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| **Dignity and Respect in the**  **School Workplace**  **A Handbook for School Leaders**  **Session 5 – Conflict Procedures** |
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| Notes to PowerPoint presentations  Staff Sessions on Developing bespoke DWaR Charter and Policy |
|  |
| **August 2021** |

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## Slide 1 - Conflict Procedures

Have this slide showing as the staff assemble? When all are ready:

**Objective**

In this session we look at the existing **formal policies and procedures** which are there to guide and inform fair process and best practice. All staff have the right and responsibility to be aware of these. They are the **formal** powerful tools and are there to protect us and help us resolve any issue. In all cases we are urged to resolve issues. This can be done informally prior to entering any formal procedures or at the informal stage in the more formal procedures.

Begin with ‘The Why’ of the session which is to make all staff aware of the procedures available to them to help resolve interpersonal conflict.

In this session we look at the Formal procedures

Expectations - Does everyone know what to expect and how things will proceed when there is a vacancy, an issue, a conflict, a HR problem?

Huston we have a problem?

The dreaded words - ’Can I talk to you’?

Or ‘you need to do something about this’

Conflict is part of relationship

Having the kit/ tool box to deal with it takes the emotional turmoil out of it

Our DRaW is designed to avoid issues escalating to this stage.

Difficult conversations are never as difficult again

However, human nature being what it is – sometimes they do need a formal mechanism

It behoves us all to know what the key formal procedures look like

We do need to be aware of what our rights and procedures are

The purpose of this session is to make all staff aware of the procedures available to them to help resolve interpersonal conflict.

While all of the formal procedures deal specifically with teachers and have been designed by INTO, they nevertheless provide a roadmap for other staff as well.

Today we will look at what procedures and safety nets we have as a staff to address interpersonal conflict or issues which arise from it.

There are informal and formal ways of dealing with such issues and, hopefully, **we will try to move to a situation where we can resolve our issues with the least amount of personal upset to all parties involved in a situation.**

## Slide 2 - .b

What we are doing today is actually about taking responsibility for our own wellbeing, our dignity and that of our colleagues

We all have both personal and collective responsibility for this.

We have rushed to get here and now we will take a minute to ground ourselves

So, Let’s calm down deliberately.

This quote from Brené Brown’s indeed a truism.

This .b exercise is one that you can practice at any time to calm your mind and reset your day

So when you are ready

* Settle yourself comfortably in your chair,
* Let your body be alert yet relaxed.
* Feel your feet firmly on the ground.
* Feel your back against your chair.
* Allow your shoulders to drop.
* If you are comfortable doing so allow your eyes to close gently or simply lower your gaze
* Now bring your attention to the flow of your breathing
* Just allow yourself to feel each in-breath and each out-breath ..
* Breathing in and breathing out
* Allow your body to be still
* Let your thoughts come and go and simply keep bringing your attention back to your breathing.
* 45 seconds ….
* Take one last cleansing breath and
* when you are ready you can gently open your eyes and bring your attention back to the room

**Side Bar**:

**4,7,8 Breathing** is a powerful tool to help get to sleep – Breathe in for 4, hold for 7 and breathe out over 8. Repeat and you will soon be asleep.

**7/11** Breathing great for calming and grounding us. Breathe in over 7 and exhale slowly over 11.

## Slide 3 - How do we resolve Conflict?

Reminder - Great Place to work Indicators:

1. Clear **vision** & Identity - shared
2. **Honest leadership**
3. Flexible growth for employees
4. Culture of **collaboration**
5. As little politics as possible
6. Promotes **meritocracy**
7. Open **communication**
8. Honest feedback welcomed
9. **Fun** atmosphere
10. Passionate people
11. **Approachable** leadership
12. Great environment – energetic - creative (Robert Levering)

Begin by giving some time for reflection and discussion, possibly in groups

Do we name the issue and deal with it?

Do we ignore it and suffer in silence? How would that work out for all involved

Can a DRaW Policy / Charter help?

DRaW will help to build a better and healthier culture in the staff to empower people to deal with issues and to accept when they may need to acknowledge their mistakes, say sorry and move on. It also enables the victim to acknowledge when the other person says sorry and to move on also

In addition to creating the culture, a DRaW will build capacity within the staff to deal with situations openly, honestly and with compassion

Above all it ensures issues do not fester and end up at a formal procedure level

## Slide 4 - Procedures to resolve Interpersonal Conflict

**Everyone always has a responsibility in trying to ensure that an issue gets resolved at the lowest possible level and does not end up at a formal procedural stage.**

**This is not always possible as indicated by calls to the IPPN Leadership Support Team**

**What then?**

This is a list of formal procedures available at present. If all attempts to resolve issues at the informal stage have been unsuccessful, these procedures may be invoked.

Each staff member should have been given a copy of these procedures in advance of the meeting.

**What about SNAs and ancillary staff?**

If the procedures for addressing conflict are adopted by the staff and ratified by the BoM, then they become the school policy and are binding on all staff.

Go through the list.

The purpose of this session to make sure you are all aware of what to expect and what procedures are in place to safeguard your rights.

## Slide 5 - Procedure to Address Staff Difficulties

Again, we are always trying to ensure that an issue gets resolved at the lowest possible level and does not end up at a formal procedural stage.

