



Staff Empowerment Policy

May 12th

2015

As an educational community we strive to embody the values of unity, truth and love in our everyday

**Good
Counsel
College**

Under the Trusteeship of the Augustinian Order

Rationale:

Staff empowerment is a significant factor in overall school performance. A school staff with high morale is more likely to seek out new challenges, more likely to provide a positive learning environment and more likely to enjoy their time at school. Research indicates that high staff morale is a predetermining factor of high student morale and overall improved performance.

The following arrangements are currently in place so as to ensure the proper empowerment, involvement, communication, representation and development of all members of staff, teaching and non-teaching:

Dignity at Work Charter

Dignity Charter



“We at

Good Counsel College

commit ourselves to working together to maintain an environment that encourages and supports the right to dignity for all who work here and attend out school. All teachers, staff and pupils are expected to respect the right of each individual to dignity. All will be treated equally and respected for their individuality and diversity.

Bullying in any form is not accepted by us and will not be tolerated. Our policies and procedures will underpin the principles and objectives of this Charter.

Each person in Good Counsel College has :

- The right to be respected, and the duty to respect others.
- The right not to accept, and the duty not to engage in, name-calling, physical abuse, ganging up, isolating or harassing other people
- The right to report if this is happening to them, and the duty to report it if they see it happening to others.
- The right to learn, and the duty to promote learning and recreation in a safe and enjoyable atmosphere.

All teachers, staff and pupils have a duty and a responsibility to uphold this Dignity Charter.”

This Charter is endorsed by the Board of Management.

Signed:

Mr. Mark O'Brien, Principal

Nothing in this Charter overrules a person's legal and statutory rights.

Staff meetings:

The opening staff meeting of each school year is held at the end of August. Thereafter, one staff meeting is held per term lasting approximately two hours. Additional staff meetings may be called by the Principal as needs arise e.g. matters requiring more substantial time allocation.

Items for inclusion on the agenda are submitted to the Principal five days in advance of each meeting, with positive suggestions/ possible solutions to any issues raised (as appropriate). The principal then prepares the agenda which is circulated along with the minutes of the previous meeting two days before the next meeting.

It is accepted by all staff that meetings are to be conducted in a respectful and dignified manner and that personal and/or professional criticism of any member of staff is not permitted at such meetings.

Department meetings:

Teachers of each area form themselves into departments. A subject co-ordinator of each department is elected. A planning folder for each subject area is maintained and held in the school. Department meetings are timetabled to be held at the start and end of each school year.

Each department may meet during the year as the need arises and set their own agenda as necessary. Currently 5 hours are available from the Croke Park Agreement for such meetings which can take place before 9am, after 4pm or at lunch break once it does not impinge on duties undertaken as part of the supervision substitution scheme.

Some suggestions for discussion at subject meetings can be found in subject folders.

Trade Union Meetings:

Meetings of members of trade union in the school are called by the school steward. All such meetings take place outside of class contact hours.

Board of Management:

The Board of Management of Good Counsel College oversee the running of the school and carry out their duties in accordance with section 15 (1) of the Education Act 1998. The Board of Management meet every month and comprise of:

- Augustinian Nominees (4)
- Parent nominees (2 elected)
- Teacher nominees (2 elected)
- Principal (non voting member and Secretary)
- 3 year term of office.
- Quorum (at least 4 voting members present)

Professional Development:

The BOM wishes to be as supportive as possible of members of staff as they seek to develop themselves professionally. The BOM will:

- Facilitate the attendance of staff at all relevant in-service training once appropriate substitution arrangements have been approved in advance by the Principal.
- Pay the subscription costs of teachers to subject associations within the context of the annual school budget.
- Make such contributions as budgetary resources allow to the fees and costs of teachers undertaking courses and further study in relation to their professional duties in the school. In this regard teachers are asked to provide all necessary details to the Principal.
 - The Board will set aside an annual fund of €1,000, subject to financial constraints, towards assisting those teachers who complete Post Graduate studies in a recognised 3rd Level institution which will be of demonstrable benefit to the school community. The following weighting will apply to the allocation of funding:

▪ Postgraduate Diploma	1 unit
▪ Master’s Degree	2 units
▪ Doctoral Studies	3 units
 - Applications in writing, with a copy of the parchment, to the Principal must be submitted on completion of the course.

- The period of time in which completion of the course is acceptable is from May 1st to April 30th, with applications submitted prior to the April 30th in that period eligible. This will begin from May 1st 2014 to April 30th 2015 and each year thereafter.

See Appendix 1 for worked example.

- Facilitate the release of teachers as examiners for State Examinations once substitution has been approved. Teachers who wish to be released for this purpose must recommend a substitute teacher to the Principal. Teachers from the same subject area are encouraged to share such release for examinations on a rotating basis.

Communications:

Whilst much information will be communicated to the teaching staff by means of the above mentioned meetings and by the daily interactions between members of staff, other methods of communication include the following:

- Written updates from the principal to all staff in post boxes, eportal or noticeboards, email or text messages.
- Parent to teacher communications should be conducted /arranged through the office.
- Matters relating to student communications should be given through the various notice boards in the staff room, including, Learning Support referrals, the care team, Year Heads & Tutors, the discipline committee and weekly activities
- Staff room and lunch time announcements will also be used where appropriate.

Communications should be conducted in a professional, respectful and dignified manner. As a staff we try to ensure that all communication is positive, helpful and solution focused.

Grievance Procedures:

We adopt the agreements that exist between ASTI and JMB on formal grievance procedures to be followed in the event of conflict between the Board of Management and teaching staff.

A further agreement between JMB and ASTI Trade Unions sets out formal Grievance, Discipline and Dismissal procedures for non-teaching staff – Clerical Officers, Caretaking and Maintenance Staff, Special Needs Assistants.

We also adopt the JMB/ASTI Code of Practice for complaints against teachers.

Non-union members should refer any grievances to management who will deal with issues as quickly and effectively as possible.

We endeavor to ensure that relationships between staff and management are such that informal solutions to problems are the norm. Formal procedures should be used only in circumstances in which informal resolution of problems is not possible. However, Boards should follow the agreed grievance procedure at all times of conflict.

The primary objective of this agreement is to promote co-operation and orderly and harmonious relationships between the school and staff members in its employment, which will assist in the attainment of the effective operation of the school.

APPENDIX 1

The following is a worked example of the distribution of funding.

One teacher completed a postgraduate diploma in March 2015 and another completed their postgraduate diploma on May 25th 2015, two studying at masters level and one at doctoral level all completed within the time frame i.e before April 30th 2015.

The postgraduate completed in May 2015 is not eligible for this year and that teacher should apply for the 2015/16 bursary. All others are eligible.

Postgraduate Diploma	= 1 teacher X 1(weight) = 1
Masters Level	= 2 teachers X 2 (weight) = 4
Doctoral Level	= 1 teacher X 3 (weight) = 3

Total weight = 8

Board fund distribution = €1000/8 = €125

- Each Postgraduate Diploma applicant receives €125
- Each Masters Graduate applicant receives €125*2 = €250
- Each Doctoral Applicant receives €125*3 =€375

Written Applications must include

1. The teachers details: Name, Address and phone number.
2. Details of the course taken.
3. Evidence of successful completion (Parchment)
4. A written demonstration as to how the study taken is of or will be of benefit to the school community.