempt to resolve them informally. Should the employee feel uncomfortable approaching their manager regarding a particular issue, they may approach another manager to raise the issue. At this stage the manager will consider the grievance carefully and respond to the employee within a reasonable and agreed timeframe. If the employee is not satisfied with the response provided, the issue may be escalated through the formal grievance procedure.

Stage 1. Formal Procedure

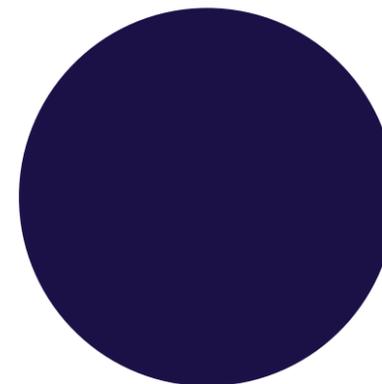
- Where the informal procedure fails to resolve a situation to the employee's satisfaction, or where it is deemed inappropriate, the employee is encouraged to raise their grievance formally;
- In order to raise a formal grievance it is necessary to put the grievance in writing, or to meet with the manager to put the grievance in writing. Where the grievance relates to the parish priest, the employee may seek support from a neighbouring parish or the Vicar Forane. In the event that the parish priest also holds the position of Vicar Forane, the complaint should be made to the Area Episcopal Vicar.
- The parish may appoint an independent third party to investigate the complaint.
- A grievance hearing will be arranged within an agreed timeframe, to which the employee is entitled to bring a representative. Advance notification of this meeting will be provided in writing;
- The employee will be invited to provide more information regarding their grievance at this meeting;
- The meeting will be adjourned to allow management to explore the issue further and to identify possible solutions where appropriate;

- A prompt decision will be provided to the employee, in writing, within a reasonable agreed timeframe;
- A record of the meeting will be kept and given to those in attendance.

Stage 2. Formal Procedures

- Should an employee feel dissatisfied with the response given at stage 1, he/she may appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing. Details of the procedure to be followed in the event of an appeal will be outlined in the written decision on the grievance, as outlined above;
- A grievance appeal hearing will be arranged within an agreed timeframe, to which the employee is entitled to bring a representative. Advance notification of this meeting will be provided in writing;
- A senior member of management, and/or an appropriate third party will be present at the meeting to ensure that the grievance is given due consideration;
- The issue will be discussed in an effort to explore satisfactory outcomes;
- A prompt decision will be provided to the employee within an agreed reasonable timeframe;
- A record of the meeting will be kept and given to those in attendance.

The decision after Stage 2 will be binding on all parties in the dispute. If the employee is dissatisfied with the response given to the grievance, he/she will have to accept that it cannot be resolved to his/her satisfaction, as the procedure has been exhausted.



Termination of Employment

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate compliance with the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act, 1973- 2005 and to outline an employee's responsibilities in the event of their decision to terminate employment with the parish. The policy also sets out steps for management to follow in the event of an employee leaving service.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

Policy

It is the policy of the parish that all employee's terminating employment are required to provide adequate notice of their departure in order to facilitate the parish to arrange cover for their position and to ensure a smooth handover of work. Therefore, all employees are required, as a minimum, to provide notice as per their statement of terms and conditions of employment when terminating employment. In all cases notice must be confirmed in writing and submitted to the employee's manager.

The parish is committed to provide notice as per the statement of terms and conditions of employment or the relevant legislation, whichever the greater. In the case of summary dismissal for acts of gross misconduct, there is no obligation on the parish to provide notice of termination or pay in lieu of notice.

The parish retains the right to pay in lieu of notice where deemed appropriate.

Procedure

Prior to leaving employment, all property belonging to the parish must be returned to the employee's manager, including items such as keys/access cards, IT equipment, or other facilities provided in the course of employment. All employee benefits will be cancelled on the date of termination of employment.

The employee will be paid their final pay as per normal payroll procedures. Final pay may include, where appropriate, payment in lieu of annual leave not availed of during employment, or alternatively may include a deduction for annual leave taken without having been accrued prior to departure. The employee will be able to view details of their ceased employment in Revenue's myAccount service following their termination date. The employee's final payslip will be issued to them at the date of termination, or soon after termination.

Where the payslip is to be posted to the employee, it is important that the employee ensures that they leave up to date contact details with their manager.

Working Time, Rest Periods and Work Breaks

Purpose

This policy demonstrates the parish's compliance with the provisions of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 related to working time, rest periods and work breaks. The policy also protects the rights of employees as set out in this legislation in order to ensure that no breaches occur.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

Policy

Normal working hours are as per the statement of terms and conditions of employment. From time to time, it is recognised that employees may be required to work in excess of these hours in order to meet parish requirements. However, the parish is committed to ensuring that no employee works in excess of the maximum average working week, as determined by the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997.

Breaks will be permitted as per each employee's statement of terms and conditions of employment. It is the policy of the parish to ensure that all employees are afforded their minimum entitlements to daily and weekly rest as per the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997.

Procedure

Should an employee have a query in relation to their working hours, breaks or rest periods, or where they have been unable to avail of same, this should be brought to the attention of their manager, or raised through the parish's grievance procedure.

Blended & Flexible Working Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the parish's commitment to promoting a more flexible way of working.

Through providing increased flexibility the parish hope to achieve optimal working practices for the parish and all employees, whilst creating greater flexibility and autonomy for employees inside and outside of work.

The parish recognises the positive benefits blended and flexible working can have on culture, team, employee engagement and retention.

This policy sets out the procedures entailed in blended and flexible working and the main considerations that the parish has taken account of in the overall risk assessment carried out in respect of providing a safe and healthy work environment.

The parish is committed to operating under a blended and flexible working practice, meaning that employees will benefit from a mix of working alongside colleagues in the office, working onsite, attending events, and working remotely.

The Health and Wellbeing of employees is paramount to the parish. Blended and flexible working is recognised as a proactive approach to allowing employees greater flexibility in managing home and personal commitments whilst at the same time enabling the parish to achieve its objectives.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the parish.

Policy

Guiding Principles:

These guiding principles have been identified to support the parish and parish employees in ensuring an effective approach to blended and flexible working;

- Trust;
- Accountability;
- Flexibility and agility are essential – jointly;
- Two-way communication is key;
- Commitment to creating a working environment and culture that supports flexibility for employees;

- In-person time is required to carry out roles effectively;
- Clarity on expectations is essential for the parish, and it is imperative for all team members to fully comprehend and adhere to these expectations.;
- Relationships are key to parish life and focus on building and enhancing each and every relationship;
- Technology can enable and support the delivery of work – technology doesn't replace the person to person interaction;
- The requirements and deliverables for different roles vary hence the parish is not applying a one-size fits all approach to effective working;
- The parish will continue to explore and implement where appropriate blended and flexible working friendly practices;
- Discretionary effort is key to continued success regardless of location.

Core Hours – Staff:

In line with the parish's principles, it is important to:

- Ensure there is sufficient cover during office opening hours;
- This should be managed locally and for everyone to be conscious that other staff can be on leave and/or also attending offsite meetings during the week so flexibility of cover is required;
- As far as possible, employee's preferences will be provided for in terms of cover and this can and should be kept under review;
- This is all subject to parishioner and other needs being met.

Employees working remotely on a full-time or part-time basis must continue to attend and be available for work during the core working hours. Employees should ensure they make time for breaks.

A record of working time and attendance should be maintained on the appropriate system.

If encountering any challenges regarding attendance, working hours, or breaks, it is the employee's responsibility to raise these concerns with their line manager.

Remote Working

Remote working allows employees to work remotely from home or elsewhere, with management agreement, for part of their contracted working hours. It involves carrying out the work and duties normally undertaken at the workplace remotely. Remote working, while flexible in its approach, should not be reflective of an agreement to varying hours or other flexible arrangements unless authorised in advance.

Employees will be expected to be available to attend in-person for meetings, client meetings and events during the course of a normal working day and blended and flexible working should not have a negative impact on that availability.

Please refer to the Remote Working Policy for more details.

Personal Details and Safety

Staff are advised not to release their home address and telephone number to non-members of staff. Work-related contacts, visitors, clients may not be invited to employee's home for security reasons.

Right to Disconnect

The parish has a Right to Disconnect policy in place to support employees. Regardless of their location of work; office, home, or client site, employees are encouraged to take adequate rest and recuperation throughout and in between working days. If employees encounter any reasons requiring support, they are advised to speak with their manager.

Blended and Flexible Review

All blended and flexible working arrangements are subject to continuous review in light of parish needs. All employees who are working remotely must ensure that the required performance and quality standards are being met.

Other Policies

Employees are reminded that all other policies will continue to operate while a flexible working arrangement is in place.

Remote Working Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the parish's commitment to promoting flexible ways of working. This policy sets out the procedures entailed in remote working and the main considerations that the parish will take into account.

Remote working is recognised as a proactive approach to allowing employees greater flexibility in managing work commitments whilst at the same time enabling the parish to achieve its objectives. The same workplace principles need to be applied when considering elements of remote working.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

Policy

Employees may request remote working, which is a form of flexible working, and the parish will consider these requests against the criteria established in this policy.

The parish recognises that some roles may be carried out from the employee's home, or another location and it can be beneficial for employees to work remotely, away from the distractions of the workplace. However, the parish cannot guarantee that all roles will be suitable for remote working, as some parts of the parish needs depend on employees being available and communicating within the workplace and is not obliged to grant requests made.

Definition of Remote Working

Remote working allows employees to work from home, shared hub or other location, with management agreement, for part/all of their contracted working hours. It involves carrying out the work and duties normally undertaken at the workplace, remotely. Remote working, while flexible in its approach, should not be reflective of an agreement to varying hours or other flexible arrangements unless authorised in advance.

Suitability for Remote Working

Certain roles will be more suited to remote working than others. These are roles or aspects of roles that involve individual/PC based work.

All remote working relies on trust between the parish and the employee. Remote working must not be used as a reason for employee's absence from the workplace when sick leave or annual leave is more appropriate. When remote working, the parish expects the employee to deliver the scope and quality of work they would normally undertake at a work premises with equal commitments regarding working hours and breaks.

Employee Suitability for Remote Working

Remote working is suitable for employees who are self-reliant and self-motivated.

Employees should be aware that not attending the workplace regularly may result in reduced social contact with colleagues and feelings of detachment/isolation from the workplace. It is not the intention of the parish to deliberately cause these feelings; they may be a consequence of undertaking remote working.

Working Arrangements

Workload

As there is a requirement, for those employees involved in remote working, to demonstrate self-discipline, self-reliance, an ability to work unsupervised and to manage their own workload, an employee who is remote working is expected to maintain high levels of performance and high quality work at all times.

Delivery of workload will be managed by the individual employee and supervised by their manager. All work outputs must be delivered in line with agreed timelines and deadlines. Where a concern arises as to the performance or conduct of an employee who is remote working, similar to any other employee of the parish, the individual involved may be subject to the disciplinary process.

Employees working remotely must continue to reach targets as set out at the commencement of the calendar year and to comply with any deadlines pertaining to the delivery of their work.

Attendance at Work and Working Time

Employees working remotely must continue to attend work during the prescribed 'office' hours as indicated in the individual contract of employment. Employees should ensure they are working enough hours to meet their contractual working hours, make time for a lunch break, and follow normal overtime procedures (if applicable).

A record of working time and attendance should be maintained on the appropriate system which will be reviewed by managers at regular intervals.

Provision of Equipment

Employees must ensure that any equipment being used is in good working order and appropriate for their own safety, comfort and wellbeing (i.e., desk, chair etc). It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure they have adequate storage space for work related which should be at a minimum as the majority of our work can be completed online.

Employees must not purchase equipment or attempt to reclaim any expenditure, unless prior approval from the appropriate manager is given. Any supplies used by employees are only to be used for business purposes.

I.T Equipment

Any equipment provided by the parish for the purposes of working remotely will be maintained by the parish. The employee is required to take reasonable care of all equipment, to keep it secure and to use it in accordance with operating instructions. They must ensure that any such equipment provided is returned at the end of the arrangement.

I.T Systems

Employees involved in remote working may have access to IT systems as required and must act in accordance with the appropriate policies and procedures (acceptable usage policy, right to monitor, data protection and disposing of information policies) while accessing such systems. Any breach of policy and procedure in this regard may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Insurance Cover

Remote workers are advised that working from home may affect the provisions of any home contents/ domestic insurance and are advised to inform their insurers prior to commencing working from home. It is the responsibility of the member of staff to ensure that their home contents policy covers any parish equipment used for the purposes of working at home.

Expenses

Employees may be entitled to reclaim expenses or tax relief from Revenue directly for remote working.

Health and Safety

The parish has a duty to protect its staff's health and safety at work in accordance with the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Acts 2005 and 2010 and the regulations made under it. Staff are required to comply with the parish's Health and Safety policy while they are working and to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of any third party with whom they come into contact during the course of their employment with the parish. Failure to comply with the parish's Health and Safety policy may result in disciplinary action against the member of staff.

A Health and Safety risk assessment must be completed by a qualified person to ensure the home is suitable. The cost of such an assessment would be borne by the parish. Any requirement to review an assessment should be arranged in the first instance by the manager in conjunction with the employee and in line with legislative requirements.

Employee Management

The employee and the line manager will establish targets/deadlines/tasks so that the employee is clear what output is expected when remote working. Output will be used to monitor employee performance and the suitability of the remote working arrangement.

Two-way contact should be maintained during the period of remote working to monitor and provide feedback on output, and to keep the employee up to date with news and developments.

Employees are reminded that all other policies, such as policies around reporting sickness, will continue to operate while a flexible working arrangement is in place.

Communication and Accessibility

Remote workers must accept that their line manager and colleagues may need to discuss work related issues during normal working hours, therefore remote workers must ensure they are fully accessible when working remotely. The employee must be contactable by telephone and email. In addition, employees must also check their e-mails regularly for news and requests.

Remote workers will be expected to attend for meetings, briefing/seminars and training when requested – adequate notice will be given, in any event at least one day. In addition, remote workers must also check their e-mails regularly for news and requests.

All employees must adhere to the guidance on information technology and the Acceptable Usage Email Policy.

Security of Data

Remote workers must comply with the Data Protection Acts 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR). Remote workers must ensure that confidential parish information/documents are not accessible to other members of the household, that they are stored securely, and that documents stored on a PC or laptop are subject to password protection.

The employee must ensure that any device in use for work purposes has the necessary updates, such as operating system updates (like iOS or android) and software/antivirus updates and should contact their manager if in doubt.

The employee must ensure that the use of a computer, laptop, or device, is done so in a safe manner and location in order to minimise who else can view the screen, particularly if working with sensitive personal data. The employee must ensure that all devices used for work purposes whilst remote working are locked if left unattended for any reason.

The employee must ensure that all devices used for work purposes whilst remote working are locked or shut down and stored carefully when not in use in line with the relevant policies.

Where effective access controls are used, such as multi-factor authentication, strong passwords and encryption (to restrict access to the device), all employees are expected to adhere to guidelines pertaining to the proper use of same to reduce the risk if a device is stolen or misplaced.

Employees are expected to safeguard parish information and assets in a responsible, safe and secure manner. The use of the parish IT equipment (laptop, PC, mobile phone, etc.) by non-employees is strictly prohibited. Confidential or sensitive paper documents must be returned to the parish in a secure manner for shredding using the facilities in the office. Business conversations must remain confidential at all times.

The loss or theft of parish information, assets or parish IT equipment must be reported immediately to the manager and an Garda Síochána.

Emails

All employees who are working remotely are expected to follow the parish's applicable policies on the safe and appropriate use of email such as using work email accounts rather than personal ones for work-related emails involving personal data.

Cloud and Network Access

Employees are expected to only use the parish's trusted networks or cloud services and comply with any parish rules and procedures about cloud or network access, login and, data sharing.

Smart Devices

Whilst working at a remote location, there is an expectation that all information relating to work is maintained at the utmost of confidentiality and therefore all employees should turn off and remove smart devices, such as Alexa, Google Assistant etc from their remote working area in order to maintain confidentiality.

Right to Disconnect

The parish has a Right to Disconnect policy in place to support employees. Regardless of their location of work; office, home, or client site, employees are encouraged to take adequate rest and recuperation throughout and in between working days. If employees encounter any reasons requiring support, they are advised to speak with their manager.

Remote Working Review

All remote working arrangements are subject to continuous review in light of parish needs. All employees who are working remotely must ensure that the required performance and quality standards are being met.

All remote working arrangements are subject to an initial trial period of three months in order to ensure that the required performance and quality standards are being met. Thereafter remote working arrangements will be reviewed every 12 months by the employee and their manager.

Other Policies

Employees are reminded that all other policies will continue to operate while a remote working arrangement is in place.

Flexible Working for Caring Purposes

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate compliance with the provisions of the Parental Leave Act 1998 as amended by the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 in relation to flexible working arrangements for qualifying employees.

Scope

This policy applies to all qualifying employees of the parish.

Flexible Working Arrangements

The following flexible working options are available to employees for caring purposes depending on the nature of the employee's role and the nature of the parish's operations.

Types of Flexible Working	Description
Part-time work	Where an employee works fewer hours than full-time employees.
Term-time work	Where an employee can take unpaid leave for a certain period of the year, most typically summertime.
Job-sharing	Where a full-time post is divided into two parttime roles and both employees share the overall duties and responsibilities for the role. Pay and benefits are shared in proportion to the hours each employee works.
Flexitime	Where an employee can vary their start and finish times outside of core hours while completing the required hours of work each week/month as specified in their contract.
Compressed working hours	Where an employee works their full-time hours in fewer days by extending their working day in longer blocks of time. An example of this is a five-day week that is compressed into four days.
Remote Working	Where an employee works all or part of their working week at a location remote from the employer's workplace, which may be the employee's home.

Policy

The parish is committed to supporting work-life balance working arrangements for our staff bearing in mind that there is no automatic right to flexible working for caring purpose and any arrangement entered into must work both for the parish and the employee.

This policy sets out the arrangements that will apply for flexible working for caring purposes in the parish. The parish will deal with each application objectively, fairly and reasonably, in line with the legislation and the procedures set out in the WRC Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Right to Request Flexible and the Right to Request Remote Working (Code of Practice) and this policy.

A flexible working for caring purpose arrangement may be requested by qualifying employees who are a relevant parent of a child up to the age of 12 years or 16 years if the child has a disability or long-term illness, and who is, or will be, providing care to that child. This policy may also be applicable for employees who will be providing personal care or support to a relevant person, namely:

- a person of whom the employee is the relevant parent/adoptive parent;
- the spouse or civil partner of the employee;
- the cohabitant of the employee;
- a parent or grandparent of the employee;
- a brother or sister of the employee;
- a person who resides in the same household as the employee; and
- who is in need of significant care or support for a serious medical reason.

The parish may require you to provide additional information in respect of the above prior to confirming any flexible working for caring purposes arrangements.

Qualifying employees must have six months' continuous service and satisfy the above criteria in order to commence a flexible working for caring purpose arrangement which is approved by the parish.

This policy sets out the application process for flexible working arrangements for caring purposes. For the purposes of this policy, where an employee ceases to be employed for a period of less than twenty-six weeks and is rehired, then the period of service of that employee before their employment ceased, shall be deemed to be continuous.

A request must be submitted in writing at least eight weeks before the arrangement is intended to start. In all cases, the employee will be required to complete an application form, outlining the date of commencement and the specific request for flexible working for caring purpose arrangements. The parish may require you to provide evidence of the relationship with the person to whom the arrangement relates to; a medical certificate or the nature of the significant care or support which the person concerned is in need of.

The parish will confirm the decision to you in writing within four weeks of the request being made, detailing the arrangement and how this will impact the applicant employee's current terms and conditions of employment. Employees should be aware that the parish can refuse or postpone such a request if it cannot be accommodated on reasonable grounds, which will be provided in writing. In such a case, the parish will provide reasons for any refusal or postponement in writing. It is important to point out that should circumstance change, the proposed agreement may change after it has been agreed.

Where the parish is having difficulty assessing the viability of the request for a flexible working for caring purpose, the four week period referred to above may be extended by a further period not exceeding eight weeks.

Health and Safety Compliance

The parish is committed to ensuring compliance with our obligations under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005. Employees who work remotely as part of any approved flexible working arrangement for caring purposes are reminded that their remote workstation is an extension of the workplace and as the parish is responsible for providing a safe place and safe system of work, employees must comply with their responsibilities in ensuring their own safety and that of others while at work. Employees will also be required to complete a risk assessment of their remote workstation and notify the parish of any changes to the remote workstation that would require an updated risk assessment.

Considering a Request for Flexible Working Arrangements for Caring Purposes

The parish will consider all requests from eligible employees having regard to:

- the needs of the parish;
- the employee's needs, i.e. the reasons why the employee is requesting flexible working arrangements for caring purposes.

When considering a request for flexible working arrangements for caring purposes, the parish will also consider the guidance set out in the Code of Practice.

Requests will be considered in an objective, fair and reasonable manner. The parish may consider both the suitability of the role for flexible working for caring purpose as well as the employee's suitability.

In reviewing whether a role is suitable for flexible working for caring purpose the following questions will be considered by the parish. This is a non-exhaustive list and these matters may not be relevant in all situations:

- What type of work does the role entail?
- What are the employee's key duties?
- Can any of the duties which make up the role be undertaken remotely?
- Does the role require a high degree of manual work?

- Does the role include tasks that must be performed or are more efficiently performed on-site?
- Does the role require access to equipment/ technologies or data that are only available on-site?
- Does the role require face-to-face engagement with parishioners, centre users, suppliers/ contractors or other employees on-site or at other locations?
- Would remote working affect the service quality or parish operations taking into account the number of employees currently on approved leave and/or on approved remote working or flexible working arrangements?
- Are there technological solutions to mitigate issues arising from remote working?
- Do any health and safety issues arise if activities are undertaken remotely?

