



## Section 4: EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

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## 4.1 Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

Disciplinary and grievance procedures which will cover all staff in the employment of North Tipperary VEC are currently being negotiated between the Irish Vocational Education Association, as the representative body of all 33 Vocational Education Committees, and representatives of all the relevant trade unions. It is understood that both the disciplinary and grievance procedures are currently being finalised.

In the meantime the current Grievance and Disciplinary procedures agreed and approved by North Tipperary VEC will continue to be implemented (see Appendix 4 A for current procedures).

## 4.2 Trade Unions

### Right of Association

North Tipperary VEC believes in the principle of resolving industrial relations issues by discussion and agreement. For practical purposes it is considered that this can best be achieved through negotiations conducted by representatives of the employers and of the employees. Currently the majority of the Committee's staff are represented by the following trade unions:

- Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI)
- Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland (ASTI)
- IMPACT Trade Union
- Services, Industrial, Professional, & Technical Union (SIPTU).

### Negotiating machinery

Terms and conditions of service and related matters are generally nationally agreed at conciliation and arbitration between management and unions, chaired by the Department of Education and Science. The employers' side is represented by the Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA).

Meetings are held locally, as required, between Committee's senior management staff and Union Representatives.

North Tipperary VEC accepts the right of recognised trade unions to appoint branch officers and shop stewards. Reasonable facilities will be given for elections to be conducted on organisation premises outside normal working hours. Only representatives so elected and notified to the organisation will be recognised for negotiating purposes. The committee affords certain facilities to branch officers/shop stewards to enable them to perform their duties.

You have a right to join a recognised independent trade union or staff association and to take part in its activities.

## Contact Details

### Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA)

Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA)  
McCann House,  
99 Marlborough Road,  
Donnybrook, Dublin 4

Tel: 01 4966033/4966248  
Fax: 01 4966460  
Email: [info@ivea.ie](mailto:info@ivea.ie)

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www.ivea.ie

### **Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI)**

Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI)  
73 Orwell Road  
Rathgar, Dublin 6

Tel: 01 4922588/4922510  
Fax: 01 4922953  
Email: [tui@tui.ie](mailto:tui@tui.ie)  
[www.tui.ie](http://www.tui.ie)

### **Irish Municipal Public and Civil Trade Union (IMPACT)**

IMPACT Trade Union  
Local Government, Education & Local Services Division  
Nerney's Court  
Dublin 1

Tel: 01 8171500  
Fax: 01 8171501  
Email: [msimpact1@eircom.net](mailto:msimpact1@eircom.net)  
[www.impact.ie](http://www.impact.ie)

### **Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland (ASTI)**

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland (ASTI)  
ASTI House  
Winetavern Street  
Dublin 8

Tel: 01 6719144/6040160  
Fax: 01 6719280  
Email: [info@asti.ie](mailto:info@asti.ie)  
[www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie)

### **Services, Industrial, Professional & Technical Union (SIPTU)**

Services, Industrial, Professional & Technical Union (SIPTU)  
Liberty Hall  
Eden Quay  
Dublin 1

Tel: 01 8586383  
Fax: 01 8749115  
Email: [info@siptu.ie](mailto:info@siptu.ie)  
[www.siptu.ie](http://www.siptu.ie)

## **4.3 Partnership in North Tipperary VEC**

North Tipperary VEC's Education Plan 2006-2010 identifies the promotion of Partnership as a key principle through and beyond the life of the Plan.

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Partnership in North Tipperary VEC operates on two levels:

1. Among all staff and education partners
2. With external organisations, agencies and individuals.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of partnership is to develop shared intra and inter-organisational understandings so that we can provide a quality learner-centred education for all our students and learners.

### **Goals**

The goals of Partnership identified by the VEC National Partnership Forum are to:

- Ensure that the voice of everyone in the organisation is heard
- Deliver excellence within the organisation for the benefit of our service users
- Create a sense of ownership and pride within the organisation
- Inform and consult our staff on matters of importance to them
- Promote partnership through our Local Working Group which is made up of an equal number of management and employee representatives
- See Appendix 4B for matrix of Partnership Core Values.

