



Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann

Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel

Brú na bhFiann, North King Street, Dublin 7. Tel: 01-485 0666 Fax: 01-485 0601

Email: info@oneconnect.ie Website: www.oneconnect.ie

22 August 2019

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

BULLYING

1. The aim of this policy and procedure is to eliminate all forms of bullying behaviour, to raise awareness of the effects of such behaviour on individuals and the learning environment and to promote a climate in which members, residents and staff feel able to raise complaints of bullying without fear of victimisation.
2. The Bullying Complaint Form is attached as Appendix 1 to this document.

Ollie O'Connor
Chief Executive Officer
Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann

Colm Campbell
Board Chairman
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Distribution:

ONE Board Members
ONE Area Councils
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POLICY AND PROCEDURES BULLYING

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann (ONE) encourages the promotion of a social, living and working environment where all members, residents and staff engage positively and harmoniously together. ONE believes that the environment should give all members, residents and staff the freedom to volunteer, live and work without having to suffer bullying or intimidation from another member, resident or staff. Bullying is not a trivial matter and can manifest itself on a regular basis in all shapes and forms. Bullying will not be tolerated, whether perpetrated by members, residents or staff, and will be dealt with in accordance to the procedures as set out in this document.

Members, residents and staff have a responsibility and an obligation to adhere to the principles set out in this policy, and to make themselves familiar with all matters set out within it. All members, residents and staff should be aware that bullying is unacceptable and can be grounds for disciplinary action. Where a finding of bullying is upheld, serious sanctions, up to and including dismissal/expulsion, are possible.

Additional information for staff can be found in Section 3 of the Employee Handbook.

Throughout this policy and procedures, the individual who feels that they have been bullied or otherwise aggrieved is referred to as the “complainant” and the person against whom these allegations have been made is referred to as the “respondent”.

2.0 AIM OF THIS POLICY

The aim of this policy and procedure is to eliminate all forms of bullying behaviour, to raise awareness of the effects of such behaviour on individuals and the learning environment and to promote a climate in which members, residents and staff feel able to raise complaints of bullying without fear of victimisation.

3.0 WHAT IS BULLYING?

Definition

ONE defines bullying as:

***“Repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, in the course of activities in ONE, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual’s right to dignity in the course of these activities.*”**

Bullying can cause a range of negative physical and emotional symptoms and problems. Bullying is a major cause of stress and can lead to problems with health and in a broader context can undermine the fabric of a healthy volunteer, living and working environment.





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The most serious effects of bullying can be fear, anxiety and depression. To these may be added severe loss of confidence and low self-esteem. Bullying, like stress generally, has a detrimental effect on the organisation as a whole because people operating in a climate of fear and resentment do not give of their best. The effects on the learning organisation as a whole can include:

- Increased absenteeism.
- Reduced productivity/engagement.
- Reduced efficiency.
- Low motivation.
- Hasty decision-making.

Examples of Bullying

- Aggressive behaviour by one individual towards another.
- Repeated verbal harassment.
- Personal insults and name-calling.
- Persistent criticism.
- Persistent picking on a person for the butt of jokes, horseplay, uncomplimentary remarks or other behaviour likely to cause offence.
- The maligning or ridiculing of a person directly or to others.
- Unfair delegation of duties and responsibilities.
- Refusal to communicate in normal collegiate way.
- Aggressive behaviour, physical intimidation, unwelcome physical contact up to and including assault.
- Cyber bullying – which can include the dissemination of hurtful, derogatory or intimidating content via electronic media, or the inappropriate use of electronic devices, including camera-phones.

This list is not exhaustive. Further examples are available on the Health & Safety Authority's Website www.hsa.ie.

For the avoidance of doubt, this policy applies to all interactions, online and offline, which arise in relation to ONE. The policy covers both curricular and extracurricular activity, and other afterhours ONE related events.

What is not bullying

It is the case that single acts of the above or other acts of unpleasantness or aggression, although unwelcome personally and indeed unwelcome in the ONE community generally, do not constitute bullying and as such do not fall under the rubric of this policy. It is also the case that occasionally there may be ongoing disputes or disagreements between members, residents and staff which, although they can evoke strong feelings and result in a difficult social, living or working environment, do not constitute bullying.





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However, any difficulty in defining what constitutes bullying should not deter members, residents and staff from complaining of behaviour which causes them distress. ONE encourages members, residents and staff to attempt to deal with interpersonal conflicts on an informal basis. Where the matter is serious or the individual or group does not feel comfortable dealing with the matter on their own, we encourage members, residents and staff to communicate with anyone of the contact points listed below who may be in a position to assist in dealing with the matter.

4.0 ADVICE FOR MEMBERS, RESIDENTS AND STAFF WHO WISH TO SUBMIT A BULLYING COMPLAINT

Advice

Advice on the invocation of the procedure may be obtained from any source of the complainant's liking. The following are some examples of where such advice is available

- Board of Directors Welfare Committee.
- CEO.
- Area Council.
- House Manager.
- Branch Welfare Officer.
- Veteran Support Centre.

Support for Complainants and Respondents

Anyone can become the victim of a bully at some point in their life. Those who bully can, at other times also be victims themselves, redirecting their anger to someone more vulnerable than themselves. Bullying can cause severe consequences both short and long term. It is important that those involved seek appropriate support. This is separate from any other additional action which the person(s) concerned may choose to take through the formal/informal procedure outlined below.

