



Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR

LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

FET ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The **FET Anti-Bullying Policy** is part of the **FET Learner Code of Behaviour and Discipline**. The objectives of the anti-bullying policy are:

- to endeavour to define bullying;
- to promote awareness of the issue of bullying;
- to provide an effective procedure for dealing with allegations of bullying;
- to outline to FET learners their rights and responsibilities;
- to define the ETB's rights and responsibilities to FET learners.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to the whole Further Education and Training community in their relationships with learners, learning practitioners¹, management, administration and ancillary staff.

Definition of Bullying and Harassment

For the purpose of this document, and all ETB FET policies relating to behaviour and discipline, the definition of bullying and its various forms is as follows:

In the context of these procedures, bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive definition:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying;
- cyber-bullying;
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs;
- in addition, in the context of these procedures, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message, or other private messaging, do not fall within this definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the **FET Learner Code of Conduct**. A single incident can have a serious effect on a learner and may also constitute harassment, which is legally prohibited in the ETB under equality legislation and our Public Sector Duty.

Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the nine discriminatory grounds (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

ETB Responsibility

The ETB has a responsibility to:

- a. promote an anti-bullying policy and ensure that every person in the ETB is afforded their entitlement to respect and equality;
- b. work pro-actively, in as far as is realistic; to ensure that bullying does not take place;
- c. create an ETB ethos which encourages disclosure and discussion of bullying incidents and behaviour;
- d. set up support for both the bullied and the bully;
- e. ensure that appropriate records of any reported incidents of bullying will be maintained.

¹ The term "Learning Practitioner" is used to cover the roles of Teacher, Trainer, Tutor and Instructor.

A learner who reports an alleged case of bullying has the right to:

- a. be treated with dignity and respect;
- b. be secure in the knowledge that all incidents are taken seriously and treated consistently;
- c. be confident that all reported incidents are recorded, and the appropriate procedure followed.

Every learner who alleges that a case of bullying has occurred, has the responsibility to:

- report any incidents of bullying promptly to their Learning Practitioner or Programme Manager²;
- co-operate fully in the investigation of the incident.

The ETB has the right and responsibility to:

- a. investigate all reported instances of bullying;
- b. record all incidents and instigate appropriate procedures.

Procedure for Reporting and Noting Incidents and Complaints of Bullying

The following procedure will be implemented for reporting and noting incidents and complaints of bullying to include:

- a. appropriate personnel will interview all of those involved in an alleged incident of bullying;
- b. the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator of the incident will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem;
- c. written statements from all involved in the incident will be taken;
- d. offenders and victims of bullying may be offered counselling;
- e. if the learner is dissatisfied, an appeal may be made through the **ETB FET Complaints Procedure**.

Sanctions may include:

- a. verbal warning;
- b. a contract of good behaviour;
- c. suspension;
- d. other sanctions, as may be deemed appropriate.

² Programme Manager includes: Principal, Deputy Principal, Provision Co-ordinator, FET Training Provision and Support Services Manager, FET Training Provision and Support Services Assistant Manager, or other person designated by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.