### **Key role for organisational communications**

The goals of partnership are enabled through North Tipperary VEC's Communications strategy. Implementation of the strategy requires all communications to be:

- Democratic
- Person-centred
- Ethical
- Transparent
- Relevant
- Realistic
- Quality Assured.

The aim of this strategy is to develop a communication culture that enables our organisation to trust its own potential to respond confidently and effectively to the challenges associated with the provision of a quality educational experience for all our learners. (See Appendix 4C for our Communications Strategy).

### **Partnership in practice in North Tipperary VEC**

To ensure the development of a partnership culture in North Tipperary VEC the following actions have taken place:

- All Working Groups and Policy Development Teams provide representation for all relevant partners/stakeholders throughout our organisation
- Representation on key boards etc, (County Development Board; Tipperary Institute; County Childcare Committee, Tipperary Energy Agency)
- Close co-operation with Tipperary Institute
- Developing Partnership agreement with NUI Maynooth
- Participation on EU Projects
- Partnership developed with the School Development Planning Service.

### **Local Partnership Group**

To support partnership across the organisation a Local Partnership Group has been established with representation from all sectors within the organisation (we are awaiting Teachers Union representative presently). This group meets on a regular basis to enable North Tipperary VEC respond to the challenges and commitments associated with ongoing National Partnership Agreements.

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|                   |  |             |
|-------------------|--|-------------|
| Majella Kennedy   | School Administrator                         | Joint Chair |
| Fiona Campbell    | Human Resources                              |             |
| David Leahy       | CEO  |             |
| Liam McGrath      | A.P.O.                                       | Joint Chair |
| Antoinette Coffey | Adult Education Officer                      |             |
| Noel Colleran     | Staff Development Officer                    |             |
| Geraldine O'Brien | Senior Travellers Training Centre<br>Manager |             |
| Bernie Harty      | Educational Support Services                 |             |
| Tony McKenna      | Committee Member                             |             |
| Ray Creaney       | Caretaking/Maintenance                       |             |
| Dan Condren       | Principal, St Sheelan's FE College           | Secretary   |

### Local Working Groups / Focus Groups

Linked directly to the Workplace Partnership Committee are:

#### i) Four Local Working Groups

- o Adult Education Administrators
- o Caretaking/Maintenance Staff
- o School/College Administrators
- o Special Needs Assistants.

### Links

|   |  |
|---|--|
| VEC National Partnership Forum                | <a href="http://www.vecnfpf.com">www.vecnfpf.com</a> |
| National Centre for Partnership & Performance | <a href="http://www.ncpp.ie">www.ncpp.ie</a>         |
| Irish Vocational Education Association        | <a href="http://www.ivea.ie">www.ivea.ie</a>         |
| SIPTU   | <a href="http://www.siptu.ie">www.siptu.ie</a>       |
| IMPACT  | <a href="http://www.impact.ie">www.impact.ie</a>     |
| Department of Education and Science           | <a href="http://www.des.ie">www.des.ie</a>           |
| Labour Relations Commission                   | <a href="http://www.lrc.ie">www.lrc.ie</a>           |
| Equality Authority                            | <a href="http://www.equality.ie">www.equality.ie</a> |

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## Appendix 4A



**Coiste Gairmoideachais**  
Thiobraid Árann Thuaidh

North Tipperary

**Vocational Education Committee**

# NORTH TIPPERARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

## GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

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# Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure

## Statement of Purpose

North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee acknowledges that most problems concerning an individual staff member and his/her employment will be dealt with satisfactorily in the course of the normal working relationship between the staff member concerned and his/her immediate supervisor. The purpose of an individual grievance procedure is to:

1. Provide a framework for dealing promptly and fairly with individual staff members concerns or complaints about working environment, terms and conditions or workplace relationships which have not been or cannot be resolved through the normal working relationship.
2. Address disciplinary issues arise when problems of conduct or performance are identified by North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee and management seeks to address them through well structured procedures.