5.0 PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT

Scope

The procedures set out in this document are to be followed where:

- A member, resident or staff feels themselves a victim of bullying by another member, resident or staff, or
- Where an allegation of bullying has been made against a member, resident or staff.

What to do if you consider yourself to be the victim of Bullying

Complainants who feel they are being bullied are advised to utilise:

- The Informal Procedure (Page 4) or
- The Formal Procedure (Page 5).





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It is recognised that it may not always be practical to use the informal procedure, particularly where the bullying or harassment is very serious. Therefore, a complainant may decide, for whatever reason, to bypass the informal procedure. Choosing not to use the informal procedure will not reflect negatively on a party during any subsequent assessment or proceeding.

All information concerning allegations of harassment, bullying or victimisation (whether brought under this or any other ONE policy) will be treated in confidence by all parties in order to protect all parties involved. Members, residents and staff are to be aware that breaches of confidentiality may give rise to action being taken under ONE's disciplinary policies.

Informal Procedure

ONE supports the resolution of complaints, as far as is possible and appropriate, through informal processes. In many cases the problem of bullying can be resolved informally. Complainants who believe they are being bullied and wish to attempt to resolve it informally should explain the following clearly to the respondent(s):

- Details of the behaviour in question.
- The fact that it is unwelcome and offensive to them.
- The harmful effects it is having on them.
- That it is contrary to ONE policy.

To facilitate this, the complainant should keep a record of events as they occur; what happened, dates, times, places, witnesses (if any), the respondent(s)' response and the impact of this behaviour.

Where members, residents and staff find it difficult to communicate directly with the respondent(s), they should be accompanied by a third party, for example a fellow member, resident or staff. The third party's role will be to provide moral support to the complainant while they are making their issues known to the respondent(s). It is not their role to make the complaint on behalf of the complainant; however, where it is evident that the complainant is having difficulty in presenting their issues the person accompanying them will be free to assist in the presentation of the complaint. The respondent(s) should be made aware at the time the meeting is being arranged that the complainant will be accompanied at this meeting. The respondent(s) also has the right to be accompanied by a third party. Should they wish to have a person with them at the meeting, they should make the complainant aware of this at the time the meeting is being arranged.

If at this point the parties come to an agreement or solution, the remedial actions should be clearly identified and agreed to by both parties. Both parties are encouraged to agree notes in order to remove ambiguity later. This will allow both parties to monitor the situation going forward. The objective of the informal procedure is to allow both parties agree a framework where they will be able to continue to interact together in an appropriate manner.

If this fails to resolve the issue or if either party wishes to have the matter dealt with formally they are entitled to refer the issue for processing through the formal procedure.





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Formal Procedure

This procedure is to be followed where:

- If following the informal route and there is no resolution; or,
- At any point during the informal procedure the complainant wishes to do so; or,
- The matter is too serious to be resolved in an informal way.

To begin the formal procedure, a written complaint should be addressed to the Chairperson of the relevant Area Council or the Chief Executive Officer, or where it involves either of these to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors who will then arrange for the investigation of the complaint as set out in the ONE's Complaints and Disputes Policy and Procedures.

Content of Written Complaint

In the letter of complaint, the complainant should set out as clearly and briefly as possible:

- The nature of the behaviour they are concerned about.
- The effect this behaviour has on them.
- Dates of, and the identity of any witnesses to, any incidents complained about, together with any documentary evidence of same.
- Details of any attempts that have been made to resolve the difficulties.
- If appropriate, the outcome/resolution they are seeking.

To assist members, residents and staff in setting out their complaint, there is a template complaint form set out at Appendix 1 (TBC) which may be used if they wish to do so. This complaint form will be available in soft copy on ONE's website, Veteran Support Centres, as well as from the Chairperson of the Area Council and the Chief Executive Officer.

Victimisation

Where an individual makes a complaint in good faith, gives evidence in proceedings or gives notice of intention to do so, they will not be victimised or subject to sanction.

Victimisation is regarded as gross misconduct, and members, residents and staff should note that any such action may result in formal investigation, a disciplinary hearing and serious sanction.

Malicious complaints

All complaints of harassment, bullying or victimisation will be considered within the context of the right of each individual to be treated with dignity and fairness. However, a formal complaint of bullying and harassment should never be made on a malicious or vexatious basis and the possible making of a complaint should never be used as a threat against an individual.

Where, following investigation under the Formal Procedure, it is concluded that complaints were made or threatened to be made on a malicious and/or vexatious basis, the complainant's conduct will be investigated under ONE's Complaints and Disputes Policy and Procedures and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal / expulsion of the complainant.





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6.0 This Policy and Procedures is authorised under paragraph 4.5 a of the Handbook of Rules 2019.

Ollie O'Connor
Chief Executive Officer
Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann

Colm Campbell
Chairman
Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann

Patron: Michael D Higgins, President of Ireland.

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Directors: Chairman Colm Campbell, Oliver Barbour, Stephen Coy, Patrick Durnin, Patrick Flavin, Tommy Gallagher, Tom James, Eddie McCarthy, Jim McEaney, Paul Morgan, Gerry O'Doherty, Patrick Rooney, Eamon Walsh.

Chief Executive Officer: Ollie O'Connor. Company Secretary: Albert John Farrell. National President: Tom James.

