



RELIGIOUS SISTERS OF CHARITY

The love of Christ urges us on

ANTI-BULLYING

POLICY

AND

PROCEDURES

DEFINITION OF A VULNERABLE ADULT

Definition as set out in **National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012-2016 -**

“Vulnerable Person” means a person, other than a child, who—

- (a) is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia,
- (b) has an intellectual disability,
- (c) is suffering from a physical impairment, whether as a result of injury, illness or age, or
- (d) has a physical disability,

this is of such a nature or degree—

as to restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against harm by another person,

or

that results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living including dressing, eating, walking, washing and bathing.

A person’s vulnerability will depend on their circumstances and environment, and each case must be considered individually.

Bullying in the Workplace / Living Space

- Repeated and persistent inappropriate behaviour.
- Direct/indirect.
- Verbal, psychological, physical or emotional.
- Undermining an individual's God-given dignity.

How do bullies bully?

- Name calling/put-downs.
- Rumours.
- Silence/isolation.
- Exclusion.
- Workloads (Overload or no work).
- Denial of equipment.

A person bullies when he/she:

- Coerces, controls, persecutes or oppresses others, through force, threats, or by imposing guilt trips on victims.

Some Characteristics of a person who bullies:

- Low moral standards.
- Insecure, jealous, angry.
- Control.
- Desire to humiliate victims.
- Misuse of power.
- Use the example of power, not the power of example.

Who can be a victim of bullying?

- Anyone.
- High achiever or low achiever.
- Tall or short.
- Young or elderly.
- Victims are often submissive, non-controversial, traditional or organised.
- Victims are often people who are successful and dedicated.
- Some people may have a tendency to bully management, volunteers and/or employees.
- Volunteers can be bullied by full-time staff.

How does a person who bullies avoid a sense of guilt?

- Rationalise.
- Deny.
- Repress.
- Project blame.

What is not bullying?

- Leaders, line managers who challenge inappropriate behaviour or insist on reasonable standards of performance.

Responsibility of those who make a complaint about bullying:

- Detailed diary.
- Dates.
- Time.
- Location.
- Words used.
- Body language.
- Effects on victim.

Ways of addressing the problem of bullying

- Informal method.
- Formal method.
- Professional mediation.

The Elderly can feel bullied by being:

- Ignored or disregarded.
- Talked about as if they are not present.
- Threatened.
- Intimidated.
- Having worries dismissed.
- Never receiving a genuine gesture of affection or concern.
- Decisions made for them without consultation.
- Bullying of the aged by others in the workplace is not uncommon.
- Sensitivity to the psychological needs of the elderly, religious or lay is most important.

Effects of bullying on the elderly

- Loss of self-esteem/personal worth.
- Depression.
- Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.
(ABC of Bullying
Murray/Keane)

Bullying is essentially the gradual breaking down of a person.

We must never allow anyone to disrespect our God-given

dignity. Bullying is contrary to Gospel values.

We must all be proactive in condemning it otherwise the impression can be given that bullying is legitimised in the home/community, workplace, and/or in Ministry.

It is extremely difficult for bullies to change their behaviour because of their denial attitudes. Change is a slow process.

Try to convince bullies that no one is totally bad and no one is totally good.

If a person feels worthless he/she will tend to do worthless things.

Help bullies to be more aware of the impact and consequence of their bullying behaviour.

Ask the person who bullies:

Can you act and speak differently to avoid causing pain to others?

Anger control therapy might help the bully to change.

An experienced professional therapist may be required.

Am I a person who bullies?

Definition of bullying:

Bullying is the persistent and repeated acts of aggression- verbal, psychological, physical or emotional behaviour that undermines the God-given dignity of people and causes deep psychological pain to those who are bullied.

Reflecting on the above definition let us ask ourselves these questions:

Am I acting as a bully, and how do I know this?

I am a person who bullies if I persistently and repeatedly act towards someone in any of the following ways:

- Ridiculing a person.
- Criticising someone or a group unduly e.g. those in Leadership roles, the elderly, the vulnerable.
- Disrespecting lay employees and making unreasonable demands on them, while ignoring the role of the line manager.
- Rejecting and isolating a person in my community, workplace, ministry.
- Misusing my power, particularly if I am in a recognised leadership/managerial role.
- Withholding information, to my own advantage, that should be shared with others.
- Monopolising shared resources.
- Engaging in hurtful and unwanted banter that is focused on one member of the group who shows that she experiences discomfort with the banter.
- Name-calling or rumour mongering.
- Engaging in pervasive resistance by absolute silence when spoken to.
- Invading the private space or affairs of other people.
- Deliberately obstructing important decisions, in spite of having engaged in dialogue.
- Sending offensive emails or text messages.
- Using painful put-downs to hurt others.
- Controlling others by my tears.
- Shouting at those who do not agree with my opinions.
- Making unreasonable demands for funds or other resources.
- Demanding that I have my own way during a decision-making process.

I collaborate with a person who bullies when 1:

- Remain silent while observing a person being bullied.
- Fail to confront a person who bullies by objecting to their aggressive behaviour.
- Do not show concern and support for victims of bullying.

NB A once off act of aggression is not bullying