

**The Diocesan Council of the
Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross ('the Diocesan Council')**

Grievance Procedure

The Diocesan Council of the Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross ("the Diocesan Council") is committed to promoting and maintaining a good working environment for all employees and good employee relations. The purpose of the Grievance Procedure is to allow employees to raise their grievance concerning work related matters so that these complaints/grievances can be addressed promptly.

The grievance must relate to the employee's terms and conditions of employment, working environment or working relationship. While the Diocesan Council will endeavour to resolve any grievance raised in the specific time frame in accordance with the policy below, the intervention of the Diocesan Council may carry on into the medium term in order to ensure that the Diocesan Council remedies the issues fully.

Implementing the Procedures of the policy

For the purposes of implementing the procedures in this policy the Diocesan Council will appoint and act through a sub-committee ('Employment Committee') of its own members which it shall elect triennially.

Informal process

All complaints should be raised firstly on an informal basis before invoking the formal grievance procedure. You should raise your complaint initially with your immediate superior and if the matter is not dealt with satisfactorily within three days of receipt of the complaint by your superior then you may raise a formal complaint under the formal grievance procedures as set out below. At all stages in the grievance procedure the Employment Committee will give consideration to Mediations/Facilitation in an effort to resolve the matter.

Formal process

Stage 1

You should refer your grievance/complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Employment Committee. A meeting will be arranged by the Chairperson to discuss the matter not later than seven working days following receipt of the complaint. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague to this meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to establish the facts of the complaint and the specific issues complained of. It may be necessary to adjourn the meeting in order to consider the appropriate way of dealing with the grievance. The Chairperson will advise you of the next course of action prepared to address the grievance.

Appeal

If agreement cannot be reached at stage 1 and you are not happy with the decision of the Chairperson of the Employment Committee then you may appeal to the Bishop

within seven days of receipt of the decision of the Employment Committee above. The grounds of your appeal must be set out in writing and addressed to The Bishop. Again a meeting will be arranged to discuss the matter not later than seven working days following receipt of the appeal by the Bishop.

Grievance procedures where a complaint concerns another employee/ work colleague.

If your complaint concerns another employee, other than a complaint of bullying or harassment, (*in which case your grievance should be raised under the Bullying or Harassment policies*) then the following is the appropriate procedure.

Informal process

If you have a complaint concerning a fellow employee or other persons connected to you by way of your employment then you should firstly raise this matter informally with your immediate superior. Your immediate superior will obtain the facts of the complaint, the specific issues complained of, when any specific incident occurred to establish the precise nature of the complaint.

The complaint may be verbal or written but if it is verbal then a written note of what is complained of will be taken by your immediate superior and you will be required to sign that note as a record of the complaint. The person handling the complaint will establish the facts, the context and the next course of action in dealing with the matter. The person complained of will be presented with a copy of the complaint and his/her response will be established.

The person handling the complaint will then agree to progress the issues or will try to resolve the matter and attempt to progress the issue for a resolution so that both parties can return to a harmonious working environment. The person handling the complaint will then issue a decision to the complainant within three working days of having received the complaint or as soon as possible thereafter.

The person handling the complaint will keep a record of all stages to include the complaint, the first meeting, any action agreed and signed records of any further meetings. Confidentiality is critical at all stages of the grievance procedures and breaches of same will result in disciplinary action being taken against the perpetrator.

Where resolution is found through informal procedures then both parties will be given support and periodic reviews to ensure and maintain a harmonious working environment.

Formal process

If after the informal procedure the matters complained of persist then you should raise a formal complaint in writing. This complaint should be furnished to the Chairperson of the Employment Committee who will appoint a designated person to investigate the complaint.

The person complained against will be notified in writing that a complaint has been made against or concerning him or her. That person will be assured of the Employment Committee's presumption of his/her innocence and he/she will be advised of the aims and objectives of the formal process and the procedures and the time frames involved.

A meeting will be arranged and the person complained against will be furnished with a copy of the complaint and asked for his/her comments in relation to same. The person complained against will be advised of their entitlement to be accompanied by a work colleague to all meetings concerning the complaint.

Investigation

A representative of the Employment Committee will investigate the complaints made and this investigation will be governed by terms of reference. The time scale for the completion of the investigation will be outlined to the complainant and the person(s) against what complaints have been made.

Statements from all parties will be recorded in writing and those giving the statements will be required to sign them. Copies of all statements made will be given to the persons who made them.

The objective of the investigation will be to ascertain whether or not, on the balance of probabilities, the behaviours complained of occurred. Witness statements may be relied upon for this purpose.

The investigation will be conducted thoroughly, objectively, with sensitivity, utmost confidentiality but at all times with due respect to the rights of both the complainant and the person complained of. Anonymity and/or confidentiality cannot be granted in the case of any investigation if it is necessary to release information to any party to the investigation in order to ensure natural justice and fair procedures.

The investigator will meet with the complainant and the person complained of and any witnesses or relevant persons on an individual confidential basis with a view to establishing the facts. The person complained of and the complainant will be advised that they may be accompanied by a work colleague to any such meetings. Where possible the investigation will be completed within seven days of the receipt of the complaint under the formal procedures and if this is not possible then within an agreed time frame.

Following completion of the investigation, the investigator will submit a report to the Chairperson of the Employment Committee to include the investigator's conclusions. The complainant and the person complained of will be given a copy of the report as soon as possible and given an opportunity to comment, within a set deadline, before the Chairperson decides on what action to take, if any.

The Chairperson will then decide in light of the investigator's report and comments made what action, if any, is to be taken arising from the report. The Chairperson will then inform the complainant and the person complained of the next steps in the process.

Where a complaint is upheld then the Employment Committee will follow the appropriate disciplinary procedures.

Appeal

An appeals process for both parties is available. Such appeals must be made, in writing, to the Bishop. The reason for the appeal must be set out clearly. The appeal will focus only on the aspect of the case cited by the appellant as being the subject of the appeal. An appeal hearing may be conducted, if appropriate in the circumstances. The grounds of the appeal and any outcome and methodology employed will be appended to the investigation file.