In considering a request under this policy, the parish may also consider the suitability of the employee. The following non-exhaustive list may be considered:

- Does the employee have the necessary IT skills to complete their required job functions outside of the office?
- Does the employee understand their role and require minimal supervision to complete their tasks?
- Has the employee met the performance standards and requirements of the role?
- Is the employee subject to an extended probation period?
- Is the employee subject to an active performance improvement plan?
- Is the employee involved in an ongoing disciplinary process or is there a live record of disciplinary action?
- Is the employee subject to a training programme or apprenticeship which requires supervision?
- Has the employee demonstrated an ability to meet deadlines or any other business requirements?
- Does the employee understand the need to demonstrate flexibility when required to attend on-site outside of their agreed arrangement in order to meet business needs?

- Does the employee understand that there may be a requirement to participate in team meetings/training/one-to-ones online while working remotely?
- Has the employee maintained a satisfactory attendance record and complied with the company's attendance policy?
- Does the employee need to be on-site for learning, development or mentoring purposes?
- Does the employee need to be on-site to collaborate with colleagues in a team environment in a face-to-face setting?

Trial Periods

Every flexible working for caring purpose arrangement is subject to an initial trial period of 3 months. The trial period will allow time for both employees and managers to assess how the arrangement is working. Any issues should be raised/ discussed and dealt with at an early stage through ongoing engagement with the employee's manager. A formal review meeting will take place between the manager and the employee at the end of the trial period and any issues arising can be discussed with a view to resolving them. A further trial period or termination may be considered if necessary or if no issues have arisen the arrangement can be signed off on.

Remote Workstations

When considering an application for flexible working for caring purpose arrangements that involves remote work, the parish will conduct an assessment of the employee's remote working location's suitability for work.

IT and health and safety experts working on behalf of the parish will require access to an employee's remote workstation at a time to be agreed with the employee. The assessment will be necessary to assess the workstation in the context of health and safety, security and privacy, internet connection.

Insurance Cover

Remote workers are advised that working from home may affect the provisions of any home contents/ domestic insurance and are advised to inform their insurers prior to commencing working from home. It is the responsibility of the member of staff to ensure that their home contents policy covers any parish equipment used for the purposes of working at home.

Changes to Flexible Working for Caring Purpose Arrangements

Both the parish and the employee can agree to changes, early return to work or postponement of any approved flexible working arrangement through consultation and any change will be confirmed in writing.

If a flexible working for caring purpose arrangement has been agreed but has not commenced, due to the employee concerned becoming ill or incapacitated and they are unable to care for the person who is the subject of an approved flexible working arrangement, the employee may, by notice in writing, postpone the commencement of the flexible working arrangement. This notice must be given as soon as is reasonably practicable after becoming ill or incapacitated, and accompanied by the relevant evidence in respect of the illness or incapacity.

Termination of Certain Circumstances of Flexible Working Arrangement for Caring Purpose

If the parish is satisfied that any agreed flexible working arrangement (whether commenced or not) would have or is having a substantial adverse effect on the operation of the business and having regard to the needs of the employee and the requirements of the Code of Practice, the parish may terminate this agreement by giving notice in writing. This notice period will be a minimum of four weeks from receipt of this termination whereby the employee is due to return to normal work arrangements due to:

- seasonal variations in the volume of work;
- the unavailability of someone to carry out the employee's duties;
- the nature of their duties;
- the number of employees in the employment;

- the number of other employees availing of flexible working arrangements; or
- any other relevant matter.

Where a proposed termination of a flexible working for caring purpose arrangement is considered, the employee will receive notice in writing of the proposed termination which will include a statement in summary of the grounds for terminating the flexible working for caring purpose arrangement. The employee may, within 7 days of the receipt of this notice, make representation to their manager in relation to the proposal, and the representations shall be considered before any final decision is made.

The parish will consider in an objective, fair and reasonable manner any representations made by the employee who has received a notice of termination and explore whether any alternative arrangements other than termination may be feasible depending on the particular circumstances of each individual case.

If the parish decides to proceed with terminating the arrangement, the employee must return to their original working arrangement on the date stated in the notice.

Flexibility

While the parish will make every effort to ensure that an agreed flexible working for caring purpose arrangement will be adhered to, the parish also requires employees to be flexible to meet business needs. For example, employees may still be required to attend onsite for training, meetings or other in-person events that take place on dates that employees are away from the premises under the terms of their flexible working arrangement.

Employee Policies

Employees are reminded that all policies will continue to operate while a flexible working for caring purpose arrangement is in place.

Working Time and Right to Disconnect

Employees working remotely are still expected to maintain the same working hours and observe the same break and rest entitlements as if they were in the office/ onsite and should record working hours as required.

Employees are not expected to work outside their contracted hours when they are working remotely and should familiarise themselves with the parish's Right to Disconnect Policy.

Tax

Employees working remotely may be in a position to claim tax relief on additional utility costs when working from home, including electricity, heating and broadband. The parish does not pay a daily remote work allowance but will cooperate with employees who wish to claim Remote Working Relief from the Revenue.

Abuse of Flexible Working Arrangement

Where the parish has reasonable grounds for believing that an employee who is on an approved flexible working for caring purposes arrangement is not using the arrangement for the purpose for which it was approved, the parish may, by notice in writing given to the employee, terminate the approved flexible working arrangement and the notice shall contain a statement of the grounds for terminating the arrangement.

Return to Work

At the end of a flexible working arrangement, the employee is entitled to return to their original working arrangements and same terms and conditions of employment.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is meeting both employee and parish requirements.

Right to Disconnect

Purpose

This policy demonstrates the parish's compliance with the provisions of the Code of Practice for the parish and employees on the Right to Disconnect and the relevant legislation; The Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997; The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005; Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2018; Terms of Employment (Information) Acts, 1994 – 2014.

The Right to Disconnect refers to an employee's right to be able to disengage from work and refrain from engaging in work communications, such as emails or telephone calls, outside normal working hours.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees.

Policy

The parish is committed to fostering a culture that supports employees' ability to disconnect from work-related tasks outside of working hours. Employees are expected to disconnect from work outside their normal working hours, including during annual, sick, maternity, or paternity leave. All parties are expected to manage this right respectfully.

Where possible, emails and other communications should be sent and checked only during working hours. Employees should be considerate of colleagues' working patterns, recognising that responses are not expected outside normal hours. However, legitimate exceptions may arise, such as emergencies or filling in for a sick colleague.

The parish recognises that certain roles may require occasional out-of-hours work depending on demands or individual terms of employment.

Occasional communications outside normal hours may also be necessary due to parish needs or employee roles. When such communications become routine, the situation will be addressed, and support provided where necessary.

Flexible work arrangements should still allow employees to maintain boundaries between work and personal time.

January 2025

Employee Wellbeing

Employees working from home or on-site should create a clear boundary between work and personal time. All staff, including those with flexible or remote work arrangements, are encouraged to switch off from work, manage their working hours, and take regular breaks as per the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997. Employees must take reasonable care of their health and safety as per Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Employee Obligations

Employees must:

- Manage their working time and care for their own and their colleagues' health and safety.
- Cooperate with any time-tracking mechanisms, particularly when working remotely.
- Respect colleagues' right to disconnect.
- Report any missed rest periods to the parish, providing a reason.
- Monitor their own work-related wellbeing and address any concerns.

Role of Parish Management

Ensure employees are aware of their expected working hours under the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018.

Ensure employees take rest and break periods according to the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.

Respect employees' right to disconnect, ensuring workloads are manageable within normal working hours and addressing any issues that hinder employees' ability to disconnect.

Protect employees exercising their right to disconnect from penalisation.

January 2025

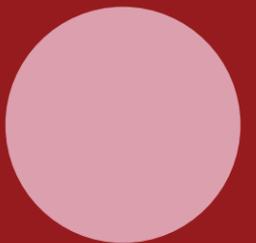
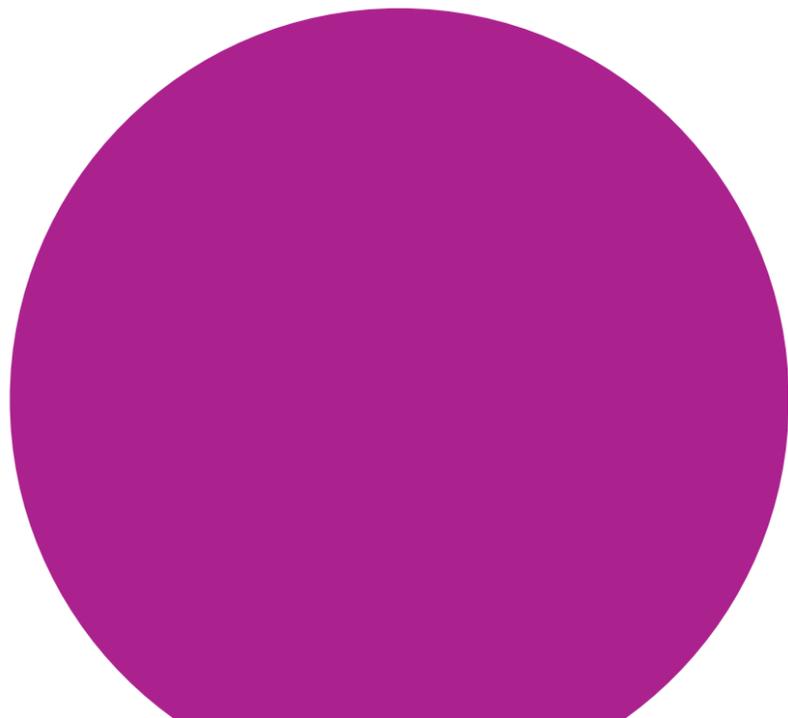
Culture of Work

The parish aims to create a culture where employees can maintain a healthy work-life balance, without feeling compelled to work outside regular hours. Any victimisation for asserting the right to disconnect will be investigated and addressed.

Raising Concerns

Employees who feel their right to disconnect is not respected, or who struggle to disconnect due to workload, should report this to their manager or follow the parish's grievance procedure.

Speak Up Policy



Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the parish's commitment to promoting a work environment which enables staff members to freely speak up about their concerns or experiences at work.

The parish's aim is to ensure that staff members feel comfortable raising any issues of concern. Furthermore, the parish is committed to applying appropriate action to resolving these concerns and observing and maintaining the highest standards of honesty, transparency and accountability in all our practices.

Scope

This policy applies to all those working in or for the parish, including but not limited to, existing and former employees, volunteers, consultants, contractors, trainees, agency workers, and those on work experience, committee members, and job applicants. All these parties are referred to as 'staff members' for the purpose of this policy.

