

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

Grievance Procedure

Introduction

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. Complaints of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment should be raised under the Dignity at Work Policy, and it is not appropriate to raise such complaints under the Grievance Procedure.

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.

In creating this Policy, the Diocesan Council has regard to the Industrial Relations Act 1990 Code of Practice on Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures (Declaration) Order 2000.

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.

Definition of a Grievance

A grievance may be defined as a complaint which relate to the Team member's terms and conditions of employment, working environment or working relationship.

The types of issues which are appropriate for referral under this policy include:

- Allocation of work
- Assignment of duties
- Hours of work
- Granting of all forms of leave, i.e. annual leave, compassionate leave, study leave
- Granting of overtime
- Access to courses
- Health and safety issues
- Acting-up/deputising arrangements
- Relationships with work colleagues (unless falling under the Dignity at Work Policy as outlined above)
- Organisational change/new working practices
- Pay and benefits

Note: This list is not exhaustive.

Confidentiality

All individuals involved in this Procedure to above should maintain absolute confidentiality on the subject.

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 Mediation/Facilitation in an effort to resolve the matter.

Mediation

The Employment Committee supports the use of mediation as an alternative method of resolving complaints at all stages of the process. Mediation is an informal process, through which a Mediator helps the parties in a dispute to talk about issues between them, and if they wish, to reach an agreement which is acceptable to both sides. The process is voluntary and both parties must be willing to take part and agree to the appointment of a Mediator (internal or external). If the parties agree to this approach, the Chairperson of the Employment Committee will appoint a neutral and impartial Mediator to facilitate the process. Where mediation is availed of, the following applies:

- An independent mediator has to be agreed by both sides.
- Mediation does not deny the right to a full investigation at a later date.
- The information that arises in mediation is confidential and cannot be used later in an investigation.

Formal process

You should refer your grievance/complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Employment Committee at the earliest opportunity. 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 understand your concerns in greater detail and to understand any solutions that you think will help to resolve your grievance. 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.

In the event that an investigation is required, the person appointed to hear your concern will meet with you and any other employees involved in the grievance. Written statements may be taken and shared with you as part of that process. The Investigator will endeavour to respond to the grievance as soon as possible and in any event within 7 days. Sometimes, depending on the number of issues and complexity of concerns raised, as well as leave resulting in other employee's unavailability, it is not possible to have all investigations completed within 7 days. If this timescale is not possible, the Investigator will keep you informed, and will make every effort to complete the process within a reasonable time period after the grievance meeting.

During the course of the Grievance Procedure, generally the status quo will be maintained. Work will continue as normal for all employees, except in exceptional circumstances where alternative arrangements may be made in the interests of everyone involved. You will be

informed in writing of the decision in relation to the grievance and will be notified of your right to appeal against the decision.

Appeal

You may appeal to the Bishop within seven days of receipt of the outcome of the Formal Process outlined above. The grounds of your appeal must be set out in writing and addressed to The Bishop. A meeting will be arranged to discuss the matter not later than seven working days following receipt of the appeal by the Bishop.

The Bishop will hear your appeal or appoint an Appeals Officer to hear your appeal. The Appeals Officer will have had no prior involvement in the process, or the circumstances relating to your grievance. An appeal hearing will be scheduled where appropriate. You may be accompanied by a work colleague to the appeal hearing, if one is scheduled. In general, you will be notified of the outcome from the appeal in writing within 7 days, or as soon as possible thereafter.

This is the final stage of the grievance and the Appeals Officer's decision shall be final.

THE Employment Committee and the Bishop reserves the right to appoint an external party to conduct the investigation of the grievance process and/or an appeal on its behalf.

Employees must note that if a grievance is made against another employee in bad faith the employee may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure.