

 The Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority	
Teagasc Dignity and Respect Policy for Teagasc Learners	
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1. Background

This policy aims to promote respect, dignity, safety, and equality in the teaching and learning environment. Learners and Teagasc staff should be aware that all forms of bullying, discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment are unacceptable. Every learner has a right to study in an environment free of such behaviours. Every learner and every member of Teagasc staff has a duty to behave in an acceptable and respectful manner. Teagasc staff should note that the [Teagasc Dignity at Work Policy \(2018\)](#) details the overarching requirements and processes in relation to dignity and respect applicable to Teagasc staff.

2. Purpose of this policy

The key aims of this policy are to:

- Achieve a teaching and learning environment where dignity and respect are to the forefront of our values
- Create a teaching and learning environment where bullying, discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment are not tolerated in any form
- Ensure that each learner and staff member is aware of his/her responsibility to behave in a way that reflects a culture of dignity and respect.

3. Applicability

- This policy applies to all Teagasc learners. Learners are expected to treat all other learners, Teagasc staff and others (e.g. Teagasc on-site service providers, practical learning hosts) with dignity and respect.
- This policy applies to all Teagasc staff (management, educators, administration, farm and other staff). Staff are expected to treat all others (learners, colleagues, service providers and others) with dignity and respect.
- Service providers to Teagasc are expected to treat learners and Teagasc staff with dignity and respect.

4. Policy Statement

Teagasc seeks to:

- a) Promote an ethos which encourages learners and staff to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying, discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment.
- b) Raise awareness of bullying, discrimination and harassment as a form of unacceptable conduct with college/centre or among management, staff, learners, parents/guardians.
- c) Implement procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying, discriminatory behaviour and harassment/sexual harassment.
- d) Implement procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying, discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment.
- e) Offer support for those affected by bullying, discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment and for those involved in bullying, discriminatory behaviour and harassment/sexual harassment.
- f) Review the effectiveness of the college/centre measures on anti-bullying, discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment behaviour.

5. Procedure

The Teagasc Learner Handbook for each college/education centre shall identify a ‘designated person’ that learners can approach regarding concerns they may have in regard to their college or education centre environment relating to:

- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Sexual harassment
- As part of course induction, colleges and education centres will make learners aware of the Dignity and Respect Policy for Teagasc Learners. The key principles of the policy will be discussed and the designated person identified.
 - In the case of a college, the designated person may be the College Principal, the Assistant Principal or a person nominated by college management.
 - In the case of a Teagasc education centre the designated person may be the Regional Advisory Manager or a course coordinator
 - A learner may also approach any member of staff, as a “person of trust” in whom the learner is comfortable to confide.
- College and education centre managers will have responsibility for ensuring that staff and service providers (where relevant) are aware of the Dignity and Respect Policy for Teagasc Learners.

- Teagasc and local Teagasc management may organise briefings/workshops and/or activities for staff and learners to promote dignity and awareness where deemed beneficial.
- Where a dignity and respect issue arises between learners and is reported to the designated person this person may, on examining the issue and its nature:
 - Seek to resolve/mediate the issues between the parties
 - Determine that it is of a nature that it should be addressed by college/centre management through learner disciplinary procedures.
- If a perceived child safeguarding issue arises the Teagasc Child Safeguarding procedures will also be invoked. <https://www.teagasc.ie/about/corporate-responsibility/child-safeguarding-policy/>
- Where a Teagasc staff member is alleged to be the instigator of a dignity and respect issue, the [Teagasc Dignity at Work Policy \(2018\)](#) may/will be applicable.

6. Enforcement

- The disciplinary processes outlined in the Teagasc Learner Handbook (Code of Conduct for Learners) will apply where a learner's conduct is alleged or deemed to have breached the Dignity and Respect Policy for Teagasc Learners.
- Learners who perceive that their complaints have not been addressed may progress complaints through the steps of the Teagasc education complaints process as outlined in the Teagasc Learner Handbook
- Staff alleged or deemed to be in breach of this policy may/will be subject to the procedures and disciplinary processes of the [Teagasc Dignity at Work Policy \(2018\)](#)

7. Definitions and Terms

Bullying	Repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another person.
Discrimination	Less favourable treatment of a person on the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community
Designated person	A designated person is a person selected by management that learners can approach should issues/concerns regarding bullying, discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment arise.

Harassment	Unwanted behaviour which a person finds offensive or which makes a person feel intimidated or humiliated. Unwanted behaviour could be Physical (harassment – jostling, shoving or any form of assault) ,spoken or written words, abusive/offensive emails, tweets or comments on social networking sites
Person of trust	A person other than the designated person in whom a person is comfortable to confide in should issues/concerns regarding bullying, discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment arise.
Service providers	Individuals or companies providing services to Teagasc including catering, security, cleaning and maintenance
Sexual Harassment	Any form of unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

8. Related Documents

Teagasc Learner Handbook
Teagasc Child Safeguarding Policy

9. Version History

Revision date	Version	Summary of Changes
07/10/2020	0.4	Version 0.4 incorporating Education Quality Group edits
29/06/2020	0.3	Comments from Teagasc HR included
22/06/2020	0.2	Developed and edited by Tony Petit
18/06/2020	0.1	Developed by Tony Petit