Management are responsible for listening and responding to all staff members' concerns raised through this policy. In all cases, matters will be dealt with in as confidential a manner as possible. Staff members may utilise the policy whenever they feel it is required. A staff member will not be treated adversely for raising a concern.

The parish is committed to fully considering any concerns raised. Each issue is dealt with on an individual basis.

General Health and Safety Responsibilities

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline some of the main provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, with a particular emphasis on the responsibilities of both the parish and employees. It is a term of employment that employees always act in the interest of workplace safety. Any act which is contrary to the requirements of health and safety legislation may be dealt with as a serious disciplinary offence.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees both in the workplace, and also any place which they attend in the course of employment.

Policy

It is the policy of the parish to operate in a safe manner which protects the safety, health and welfare of all employees in accordance with the relevant legislation. This policy states the general responsibilities on both the parish and its employees in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Employer

The duties of the parish under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 may be summarised as follows:

The parish shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all his/her employees.

In particular, the parish will endeavour to:

- manage and conduct work activities in such a way as to ensure the safety, health and welfare at work of the parish's employees;
- manage and conduct work activities in such a way as to prevent any improper conduct or behaviour likely to present a health or safety risk to employees;
- as regards the place of work, the parish will ensure:
 - > the design, provision and maintenance of it in a condition that is safe and without risk to health, the design, provision and maintenance of safe means of access to and from it;

- > the design, provision and maintenance of plant and machinery or any other articles that are safe and without risk to health.
- ensure the safety and prevention of risk to health at work of his/her employees relating to the use of any article or substance or the exposure of noise, vibration or ionising or other radiations or any other physical agent;
- provide systems of work that are planned, organised, performed, maintained and revised as appropriate so as to be safe and without risk to health;
- provide and maintain facilities and arrangements for the welfare of employees at work;
- provide the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure the safety, health and welfare at work of employees;
- determine and implement the safety, health and welfare measures necessary for the protection of the safety, health and welfare of employees when identifying hazards and carrying out a risk assessment or when preparing a safety statement and ensuring that the measures take account of changing circumstances and the general principles of prevention;
- have regard to the general principles of prevention, where risks cannot be eliminated or adequately controlled or in such circumstances as may be prescribed, providing and maintaining such suitable protective clothing and equipment as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of employees;
- prepare and revise, as appropriate, adequate plans and procedures to be followed and measures to be taken in case of an emergency or serious and imminent danger;
- report accidents and dangerous occurrences, as may be prescribed to the Health and Safety Authority, and
- obtain, where necessary the services of a competent person for the purpose of ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of employees.

Responsibilities of the employee

It is the responsibility of all employees to co-operate with management in the implementation of health and safety initiatives in the parish. Employees must be aware that they have a responsibility for the safety of their visitors while on site. Employees also have a specific responsibility for their own safety. Therefore, employees are expected to discharge their work in a safe manner, so as to avoid injury to themselves or other employees and parishioners, and to avoid damage to parish equipment and property. Employees are required to report all accidents, dangerous occurrences, unsafe conditions and unsafe acts to their manager.

The duties of an employee under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 may be summarised as follows:

While at work an employee must:

- comply with the relevant statutory provisions and take reasonable care to protect his/her safety, health and welfare and that of any person who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions at work;
- ensure that he/she is not under the influence of an intoxicant to the extent that he/she is in such a state as to endanger his/her own safety, health or welfare at work or that of any other person;
- Cooperate with the parish to facilitate compliance with relevant statutory provisions as appropriate;
- not engage in improper conduct or behaviour that is likely to endanger his/her own safety, health and welfare at work or that of any other person;

- attend such training and assessment as may be reasonably required relating to safety, health and welfare at work, or relating to the work carried out by the employee;
- make correct use of any article or substance provided for use at work or for the protection of his/her safety, health and welfare at work, including protective clothing or equipment;
- report to management any work being carried on, or likely to be carried on, in a manner which may endanger the safety, health and welfare at work of any person;
- any defect in the place of work, the systems of work, any article or substance which might endanger the safety, health or welfare at work of any person, or any contravention of the relevant statutory provisions which may endanger the safety, health and welfare at work of the employee or that of any other person;
- not mis-represent him/herself to the parish with regard to the level of training they have received in respect of their position.

Procedure for Raising Concerns

An employee who has any concerns with regard to this policy may raise the issue informally with their manager or any other manager. Where they do not receive a satisfactory response to their concerns, they may raise the issue through the grievance procedure.

Lone Working

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all employees who have occasion to work alone, either within the parish's office or surrounding buildings, or when making visits to any other parish, are aware of basic safety procedures in order to minimise personal risk.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees working alone.

Policy

Lone Working - During Office Hours

Employees working alone within the parish during working hours should:

- Ensure that you are near to a telephone to call for help if needed;
- Ensure that keys are secured and not accessible to visitors;
- If you become anxious regarding your safety, you should call Emergency Services for help;
- The incident should be reported to the parish priest or another member of management as soon as practical after the event.

Lone working - Outside Office Hours

Employees working alone within the parish offices outside of normal working hours should:

- Ensure that all windows and doors are secured to prevent unauthorised access, so that the working environment is as safe as possible;
- On leaving parish facilities, ensure that all windows are closed and doors locked;
- If an incident occurs, you should call Emergency Services for help;
- The incident should be reported to a member of management as soon as practical after the event.

Lone Working away from your work location

Employees working alone, away from parishes during working hours, must advise colleagues of the following:

- Where you are going;
- Who you are going to see;
- A contact telephone number, if possible;
- The time of the appointment;
- The time when you are expected to return to the office;
- If not returning to the parish at the time expected, employees should call or text their manager on leaving the meeting;
- Employees must inform their managers if involved in a car accident or breakdown as well as the Emergency Services.

In addition, employees should:

- Carry a mobile phone;
- Park as close as practical to the building you are visiting in a well-lit position if possible;
- When working alone, if you have any concerns regarding the safety of a particular service visit, you should either take a colleague with you, or rearrange it for a time when the risks can be minimised.

Stress Management

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to highlight that the parish places a high value on maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all its employees and it recognises its duty of care extends to mental health as well as physical health at work.

Scope

The parish is committed to providing a supportive working environment that maintains and promotes the health and wellbeing of all its employees.

Policy

The parish is committed to implementing a stress management policy. This includes improving the environment within the parish through effective and sensitive management; enabling individuals to cope successfully with the demands and pressures of work, and providing support for staff members whose health and wellbeing are affected by stress.

Definition of stress

Stress is what individuals experience when they feel they have difficulty coping with the pressures and demands placed upon them.

There is a clear distinction between pressure and stress. Pressure is essential to help people feel stimulated and excited about achieving the goals that give them their sense of achievement and satisfaction. Stress arises only when the pressure is excessive, prolonged or comes from too many directions at the same time, which can result in being accompanied by physical, psychological or social complaints or dysfunctions.

Although in itself, stress is not an illness, there is evidence that stress can lead to mental and physical ill health.

Policy Aims

The Stress Management policy aims to ensure that the parish develop a culture which identifies the causes of work related stress through the application of management systems and procedures.

This document also aims to establish standards for line managers and employees of the parish on the identification, prevention and management of work related stress. The parish believes that the measures as set out in this policy (and the linked guidelines) will have a substantial effect on reducing those potential causes of work related stress.

Stress Management Procedure

The parish aims to gain a detailed understanding of risk factors, identify which areas may be presenting problems and work with employees to take action to reduce these problems.

Stage 1: Stress Risk Assessment

Given the complexity of stress phenomenon, it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of potential stress indicators. However, high absenteeism or staff turnover, frequent interpersonal conflicts or complaints by workers are some of the signs that may indicate a problem of work related stress.

Where a staff member indicates that they may be suffering from stress, a Stress Risk Assessment should be conducted by an appropriate manager in conjunction with the staff member and reviewed on a regular basis.

Identification whether there is a problem of work related stress can involve analysis of factors such as:

- **Work organisation and processes** – working time arrangement, degree of autonomy, match between worker's skills and job requirements, workload, etc.
- **Working conditions and environment** – exposure to abusive behaviour, noise, heat, dangerous substances, etc.
- **Communication** – uncertainty about what is expected at work, employment prospects, forthcoming change, etc.
- **Subjective factors** – emotional and social pressures, feeling unable to cope, perceived lack of support, etc.

The HSE has identified six broad risk factors that can cause work-related stress. These are:

- **Demands** – such as workload, work patterns and the work environment
- **Control** – such as how much say the person has in the way they do their work
- **Support** – such as the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the parish, line management and colleagues
- **Role** – such as whether people understand their role within the parish and whether the parish ensures that they do not have conflicting roles
- **Relationships** – such as promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- **Change** – such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the parish.

Factors such as training and organisational culture can be added: -

- **Training** – such as lack of training and development
- **Culture** - such as unsympathetic organisational culture

The parish is not under a legal duty to prevent ill health due to stress arising from personal/domestic circumstances. However, line managers should deal sympathetically with employees whose personal circumstances make it difficult for them to cope for the time being with the pressures of work.

The Stress Risk Assessment Form can be found in the 'Stress Management Procedure: Guidelines for Line Managers'.

Stage 2: Agreement of Actions

After conducting Stress Risk Assessment, a staff member with a line manager has to find ways to manage pressure/stress more effectively and reduce it to the optimum level. The completion of the Stress Management Form is required; please ask the line manager for assistance.

Stage 3: Monitor and Review

After the action plan of managing stress is made, the line manager together with the employee sets the date for reviewing the plan. The necessary amendments to the action plan can be made on the review date. The line manager will continue to

support the employee suffering from stress and monitors the situation.

Parish responsibilities

The parish is committed to implementing a stress management policy for all employees throughout the parish. This includes improving the environment in the parish through effective and sensitive management; enabling individuals to cope successfully with the demands and pressures of work, and providing support for staff members whose health and wellbeing are affected by stress. The parish has a duty to ensure that risks arising from work activity are properly controlled.

The parish is responsible for: -

- Developing working practices that reduce the factors which may lead to stress in the workplace;
- Providing a supportive working environment that maintains and promotes the health and wellbeing of all its staff members;
- Raising the awareness of line managers and staff about stress and its causes by making courses on stress awareness and management available so they are better able to handle pressures they may encounter, and they are able to recognise stress when it occurs in themselves and others;
- Providing adequate resources and training to enable line managers to implement the parish's agreed stress management strategy;
- Providing information and training to enable employees to develop their skills and maximise their contribution to the success of the parish;
- Identifying workplace stressors and conducting risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed;
- Providing a workplace free from harassment and victimisation;
- Ensuring good communication throughout the parish;
- Managing pressures which may affect employees by anticipating likely problems and taking actions to reduce the effects of them; the parish will provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.

Line Managers' Responsibilities

It is essential that line managers have an active role in facilitating and supporting staff to do their job effectively and to contribute to the success of the parish. Even if it is not the line managers' job to diagnose whether an employee is suffering from stress, anxiety or depression, they should notice changes in behaviour. The observable signs that suggest there may be a stress problem are available in 'Stress Management Policy: Guidelines for Line Managers'.

