



Comhaltas  
Ceoltoiri  
Éireann



**Positive  
Working and  
Learning  
Environment**

# The Comhaltas Environment



- Comhaltas operates at different levels and engages with
  - Employees
  - Volunteers
  - Members (Adult & junior)
  - Students
  - Members of the Public

# Priorities



- *Cothromaíocht*
  - Respect
  - Equality
  - Opportunity
- Recognising inappropriate behaviour and taking measures to prevent it
- Zero Tolerance (of inappropriate behaviour) from By-standers
- Early resolution of conflict when it arises

# Fundamental Principles



- Each person **deserves**, and is **entitled** to be treated with Fairness, Dignity and Respect
- Negative Behaviours such as Bullying & Harassment are **unacceptable**
- We can all play a part in Creating and Fostering a positive working and learning environment.



# What is Harassment



- **Unwanted conduct** based on any of 9 grounds (of discrimination)
  - Gender (*male, female, transgender etc*)
  - Civil status (*single, married, separated/divorced, widowed etc*)
  - Family status (*pregnant, responsible for care of children or adults etc*)
  - Sexual orientation
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Race
  - Religious belief
  - Membership of the Traveller community

# What is '*Unwanted Conduct*'



- **C**onduct 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”
- The “unwanted conduct” includes:
  - Spoken words
  - Gestures – including offensive gestures or facial expressions
  - Production and display of written words, pictures and other material (unwelcome emails or other offensive material).

# What is Sexual Harassment



- Sexual harassment is any form of “unwanted conduct” of a sexual nature”
- It can be
  - verbal,
  - non-verbal or
  - physical
- Some examples include unwanted physical contact or unwelcome propositions.

# Bullying



- Bullying is *repeated inappropriate behaviour* that undermines a person's right to dignity.
- Takes place over a period of time.
- Done by one or more persons and it is aimed at an individual or a group.

# Types of Bullying



- Bullying can be direct or indirect
- Verbal, physical or psychological.
- Cyberbullying is bullying which is carried out online, through mobile phones, social networking sites, email or texts.
- The terms bullying and harassment are different.

# Forms of Bullying



- Social exclusion and isolation
- Verbal abuse and insults
- Being treated less favourably than colleagues in similar roles
- Belittling a person's opinion
- Spreading malicious rumours, gossip or innuendo
- Intrusion - pestering, spying or stalking
- Intimidation and aggressive interactions
- Excessive monitoring of work
- Withholding information needed for the person to perform their job properly
- Repeatedly manipulating a person's job contents and targets
- Blaming a person for things beyond their control
- Use of aggressive or obscene language
- Repeated physical abuse

# Types of Bullying



- Verbal
- Physical
- Gesture
- Exclusion
- Extortion
- e-Bullying (cyber)

# Examples of bullying behaviour

- Undermining a person.
- Targeting a person in a negative manner.
- Rumour, gossip, ridicule, innuendo.
- Exclusion or isolation.
- Intimidation.
- Physical or threatening abuse.
- Aggressive or obscene language.





## Examples cont.

- Offensive jokes.
- Intrusion on person's privacy.
- Giving unreasonable assignments.
- Setting unreasonable or impossible deadlines.
- List is endless but must (**usually**) be repeated to constitute bullying.



# Bullying Facts

- Widespread and serious
- Causes indescribable and unimaginable pain
- Often psychological in nature
- Anyone can be bullied (*It's not the victim's fault*)
- Bully is often insensitive, lacks empathy, is insecure and has poor self esteem
- Bully has strong need to dominate



# Effects of Bullying

- Stress/Depression/Anxiety
- Loss of confidence and self esteem
- Reduced concentration, motivation, energy
- Feelings of isolation/hopelessness
- Sleeping problems, nightmares
- Headache, skin or bowel problems
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Panic attacks/ attempted suicide/suicide



# Strategies for victims

- Recognise and name the behaviour
- It is not your fault
- Find support, seek help
- Keep written record of all interactions
- Find witnesses
- Don't retaliate
- Keep account of effects on you



# Confronting the bully

- Don't attack
- Remain calm
- Be specific
- State behaviour is unacceptable
- Use assertive words
- Speak clearly, audibly and firmly
- Quote your rights (*right to dignity, free from abuse etc*)

# Bullying Procedures/remedies



- Informal
  - IF POSSIBLE, Approach perpetrator alone and seek immediate cessation. Express zero tolerance.
  - Constructive discussion aiming for Early Resolution.
  - Seeking Modified Behaviour
  - Monitor
  - Record outcome in mutually agreed manner.



# Informal procedure

- If unable to approach alleged perpetrator, seek contact person e.g. work colleague, supervisor or line manager, human resource or personnel officer or trade union rep.
- Contact person could accompany victim when approaching perpetrator
- Mediator

# Bullying Procedures Cont.



- Formal Procedure. (External Intervention)
  - Complaint in writing to management
  - Alleged perpetrator informed of allegation
  - Investigators to be appointed
  - Written submissions
  - Parties will be interviewed separately (*at least at the beginning*)





# Role of investigator

- Investigation must be thorough, objective, sensitive, confidential, respectful of rights of both parties,
- Agreed timeframe of investigation
- Meet both parties
- Written submissions
- Interview witnesses
- Findings recorded
- Assess validity of complaint

# Outcome if complaint upheld



- Management to interview perpetrator
  - Verbal warning
  - Demand cessation
  - Seek apology
- Serious disciplinary sanction
  - Written warning
  - Payment/Benefit sanction
  - Modify work environment
- Monitor on ongoing basis



# Legislation

- Employment Equality Act & Equal Status Act.
- Safety Health and Welfare Act 2005
  - *Onus on Employer to maintain safe and healthy working environment*
- Industrial Relations and Unfair Dismissals Acts

# Uncontrolled Anger

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# Whispering and Exclusion







Happy Group



Physical  
Aggression

Recording on  
Mobile Phone





# Group bullying an individual classmate

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Group Poking Fun at a classmate

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A photograph of a whiteboard with a blue top edge and a black marker tray at the bottom. The text 'Bullies are not welcome here!' is written in black marker. The word 'Bullies' is on the first line, 'are' is on the second line, 'not' is on the third line, 'welcome' is on the fourth line, and 'here!' is on the fifth line. A black marker is visible in the tray.

Bullies  
are  
not  
welcome  
here!

Discourage  
Bullying  
ALWAYS

# The Role of the By-Stander



- Not enough not to be a bully
- Must **Stand Up** and **Speak out** (even when your friends behave inappropriately).
- Imagine yourself in the victim's position
- Support the Victim

# The Positive Stuff



- **Encourage** friendliness, sharing, empathy, generosity, effort etc
- **Acknowledge** good behaviour/performance
- **Advise** rather than **criticise** if behaviour/performance is less than optimal
- **Raise Awareness** of the Negative stuff
- **Support** those who are less-able

# In Conclusion



- Raise awareness of Bullying & Harassment
- Educate adults/children to ensure they are equipped to deal with a problem of Bullying/Harassment
- Encourage and Promote behaviours that enhance a persons dignity

NO  
~~Bully~~  
Zone

Comhaltas is a  
No Bully Zone

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# Conflict



- It does happen
- No Organisation is IMMUNE
- Consumes energy of people and organisation
- Has a negative impact
- Seek early resolution

# Create a positive working and learning environment



- Develop a FRIENDLY and FAIR work atmosphere
- Assign tasks equally
- Provide assistance /advice when needed
- Provide affirmation on job well done
- Advise and support rather than criticise





Happy Team

Go Raibh Maith Agaibh