This procedure is designed for use when an interpersonal issue needs resolution.

**Stress the emphasis on trying to resolve it at the lowest and least formal stage.**

Simply go through the stages briefly. The aim is to ensure that all staff are aware of this procedure. They have been given a copy of the full procedure that may be used in their own time, if required.

## Slide 6 - Bullying / Harassment Procedure

**We are all aware of the procedures in place with regard to students and zero tolerance of bullying.**

**We are aware of the damage bullying can do if it goes on.**

This procedure is designed for use when it is staff members who find themselves trying to address these issues.

This procedure is designed for use where someone feels that they are being bullied or harassed. Refer to the definitions in Session 1.

Again, stress the emphasis on trying to resolve it at the lowest and least formal stage.

Simply go through the stages briefly.

The aim is to ensure that all staff are aware of this procedure. They have been given a copy of the full procedure that may be used in their own time, if required.

## Slide 7 - Grievance Procedure

Grievances are in house.

Complaints are outside in.

This procedure is designed for use where someone feels that they are unfairly treated by management either a by a school leader or the BoM.

Again, stress the emphasis on trying to resolve it at the lowest and least formal stage.

Simply go through the stages briefly.

The aim is to ensure that all staff are aware of this procedure.

They have been given a copy of the full procedure that may be used in their own time, if required.

## Slide 8 - Parental Complaints Procedure

This procedure is designed to allow parents and teachers resolve complaints and issues that inevitably arise in schools.

We must always remember that parents are often relying on the reports from their children when making complaints. So perception is particularly important in these cases.

Most of them can be quickly resolved through early dialogue.

Stress the emphasis on trying to resolve it at the lowest and least formal stage.

Simply go through the stages briefly.

The aim is to ensure that all staff are aware of this procedure.

They have been given a copy of the full procedure that can be used by parents in their own time, if required.

## Slide 9 - Common to all Procedures

This slide aims to bring the common features of all procedures to the attention of staff and then reflect on them.

They will also be encouraged to reflect on the difficulty some people may have in surfacing an issue and for others, the difficulty they may have in acknowledging their part in causing distress.

For both sides **courage** is required and that needs to be recognised, acknowledged and affirmed.

We also need to recognise that, as a DRaW policy begins to work in a school, that task becomes easier for everyone, because of the development of culture and capacity as mentioned in Slide 3.

Stages - All have stages designed to move from informal to formal incrementally. Emphasise that they must be followed sequentially.

Informal v formal - The emphasis is always on resolving conflict in an informal setting. This is best done in an atmosphere of calmness and compassion.

While feelings and emotions will be high, everyone involved must seek to behave professionally.

This is not easy and this is where a DRaW comes into its own.

Courage - Ask staff to consider how difficult it can be for someone to surface an issue, particularly for someone young or inexperienced. How can we all help? How does our DRaW help?

Finality - One of the great advantages of these procedures is that they provide finality to a dispute, if taken all the way. Finality may not be the same as closure for some and they can endure a lot of self-inflicted pain and upset as a result.

We must be prepared to accept the outcome of a procedure if we enter into it.

## Slide 10 - Fairness

Ask the staff to briefly discuss their reaction to this quote. Does it behove us to develop and enhance our sense of fairness?

**What we practice becomes our practice.**

Fairness is a muscle- How fit is your fairness muscle?

What does being fair look like? Perception is reality!

How does it feel if we are unfairly treated?

The pet….

**Stay aware of being fair – Fair process\*\*\***

**Think of a time when you were unfairly treated.**

**What feelings does this illicit?**

## Slide 11 - Perception is Reality

How true is this quotation?

Discuss in groups.

How does that apply to our everyday lives in school?

## Slide 12 - Perception

This slide is simply another means of emphasising that there is always more than one way of looking at issues.

Ask them to read it from the top.

Having given time for them to do this, go to Slide 13.

Ask them to now start at the bottom and read up.

Any situation can be reframed.

## Slide 13 – Procedures / Policies to ensure Fairness

This is a list of the formal procedures available to us at present.

Each staff member should have been given a copy of these procedures in advance of the meeting.

Go through the list.

The purpose of this session is to be aware of the procedures in place.

That does not mean we will always like the outcomes!

**Do we need other procedures?**

***What about SNAs and ancillary staff? - Are there other issues of perceived unfairness in their working lives?***

## Slide 14 - PoR Appointment Procedures

The purpose of this slide is to inform all staff that there are procedures in place governing the appointment to Posts of Responsibility.

PoR appointments have been shown to be the single greatest cause of conflict among staff and therefore require addressing in any discussion of a DRaW policy.

It has also become apparent that many teachers are not aware of the process of such appointments.

Emphasise that consultation, communication, and confidentiality are the responsibility of the BoM in making such appointments.

Teachers involved need to be clear that they are willing to accept the result of a fair process and manage their own expectations and disappointment if not appointed.

This merits a discussion either as a whole staff, or in groups, will be decided based on the circumstances in each school.

## Slide 15 - Need for DRaW Policy and Charter

Distribute the Draft Template Charter and Policy, updated with updated values, vision etc. according to work done to date in previous sessions.