Where line managers become aware of changes in the performance, physical condition or behaviour of a team member, consideration should be given to whether the employee is able to handle the pressure of their work. While it is important that line managers do not over react to a small behavioural change it is important that they monitor the situation.

It is the line managers responsibility to follow the Stress Management Procedure once a staff member reports that he/she is suffering from stress: -

- To conduct the Stress Risk Assessment;
- Together with the employee to find ways how to manage work related stress and to set the review date. To record the agreed action plan on the Stress Management Form;
- To monitor and review the action plan on the agreed date.

Managers play an important role in prevention of work-related stress. In order to minimise the risk of work-related stress, managers must: -

- Ensure jobs are designed to avoid conflicting demands and that expectations and the job role are clear;
- Ensure employees are fully trained to undertake the demands of their job and are able to contribute to decisions about how the job is done;
- Ensure there are regular opportunities for feedback on performance e.g. regular 'one to one' meetings and team meetings;
- Identify or respond to issues of concern promptly and seek constructive solutions;
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes;

- Ensure employees are provided with meaningful training and developmental opportunities;
- Monitor workload to ensure that people are not overloaded;
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking;
- Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement;
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated;
- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.

Employees' Responsibilities

It is essential that employees have an active role in contributing to their own development and the success of the parish by using the resources available to carry out their role effectively. All employees members of the parish are charged with a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and to highlight any problems to the appropriate staff.

In order to minimise the risk of work-related stress, employees must:

- Raise issues of concern with their line manager at an early stage and seek constructive solutions by participating in Stress Risk Assessment meeting with the line Manager;
- Ensure good communication with colleagues and their line manager;
- Support colleagues by providing appropriate information and by sharing knowledge and resources where appropriate;
- Engage in discussion about their performance and act on feedback;
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated.

Staff Member Parish Data Privacy Policy

Purpose

The parish priest or his equivalent (hereinafter referred to solely as the parish priest) is the Data Controller and he is responsible for deciding how personal information about you is held and used. The parish is required by law to notify you about your personal data and how it is processed. The parish is committed to complying with its legal obligations with regard to the data protection legislation.

The purpose of this privacy policy is to inform staff members and their parish priest (or his equivalent) of their rights and responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR). The parish is committed to protecting the privacy and security of staff members personal data. This privacy policy describes how we collect and use personal information about you during and after your working relationship with us, in accordance with data protection laws, including the GDPR. It applies to all staff members, workers and contractors.

Scope

This privacy policy applies to all staff members of the parish, current and former, as well as candidates for new positions. This privacy policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services. This policy can be updated at any time and the parish will inform you if this occurs.

It is important that you read this policy, together with the parish Data Protection Statement and/or with other relevant privacy policies that are provided on specific occasions when the parish is collecting and processing personal information about you, so that you are aware of how and why the parish is using such information.

Definitions

1. Personal data means any information relating to an identified or identifiable person (data subject); an identified or identifiable person who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors

specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that person. In other words any data that can identify you.

2. Processing means any operation or set of operations which is performed on personal data or on sets of personal data, whether or not by automated means, such as collection, recording, organisation, structuring, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, restriction, erasure or destruction. In other words, anyway in which the parish uses your personal data.
3. Pseudonymisation means the processing of personal data in such a manner that the personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without the use of additional information, provided that such additional information is kept separately and is subject to technical and organisational measures to ensure that the personal data are not attributed to an identified or identifiable person, e.g. Family Offering envelopes identified by a number rather than by a person's name.
4. Filing system means any structured set of personal data which are accessible according to specific criteria, whether centralised or dispersed on a functional or geographic basis, e.g. the use of a database in the parish.
5. Controller means the natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which, alone or jointly, determines the purposes and means of processing such personal data. In this instance the parish priest (or his equivalent) is the Data Controller.
6. Processor means a natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which processes personal data on behalf of the controller, e.g. your CCTV and/or webcam provider.
7. Recipient means the natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body, to which the personal data are disclosed, whether a third party or not, e.g. sending your personal data to Revenue.
8. Third party means the natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body other than the data subject, controller, processor

- and person who, under the direct authority of the controller or processor, are authorised to process personal data, e.g. HR consultancy firm.
9. Consent of the data subject – please see section below.
 10. Personal data breach means a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of or access to, personal data transmitted, stored or otherwise processed e.g. sending to the wrong email address.

Data Protection Principles

The parish priest will comply with the data protection principles set out in the GDPR (2018). The parish priest ensures that all data is:

1. Used lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner;
2. Collected only for valid purposes that have been clearly explained to you and not used in any way that is incompatible with those purposes;
3. Adequate, relevant to the purposes we have told you about and limited only to those purposes;
4. Accurate and kept up to date;
5. Kept only as long as necessary for the purposes we have told you about;
6. Kept safely.

In day to day practice the above Principles are applied in the following way;

1. Obtained and processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner

The parish will meet this obligation by informing staff members of the purpose(s) for which their data is being processed as well as the legal basis for the processing; to whom their data may be disclosed and if the parish intends to transfer data to a third country or international parish outside of the EEA. In reality the latter will not occur.

When processing is required for the legitimate interests of the parish, staff members will be informed of the specific legitimate interests being pursued.

In cases where the parish plans to implement CCTV surveillance, prominent signage will be displayed for

full visibility and the reasons for the use of CCTV will be explained. It will never be used for monitoring employee performance. (For further information see the CCTV Policy & Procedures).

The parish will adopt appropriate data protection notices at the point of data capture e.g. application forms.

2. Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not be further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes

The parish will obtain data for purposes which are specific, lawful and clearly stated. Staff members will be informed of the reasons their data is being collected and will be informed of the uses to which their data will be put. Should the parish subsequently intend to use the data for another purpose, the consent of the staff member concerned will be sought prior to doing so unless a relevant exemption under the law applies.

Data relating to staff members will only be processed in a manner consistent with the purposes for which it was collected. Information will only be disclosed on a need to know basis, and access to it will be strictly controlled.

3. Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which data are processed

The parish will ensure that the information sought is essential for the purpose for which data is being obtained and that data will not be kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it was collected.

4. Accurate and up to date

The parish is required to keep staff member's data accurate and up to date. The parish will meet this obligation by:

- Obtaining and processing only the necessary amount of information required;
- Conducting periodic reviews to ensure that relevant data is kept accurate and up-to-date.

If a staff member informs the parish priest of a change in their personal information, he will ensure

this information is updated on all its internal systems and any relevant third party providers are notified of this change where necessary, for example, payroll provider.

5. Limited retention in a format that permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed

The parish will ensure that the data is kept in a form that permits identification of staff members for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data is processed. Personal data is retained for a period of time to meet certain legal obligations. For employment statutes, generally a 3-year retention period is applicable but certain employment records will have to be retained for longer periods. The retention schedule is available on request to your line manager.

Once the respective retention period has elapsed, the parish priest undertakes to confidentially destroy or delete personal data.

6. Secure and confidential processing of data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage

The parish priest will undertake appropriate technical measures in order to protect the personal data under his care. Appropriate security measures will be taken to protect against unauthorised access to, unlawful processing, accidental loss, destruction or damage of any personal data held by him in his capacity as Data Controller.

Only staff members authorised by the parish priest will be given access to the personal information and only in so far as they require it.

Sensitive Personal Data is securely stored in locked filing cabinets as in the case of manual records and password protected with firewall software where held electronically.

Portable devices storing personal data (such as laptops, tablets, iPads) should be encrypted and password protected. The use of unencrypted USB keys is not advised.

Confidential information will be stored securely, and in relevant circumstances it will be placed in a separate folder within the individual's file.

Accountability

The parish priest is committed to be accountable and transparent in relation to all aspects of the GDPR and hence the provision of this Privacy Policy.

Purposes for which staff records are held

Staff records are provided to the parish by staff members by way of a contractual and statutory requirement for the following purposes:

- The management and administration of staff member information for specified purposes;
- To facilitate the payment of salary, and calculate other benefits/entitlements (including reckonable service for the purpose of calculation of pension payments, entitlements and/or redundancy payments where relevant);
- Human Resources management generally;
- To enable the parish to comply with its legal obligations as an employer, in the preservation of a safe, efficient working environment (including complying with its responsibilities under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and the 2007 Health and Safety Regulations).

The types of Data we hold about you

Data means any personal data or special categories of data about you from which you can be identified. It does not include information where you cannot be identified (anonymous data). "Special categories" of more sensitive personal data require a higher level of protection.

The parish priest may collect, store, use and process the following personal data or categories of personal data about you:

- a. Personal contact details such as name, address, telephone number and personal email address;
- b. Date of birth
- c. Gender;

- d. Marital status and dependents, where applicable;
- e. Next of kin and emergency contact information;
- f. PPS Number
- g. Bank account details, payroll records and tax status information;
- h. Salary, annual leave, pension and benefits information;
- i. Start date;
- j. Copy of identification documents;
- k. Recruitment information (may include CV, references, cover letter. The list is not exhaustive)
- l. Employment records (may include job title, work history, working hours, training records and professional memberships)
- m. Performance information
- n. Disciplinary and grievance information;
- o. CCTV footage and other information obtained through electronic means such as swipe cards
- p. Information about your use of our information and communication systems (including internet, email);
- q. Photos and Videos
- r. Accident book, first aid records, injury at work and third party accident information;
- s. Evidence of your right to work in Ireland/immigration status.

The parish priest may also process or collect data which is deemed to be more sensitive and falls within the definition of special category data. The types of data may include (but are not limited to):

- a. Information about your gender, ethnic or national origin, religious or philosophical beliefs, sexual orientation and political opinions;
- b. Information about your health, including any medical condition(s), health and sickness records;
- c. Trade union membership;
- d. Information about criminal convictions and offences.

How is your personal information collected?

Personal data is typically collected about staff members during the application and recruitment process, either directly or indirectly from the individual.

The parish priest is permitted to gather additional information through third parties, for example, references from previous employers. Additional information will be gathered about staff members during the course of your employment.

How is your data processed and in what situations?

The situations in which we will process your personal data are listed below:

- Making decisions about your recruitment and appointment;
- Determining the terms on which you work for the parish;
- Undertaking employment screening to access your suitability for the role;
- Paying you, if you are an employee, and deducting tax and other contributions;
- Providing and administering benefits to you;
- Administering the contract the parish priest has entered into with you;
- Conducting performance reviews, managing performance and determining performance requirements;
- Salary reviews and compensation;
- Assessing qualifications for a job/task;
- Gathering evidence for possible grievance or disciplinary hearings;
- Making decisions about your continued employment or engagement.

Staff records are provided for:

- Continued employment or engagement;
- Making arrangements for the termination of our working relationship;
- Education, training and development requirements;
- Dealing with possible legal disputes involving you, or other employees, including accidents at work;

- Ascertaining your fitness to work or providing appropriate workplace adjustments;
- Monitoring and managing sickness absence and other absences, sick pay and other sick benefits;
- Complying with health and safety obligations;
- To prevent fraud, breaches on intellectual property rights, unauthorised access to IT systems or to detect a crime;
- To comply with employment and other laws;
- To monitor use of our information and communication systems to ensure compliance with our IT policies, social media policies, email and internet use policies;
- To ensure network and information security, including preventing unauthorised access to parish computer and electronic communications systems and preventing malicious software distribution;
- Providing references.

We may process data about you in compliance with our lawful basis and/or where required or permitted by law. Some of the above grounds for processing will overlap and there may be several legal bases which justify the use of your personal data.

If you fail to provide personal information when requested, the parish priest will not be able to fully perform the contract he has entered with you (for example paying you or providing you with a benefit), or he would be prevented from complying with his legal obligations (for example ensuring your health and safety at work under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and the 2007 Health and Safety Regulations).

The parish priest will only use your person data for the purposes for which it was collected, unless he reasonably considers that it can be used for another reason compatible with the original purpose. If your personal data is to be used for a new unrelated purpose, you will be notified and an explanation of the legal basis to allow this will be provided. Please note that the parish priest will, if necessary, process your person information without your consent or knowledge, in compliance with the above, where this is required or permitted by law.

How we use sensitive personal data

Under the GDPR, the parish priest, has to explain how your data is used, because he can only use that data if permitted by law. Below are the legal bases relevant to personal data:

- Where the parish priest needs to fulfil the contract entered into with you;
- Where the parish priest needs to comply with a legal obligation;
- Where you have given consent;
- To protect your vital interests, for example a known serious medical condition;
- Where it is necessary for the legitimate interest of the parish, or those of a third party, and your interests or fundamental rights do not override those interests.

Below are the legal bases relevant to special categories of data: We may also use your personal data in the following situations when special category data is being processed;

- Where the parish needs to comply with a legal obligation;
- Where you have given explicit consent;
- To protect your vital interests;
- Processing is carried out in the course of our legitimate interests with appropriate safeguards by a foundation, association or any other not-for-profit body with a political, philosophical, religious or trade union aim and on condition that the processing relates solely to members or former members of the body or to persons who have regular contact with it in connection with its purposes and that the personal data are not disclosed outside the body without the consent of the data subject;
- For the defence, establishment or exercise of legal claims;
- Processing is necessary for the purposes of preventative or occupational medicine, for the assessment of the working capacity of the staff member

Our Legitimate Interests

With regard to our ‘legitimate interests’ referred to above, these would include but are not limited to:

- The furtherance of the parish mission, and the provision of services to the faithful, and all who interact with it;
- The furtherance of HR functions and initiatives;
- The pursuit or defence of any claims, rights or litigation or detection of a crime;
- Accounting or auditing functions and reporting duties;
- Monitoring and ensuring compliance with parish policies, processes and procedures such as security, fraud prevention, staff member benefits and training.

Consent

We do not need your consent if we use special categories of your personal information in accordance with our written policy to carry out legal obligations, or for one of the other reasons outlined above. In limited circumstances, if the need arises, the parish priest will approach you for written consent to allow him process certain particularly sensitive data. If the parish priest does so, he will provide you with full details of the information that he would like and the reason he needs it, so that you can carefully consider whether you wish to consent. You should be aware that it is not a condition of your contract with the parish priest that you agree to any request for consent from him.

In limited circumstances where you have provided consent to the collection, processing and transfer of your personal information for a specific purpose, you have the right to withdraw that consent for that specific processing at any time. To withdraw your consent please contact the parish priest. Once the parish priest has received your request, he will no longer process your information for the purpose or purposes you originally agreed to, unless he has another legitimate basis for doing so in law.

Criminal Convictions

The parish will only use information relating to criminal convictions or alleged criminal behavior where the law allows it to do so.

Third Party Recipients

The parish will share your data with third parties when required to do so by law, where it is necessary to administer the working relationship with you or where the parish has another legitimate interest in doing so. For example, the parish may use third party providers for IT support, for payroll, pension providers, health insurance providers. Data will be shared with Government and statutory bodies such as Revenue. The list is not exhaustive.

All parish third party providers are required to take appropriate security measures to protect your personal information in line with our policies. The parish only allows them process your data for specified purposes and in accordance with its instruction.

Transferring Information outside the EU

We will not transfer your personal data outside the EU.

Your Rights

Under certain circumstances, by law, you have the right to;

- Request access to any data held about you by a data controller (known as a “Data Subject Access Request”)
- Have inaccurate data corrected – incomplete or inaccurate information can be corrected;
- Have information erased – you can ask to have your information deleted or removed where there is no good reason for the parish to continue processing it;
- Object to the processing of your data where the parish is relying on a legitimate interest or that of a third party and there is something about your particular situations which makes you want to object to processing on this ground;
- Restrict the processing of your information. This enables you to ask the parish to suspend the processing of your data, for example, if you want the parish to provide the reason for processing;
- Where processing is based on consent you can withdraw that consent at any time;

- Data portability (not applicable to parishes)
- Object to automated decision-making and profiling (automated decision making and profiling is not used by the parish priest)
- Right to lodge a complaint with the Data Protection Commission.

If you wish to review, verify, correct or request erasure of your data, or wish to enact any of the above, please contact the parish priest.

Data Subject Access Request

Staff members are entitled to request data held about them in the parish by means of a Data Subject Access Request. The parish priest will ensure that such requests are answered within the allocated time period, within one calendar month. He may ask the Archdiocesan Data Protection Officer to assist with such requests. To make a Data Subject Access Request a staff member can speak directly with the parish priest, send the request via email, letter or phone and ask for the information. In some cases, the parish priest may need to ask for proof of identification before the request can be processed. This may relate to a former employee who did not work in the parish during his tenure. The parish priest will ask the employee to verify their identity as soon as possible after the Data Subject Access Request has been received.

While a Data Subject Access Request should be responded to within one calendar month, this period may be extended up to two further months where necessary and the requestor will be informed about the reasons for this as soon as possible.

Information will be sent via registered post unless you request, in writing, that you are happy to receive it electronically. Data Subject Access Requests are provided free of charge, unless the request is “manifestly unfounded or excessive”, in which case an administration fee may be applied. A subject access request is likely to be manifestly unfounded or excessive where a request is repeated to which the parish has already responded.

If an employee makes a Data Subject Access Request, the parish priest will inform them of:

- The purposes of the processing;
- The categories of personal data concerned;
- To whom the personal data has been or will be disclosed;
- Whether the data will be or has been transferred outside of the EU;
- The period for which the data will be stored, or the criteria to be used to determine retention periods;
- The right to seek a judicial review and make a complaint to the Data Protection Commission;
- The right to request rectification or deletion of the personal data (not an absolute right);
- Whether the data has been subject to automated decision making.

Staff members are only entitled to receive personal data about themselves and will not be provided with data relating to other employees or third parties. Staff members who express opinions about other colleagues in the course of their employment should bear in mind that their opinion may be disclosed in an access request, e.g. performance appraisals.

Security and Disclosure of Data

The parish priest has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that appropriate security measures are in place to protect the confidentiality of both your electronic and manual personal data, from accidental loss, unauthorised use/access/alteration and/or disclosure. In addition, the parish priest limits access to this personal data to authorised individuals and authorised third parties only who have a need to know. They will only process your data on his instructions and each are subject to a Confidentiality Agreement.

The parish priest has put in place procedures to deal with any suspected data security breach. He will notify the Archdiocesan Data Protection Officer, and upon their advice, in some instances, will notify you and the Data Protection Commission when he is legally obliged to do so.

Email Monitoring

Whilst staff members are entitled to a degree of privacy at work, the parish priest reserves the right to monitor, review, analyse and log all aspects of email and internet usage. He may conduct routine monitoring, including, but not limited to data stored on parish devices, internet sites visited, participation in chat and newsgroups, file downloads, and all communications sent and received by employees. Monitoring is only carried out to the extent permitted or as required by law and as necessary and justifiable for parish purposes.

The parish priest reserves the right to ensure that staff member obligations to the parish are being complied with and to ensure that the staff member is not engaging in prohibited activities as identified or activities deemed inappropriate in the Acceptable Usage Policy.

The parish priest does not conduct routine monitoring, but he does have the ability to interrogate the information listed above if there is a requirement to do so and in accord with the aforementioned policy. If the parish priest is using monitoring software, he is obliged to inform all employees.

Data Retention

How long will we use your information for?
The parish will only retain your personal information for as long as necessary to fulfil the purposes for which it was collected, including for the purposes of satisfying any legal, accounting or reporting requirements. Details of the retention periods for different aspects of your personal information are available in our Data Retention and Erasure Policy.

To determine the appropriate retention period for personal data, the parish priest will consider the amount, nature and sensitivity of the data; the potential risk of harm from unauthorised use or disclosure of your personal data; the purposes for which the parish processes your personal data and whether it can achieve those purposes through other means; and the applicable legal requirements. In some circumstances, the parish will anonymise your personal information so that it can no longer

be associated with you, in which case, the parish will use such information without further notice to you. Once you are no longer an employee, worker or contractor, the parish will shred and/or securely destroy your information in accordance with our Data Retention and Erasure Policy or applicable laws and regulations.

An optional Parish Data Protection Representative

While the parish priest is the Data Controller for the Parish, and has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance the GDPR, he may find it opportune to appoint a suitable volunteer to assist him in his compliance. For further information and training please contact dataprotection@dublindiocese.ie,

Data Protection Commission

You have the right to complain to the Data Protection Commission.
Fax: +353 57 868 4757
E-mail: info@dataprotection.ie

Postal Address: Data Protection Commission, 21 Fitzwilliam Square South, Dublin 2, D02 RD28

Changes to this Privacy Policy

We reserve the right to update this privacy notice at any time, and we will provide you with a new privacy policy when we make any substantial updates. We will also notify you in other ways, from time to time, about the processing of your personal data.

If you have any questions, please contact the parish priest or the Archdiocesan Data Protection Officer.

Acceptable Usage Email Policy

Acceptable Usage Email Policy

Introduction

The parish priest or his equivalent (hereinafter referred to solely as the parish priest) utilises and makes available email for his employees in the functioning of the parish but recognises the risks to security and personal data posed by such use. This policy outlines the acceptable email usage for the parish, restrictions and rules for governing use of email throughout the parish and serves as a guidance document in the correct use and behaviour of employees and third-parties when accessing and using email.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other information security policies and data protection protocols and measures for a complete approach to securing and protecting personal information.

Policy Statement

The parish recognises that email is a necessary and standard way to communicate in business and makes up an essential part of the parish's communication with other employees, third-parties, members of the faithful and all who interact with it.

Like all forms of technology used by the parish, email can pose security or business risks if used or set-up incorrectly or inappropriately. This email policy sets out the approach and expectations for safe and secure use of email throughout the parish and provides guidelines on good email etiquette for those using and accessing email.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide the parish's statement of intent on how it sets-up, secures, uses and monitors email use. It provides staff members with their obligations and expectations when using email and helps to reduce the risk associated with parish email use.

A portion of the information sent and received by email in the parish constitutes personal information and as such, this policy should be read in conjunction with our other information security and data protection policies.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff members within the parish (meaning permanent, fixed term, and temporary staff, any third-party representatives or sub-contractors, agency workers, volunteers and interns). The policy applies within the parish premises and outside where employees are using or accessing parish email whilst working at home or travelling. This policy is applicable to any device where email is accessed, including smartphones, tablets, other mobile devices, laptops and desktop computers. Adherence to this policy is mandatory and non-compliance could lead to disciplinary action.

Email Use and Guidance

The parish has set out guidance for employees on how to use email for best practice, acceptable use and any actions deemed unacceptable when using or accessing the parish email.

Acceptable Use

The parish has adopted the below set of acceptable use guidelines for staff members to follow when using the parish email:

- Email must be used in accordance with current legislation and regulations;
- Staff members must adhere to this policy at all times when using parish email;
- The parish email should only be accessed outside of the business premises or hours with the explicit authorisation of the parish priest;
- Staff members must only access their own email and must not share or disclose logins or passwords;
- Staff members must report any unusual or flagged email messages to the parish priest immediately;
- The parish email should only be used for legitimate business use.

Prohibited Use

In addition to the acceptable use of the parish email system, the below actions and forms of use are unacceptable and must be adhered to by all employees. **The parish email must not be used:**

- To send or receive inappropriate content or attachments, including distributing, disseminating or storing images, text or materials that might be considered indecent, racist, sexist, abusive, offensive, pornographic, obscene or illegal;
- For personal use, to disseminate personal views or opinions or to access personal emails;
- For sending confidential messages to any unauthorised person or location;
- To sign-up to personal, inappropriate or non-business internet sites;
- For sending or forwarding 'chain letters' or social content;
- Forwarding of parish confidential messages to external locations;
- To send, receive or access any copyrighted information in a way that violates or breaches that copyright;
- To send unsolicited parish, marketing or advertising material;
- In a way that restricts the sending or receive of files by other employees (i.e. sending large files without pre-authorisation) or for undertaking deliberate activities that waste any networked resources;
- In a way that could introduce any form of computer virus or malware into the parish network.

Best Practice

As email is used so often to communicate with other people, the parish has set out the best email etiquette that should be followed by all staff members or third-parties using the parish email. Appropriate use of the email system and message structure is essential to the parish's reputation and for best practice when contacting members of the faithful or others.

The parish suggests that when using parish email, staff members should:

- Ensure that the 'to' field is correctly populated before sending the email;
- Turn off 'Contact Auto-Fill' for the recipient field so that the email system does not 'suggest' the name of the person you are sending the email to;
- Not use 'BCC' for hiding email recipients as a 'reply to all' from the intended recipient will continue to copy the 'BCC' in unknowingly – instead send a separate copy of the email to other users;
- Not use the email system for sending personal staff member content, discussions or opinions such as jokes, outside work events. The list is not exhaustive.
- Always ensure that the 'Subject' line is meaningful and appropriate;
- Keep the email content brief and to the point – do not clog other staff members email system up with lengthy emails if a meeting or phone call would serve better;
- Only use the 'flag' or 'urgent' options when the message is urgent or needs a time sensitive response;
- Not add a 'read receipt' request onto email as they can become overwhelming when someone receives a lot of email and some servers do not support them;
- Do not type in all 'CAPS' to get a message across or in the subject lines as in email terms it is seen as shouting and is not polite.

Personal Email

The parish understands that email forms a large part of individual's daily life and is an integral communication tool used by most people. As such, the accessing of personal email is allowed, with the below stipulations: -

- Personal email should only be used or accessed on personal devices such as smartphones and should never be accessed via computers or devices;
- Use and access to personal email is restricted to non-working periods such as prior to, and after work and lunch, break times;
- Staff members must never use personal email to send or receive material or information relating to or owned by the parish or for business purposes;
- It is preferable that personal email should only be access via a staff member's own 4G/5G or Wi-Fi access and must not use or access the parish's internet connection for personal use;
- Personal email must never be used to send or receive inappropriate content, whether for personal or business purposes

Email Security

The parish priest and/or IT support company are responsible for ensuring that the network and email system is adequately protected from viruses and malware. However, staff members and users can also help in avoiding security issues by complying with the below responsibilities. Users of the email system must not:

- Send or open any attachment that is not recognised, authorised or has come from an unknown source;
- Disable or change any of the security settings applied by default to the parish email system and network;
- Alter any of the security settings on the device being used to access the email system;
- Send any personal or confidential information by standard software. Speak to the parish priest who will advise on the correct secure transfer tool or system for the file type;

- Disclose your email login or password or attempt to access another user's email system;
- Leave email systems open, unattended and unlocked when leaving a desk or the room.

Staff members should submit any personal devices being used to access the parish email system to the parish priest/IT support for security software installation and checks.

Email Archiving and Retention

Under the **General Data Protection Regulation** (GDPR), all personal data, including that stored as a message or in an email system is subject to the GDPR's data minimisation and storage limitation principles, which the parish strictly adheres to.

The general retention periods and destruction and archiving methods are detailed in the Data Retention and Erasure Policy, to which all emails and archives messages are subject. All emails are treated in the same way as paper files in terms of retention and disposal.

Emails where there is a lawful obligation or basis to retain are archived and become the responsibility of the parish priest or (his Data Protection Representative, where applicable), for review on retention periods and setting accurate destruction dates.

Where any email contains personal information in the form of an attachment (i.e. medical invoices, passports copies, birth certificates and any other documents of a sensitive nature), these attachments are removed from the email and stored in accordance with the personal information protocols as detailed in the data protection and information security policies.

Email Monitoring

Whilst staff members are entitled to a degree of privacy at work, the parish priest reserves the right to monitor, review, analyse and log all aspects of email and internet usage. He may conduct routine monitoring, including, but not limited to data stored on parish devices, internet sites visited, participation in chat and newsgroups, file downloads, and

all communications sent and received by staff members. Monitoring is only carried out to the extent permitted or as required by law and as necessary and justifiable for parish purposes.

The parish priest reserves the right to ensure that staff member obligations to the parish are being complied with and to ensure that the staff member is not engaging in prohibited activities as identified or activities deemed inappropriate in the Acceptable Usage Policy.

The parish priest does not conduct routine monitoring, but he does have the ability to interrogate the information listed above if there is a requirement to do so and in accord with the aforementioned policy. If the parish priest is using monitoring software, he is obliged to inform all staff members.

Responsibilities

All email users within the parish are responsible for adhering to this policy and for the correct and proper use of email and ensuring the security of the information sent and received. Where any staff member has or is believed to have breached the standards or requirements set out in this policy, they may face disciplinary action.

The disciplinary penalty will be proportionate to the level of misuse of email but can range from a verbal warning through to dismissal, dependant on the factors involved in the policy breach. Knowingly using email in a manner that does not comply with legal obligations or this policy is a serious matter and the parish will monitor and review all email use to ensure the correct procedures are being followed and adhered to.

Protected Disclosures

Purpose

This policy ensures compliance with the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 and the Protected Disclosures Amendment Act 2022, promoting honesty, openness, and accountability. It offers a safe channel for workers to report concerns or wrongdoing without fear of reprisal. Workers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the policy and confidently disclose genuine concerns internally, knowing they are legally protected from penalisation or unfavourable treatment.

Scope

This policy covers all workers in the parish, including employees, volunteers, contractors, and others. It emphasises compliance with both voluntary and mandatory reporting obligations. However, it doesn't address interpersonal grievances or complaints against employers. Protected Disclosures should not interfere with ongoing processes unless they result in penalisation.

Policy

What is a Protected Disclosure?

A Protected Disclosure refers to the disclosure of relevant information by a worker in the reasonable belief that it tends to show one or more relevant wrongdoings and it came to their attention in a current or past work-related context. 'Relevant wrongdoings' are broadly defined in the Act and include the following:

- That an offence has been, is being or is likely to be committed;
- That a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation, including breaches of EU law including Public Procurement, Financial services products and markets, Transport Safety, Product Safety, Food Safety, Consumer Protection, Environmental Protection, Data Protection, Nuclear Safety, acts or omissions affecting the financial interest of the Union, other than one arising under the individual's contract of employment or other contract whereby the individual undertakes to do or perform personally any work or services;

- That a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- That the health and safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered; That the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged;
- That an unlawful or otherwise improper use of funds or resources of a public body, or of other public money, has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- That an act or omission by or on behalf of a public body is oppressive, discriminatory or grossly negligent or constitutes gross mismanagement; or
- That information tending to show any matter falling within any of the points above has been, is being or is likely to be concealed or destroyed. And where an attempt has been, is being or is likely to be made to conceal or destroy such information.

It is not deemed to be a relevant wrongdoing where a matter is a function of the employee or the parish to detect, investigate, or prosecute and does not consist of or involve an act or omission on the part of the parish.

What is meant by a Reasonable Belief?

Workers are expected to have a reasonable belief supported by solid grounds when making a disclosure, without the need to prove the absolute truth of the information. Unlawful or unethical motives are not tolerated. If unsure whether a concern qualifies as a Protected Disclosure under this policy, individuals should seek guidance from the designated person specified herein.

Designated Person:

An impartial and competent individual or team is designated to handle reports, ensuring follow-up and appropriate action.

Procedure for Raising a Concern:

Workers who have a reasonable belief that a relevant wrongdoing has occurred or is occurring in a work-related context can report these concerns

to the Designated Person/authorised external third party, either verbally or in writing. The disclosure should include specific details of the concern, and the Designated Person conducts an initial assessment within a reasonable timeframe.

The disclosure should state:

- That the disclosure is being made under this procedure;
- The discloser's name, position in the parish, place of work, and confidential contact details; the name of the person(s), body or otherwise alleged involved;
- A description of the 'relevant wrongdoing'; information in respect of the alleged wrongdoing – what is occurring / has occurred, and how including dates/times and locations so as to assist the investigation of the matters raised in the disclosure;
- Whether or not the alleged 'wrongdoing' is still ongoing;
- Whether the alleged wrongdoing has already been disclosed, and if so, to whom, when and what action was taken;
- Any other relevant information.

Initial Assessment

Where necessary, further information may be requested by the Designated Person/authorised external third party from the discloser to enable them to carry out an initial assessment of the complaint.

On completing an initial assessment, the Designated Person/authorised external third party may determine:

- (i) there is insufficient evidence that a relevant wrongdoing occurred and they will notify the discloser in writing of this decision and the reasons for it.
- (ii) there is evidence that a relevant wrongdoing may have occurred, they will take appropriate action to address the relevant wrongdoing, having regard to the nature and seriousness of the matter concerned.

This process will be completed within a reasonable period but will take no longer than three months

from the date of the acknowledgement of receipt of the protected disclosure.

How the parish will deal with a worker's Disclosure

Having acknowledged receipt of the concern in writing, the parish will arrange a meeting with the Discloser to discuss the matter on a strictly confidential basis. The meeting will be conducted by the Designated Person/authorised external third party and the Discloser is permitted to be accompanied by a work colleague.

The Discloser will be advised of any supports that may be available at this time.

The Designated Person/authorised external third party will at this point carry out an initial assessment to identify if the concern is appropriate to this policy. This may involve simply clarifying certain matters, clearing up misunderstandings or resolving the matter by agreed action without the need for an investigation or it may be determined that the concern raised is a matter more appropriate to other policies, for example Grievance or Dignity in the Workplace policies.

Should this approach be deemed inappropriate or inconclusive, matters raised by the worker may:

- Be investigated internally by an appropriate independent member of management or other appropriate person;
- Be referred to an external enforcement agency or regulator;
- Be referred to An Garda Síochána.

If the assessment determines that the matter is in fact appropriate to this policy an appropriate course of action will commence.

Where an internal investigation takes place, this will be governed by the terms of reference which will detail the likely time frame for its completion (an indicative timeframe will be outlined) and the scope of the investigation.

Any worker making a Protected Disclosure or any worker against whom a relevant disclosure concern has been made, is entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague. The investigation will be conducted

thoroughly, objectively and with sensitivity. Utmost confidentiality will be protected in so far as it is reasonably practicable.

Where possible or appropriate, the parish will keep the Discloser who made the disclosure informed of actions taken. Such information should be treated as confidential. Sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent the parish however from giving specific details of any steps, including the outcome of any investigation or sanctions taken as a result.

In all cases, the Discloser will be provided with feedback from the parish on the actions taken or envisaged within 3 months of the Disclosure being made. Where requested by the Discloser, the parish will provide further feedback at 3-month intervals thereafter.

Internal Investigation Outcomes

Every reported issue will be taken seriously. Appropriate action will be taken based on the outcome of any actions or investigation undertaken.

Measures will be taken against a worker where an investigation finds sufficient evidence to conclude that the concern(s) raised by the discloser was justified. This may include formal disciplinary action, or other appropriate sanction or intervention deemed necessary to prevent a recurrence of the 'relevant wrongdoing'. Prior to any disciplinary action being taken, a fair disciplinary hearing will be held in line with the parish's disciplinary procedure.

On completing an initial assessment, the Designated Person/authorised external third party may determine:

- there is insufficient evidence that a relevant wrongdoing occurred and they will notify the discloser in writing of this decision and the reasons for it;
- there is evidence that a relevant wrongdoing may have occurred, they will take appropriate action to address the relevant wrongdoing, having regard to the nature and seriousness of the matter concerned.

The investigation will be completed within three months from acknowledgment of the protected

disclosure. If inconclusive, no negative inference will be drawn, and all parties are expected to continue working normally. Disclosers aren't required to prove the truth but must have a reasonable belief. Deliberately false disclosures may lead to disciplinary action. Malicious disclosures are not protected and may result in legal action.

Confidentiality

The parish is committed to protecting the anonymity of the worker making a disclosure and ensuring the confidentiality of relevant disclosures. No information revealing the discloser's identity will be disclosed beyond authorised recipients. However, exceptional circumstances outlined in the Protected Disclosures Act 2022 may require limits on confidentiality, including:

- Instances where disclosure is mandated by Irish Law in the context of investigations or judicial proceedings, especially to safeguard the rights of the person involved;
- Cases where the recipient of the disclosure has taken all reasonable steps to prevent disclosing the identity of the discloser or believes such disclosure is necessary to prevent serious risks to the security of the State, public health, public safety, or the environment;
- When the identity of the discloser or related information is disclosed to another party as per the aforementioned circumstances, the Discloser shall be notified in writing before their identity or the relevant information is disclosed, unless such disclosure would jeopardise related investigations or judicial proceedings;
- Instances where the Discloser explicitly states no objection to their identity being disclosed.

When taking action after a disclosure, the designated person should seek the discloser's consent before revealing their identity, except in exceptional cases. If identity disclosure is necessary, the discloser should be notified, and they can request a review of the decision. Confidentiality is crucial throughout the process, and failure to maintain it may result in disciplinary action. Seeking advice from a solicitor, or barrister is also considered a Protected Disclosure.

Raising a Concern Anonymously

Concerns may be raised anonymously, although practically, investigating such concerns may prove challenging. The parish is not obligated to pursue anonymous reports received. However, all workers are encouraged to attach their names to their disclosures to facilitate appropriate follow-up. This enables the parish to assess the disclosure and take necessary action, including investigation if required.

Safeguards and Protection

Any penalisation of a worker making a Protected Disclosure violates the Act and will not be tolerated. The parish will take disciplinary action in any instance where a discloser faces penalisation or threat of it. No discloser involved in these procedures will face unfavorable treatment, whether making a Protected Disclosure, supporting one, providing evidence, or indicating intent to do so.

Penalisation includes various detrimental acts or omissions in a work-related context, such as suspension, dismissal, demotion, coercion, harassment, or discrimination. Disclosers must also refrain from causing detriment to others, which may constitute gross misconduct. If facing such treatment, the discloser should inform their manager or use the Parish Grievance Procedure if the issue persists.

Other Channels – Raising Concerns Outside of the Workplace

While the main goal of this policy is internal disclosure, it recognises that in rare cases, external disclosure may be necessary. The Protected Disclosures Act 2022 provides avenues for such disclosures, detailed in the ‘Disclosure outside of the Employer’ section. It’s crucial to understand that the criteria for external disclosure are stricter than for internal reporting, requiring more substantial evidence depending on the recipient.

Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for these procedures rests with the parish priest. Management will ensure communication of this policy to all workers, periodic review in line with legislative changes, and

maintenance and updating as needed. Measures will be taken to ensure the accessibility of policies and procedures for all workers.

All workers are expected to adhere to this policy and raise concerns through the outlined procedures.

Designated Person/Authorised Third Party:

- Name:
- Telephone:
- Email:

Disclosure outside of the Employer

Workers are encouraged, enabled, and supported to raise disclosures internally in the first instance. The 2022 Act permits a worker to make a Protected Disclosure externally to individuals other than their employer under specific circumstances, each with different requirements, as detailed below:

1. Other Responsible Person

If the worker reasonably believes that the ‘relevant wrongdoing’ primarily concerns the conduct of a person other than their employer, or something for which that other person holds legal responsibility, the worker can disclose the information to that other person.

2. Prescribed Person

Certain external individuals are designated by Statutory Instrument 339 of 2014 (“SI 339”) to receive Protected Disclosures (“prescribed persons”). This includes heads or senior officials of various statutory bodies or relevant regulators. A list of prescribed persons can be found at www.gov.ie/prescribed-persons.

3. Protected Disclosures Commissioner

A worker may also disclose to the Protected Disclosures Commissioner, who typically refers the report to an appropriate regulator for acknowledgment, follow-up, and feedback. The timeline for feedback to the worker may be extended to six months for external disclosures made through a prescribed person.

A Protected Disclosure is made in accordance with

this section if the Discloser:

- (a) makes the disclosure to a person prescribed in the link provided above, and
- (b) reasonably believes that:
 - (i) the relevant wrongdoing falls within the description of matters in respect of which the person is prescribed in the link provided for;
 - (ii) the information disclosed, and any allegation contained in it, are substantially true.

4. A Minister of the Government

A worker may report to a relevant Minister (i.e., the Minister on whom any function relating to the public body is conferred) if the worker is or was employed in a public body and meets one or more of the following conditions:

- The worker has previously reported substantially the same information, but no feedback has been provided within the specified period, or if feedback has been provided, the worker reasonably believes there has been no follow-up or inadequate follow-up;
- The worker reasonably believes the head of the public body concerned is complicit in the relevant wrongdoing; The worker reasonably believes that the relevant wrongdoing may constitute an imminent or manifest danger to the public interest.

5. A Legal Advisor

A disclosure is made in the manner specified in this section if the Discloser makes the disclosure in the course of obtaining legal advice, including advice relating to the operation of this Act, from a barrister, solicitor.

6. Alternative External Public Disclosure (in very limited circumstances)

It is preferable in most circumstances for a worker to disclose to their employer, and if that is not appropriate, to use one of the options outlined above. It will rarely be appropriate to make alternative external disclosures where the disclosure could be dealt with through one of the other disclosure options above. There are stringent requirements for alternative external disclosures to qualify as Protected Disclosures under the Act.

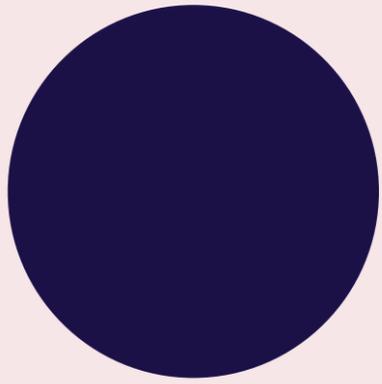
The protections will only be available if the following conditions are met:

The Discloser must reasonably believe that the information disclosed, and any allegation contained in it, are substantially true. At least one of the following conditions at (a) to (d) are met:

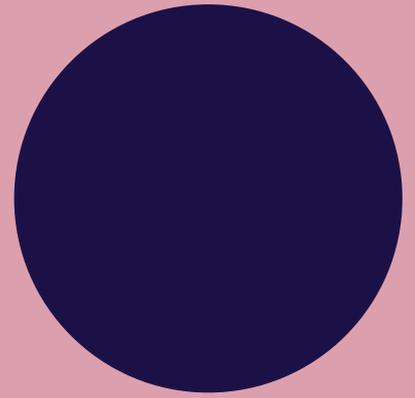
- (a) At the time the Discloser makes the disclosure, the Discloser reasonably believes that he/she will be subjected to penalisation by the parish if he/she makes the disclosure to the parish, other Responsible Person, a Prescribed Person, or a Minister; or
- (b) In a case where no relevant Prescribed Person is prescribed in relation to the relevant wrongdoing, the Discloser reasonably believes that it is likely that evidence relating to the relevant wrongdoing will be concealed or destroyed if the Worker makes the disclosure to the employer or responsible person; or
- (c) The Discloser has previously made a disclosure of substantially the same information to their employer or other Responsible Person or a Prescribed Person or a Minister; or
- (d) That the relevant wrongdoing is of an exceptionally serious nature.

In all the circumstances of the case, it is reasonable for the Discloser to make the disclosure. In determining whether it is reasonable for the Discloser to make the disclosure, regard shall be had, in particular, to:

- the identity of the person to whom the disclosure is made;
- the seriousness of the relevant wrongdoing; whether the relevant wrongdoing is continuing or is likely to occur in the future;
- whether any action had been taken in cases where a previous disclosure was made and whether the Discloser complied with any procedures in place when making that previous disclosure.



Archdiocese of Dublin



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