The purpose of this policy is to outline North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee agreed procedure in relation to dealing with grievances and disciplinary issues in employment.

## Grievance Procedure

### **1. Purpose**

- 1:1 The purpose of this policy and procedure is to enable all staff to raise any concerns or complaints about their working environment, terms and conditions and workplace relationships and to ensure that they are resolved quickly and satisfactorily.

### **2. Scope**

- 2:1 This policy applies to all staff employed by North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee.

### **3. General Principles**

- 3:1 The procedure complies with the general principles of natural justice and fair procedures which include:
- that staff members' grievances are fairly examined and processed;
  - that staff members are given the opportunity to avail of the right to be represented, by a work colleague or recognised Trade Union representative, and management reserve the right to be represented by the Personnel/Human Resources Department during the procedure;
  - that staff members have the right to a fair and impartial determination of the issues concerned, taking into account any representations made by, or on behalf of, a staff member concerned and any other relevant or appropriate evidence, factors or circumstances.

### **4. Policy**

- 4:1 It is acknowledged by all parties to this agreement that grievances are best resolved as close to the source of the dispute as possible.
- 4:2 It is recognised that there are different types of grievance that may need to be handled in different ways depending on the nature of the problem. If alternative procedures have

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already been agreed to address a grievance (e.g. sexual harassment, bullying etc), these will be utilised.

4:3 It is the duty of all management and staff to ensure good working relationships and the resolution of personal frictions and matters of conduct.

4:4 However, there is a role for a formal procedure when grievances cannot be resolved through normal working relationships.

## **5. Procedure**

5:1 Any staff member who feels that he/she has a grievance in respect of any matter regarding his/her employment shall, in the first instance, raise it informally with his/her immediate supervisor/manager. Most complaints and grievances are resolved speedily and satisfactorily in this way.

Grievances may be raised at the next level in certain circumstances if that is deemed to be more appropriate.

5:2 Where the grievance cannot be resolved informally it will be dealt with under the formal grievance procedure.

5:3 The formal grievance procedure provides for the staff member to refer the grievance to the immediate supervisor/manager at the earliest opportunity, but in any event within a reasonable time-scale. At this stage the grievance should be recorded in writing.

5:4 If agreement is not reached by this approach the procedure provides for the staff member to refer the grievance to the next highest level of management at the earliest opportunity.

5:5 If agreement cannot be reached through the above stages of the grievance procedure the issue in dispute may be referred by the staff member to the relevant Principal, Manager, Assistant Principal Officer, Adult Education Officer, Chief Executive Officer as appropriate.

5:6 A meeting will be arranged with the staff member concerned within two weeks. Every effort will be made by both parties to effect a settlement.

5:7 If the matter is not resolved at this meeting the issue in dispute may be referred to the Head of Human Resources who will arrange a meeting with all parties within two weeks.

5:8 Should the parties fail to resolve the issue, the matter may be referred by either or both parties to the Rights Commissioners, Service/Labour Relations Commission, Formal Management Union Meeting's or appropriate other third party e.g. Director of Equality Investigations.

## **6. Status Quo Clause**

6:1 During the course of the grievance procedure, the status quo will be maintained and work will continue without interruption.

6:2 No industrial action of any form will be taken by either side during the course of the procedure.

## **7. Harassment and Sexual Harassment**

7:1 As highlighted at 4.2, it is recognised that there are different types of grievance that may need to be handled in different ways. Staff members with grievances in relation to equal opportunities, harassment (including bullying) and sexual harassment should, in accordance with North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee policies in this area, seek advice from any of the following:

- Shop Steward/Union Representative
- Principal
- Centre Manager
- Programme Manager
- Assistant Principal Officer
- Adult Education Officer
- Designated Contact Person
- Chief Executive Officer.

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# Disciplinary Procedure

## 1. Policy

- 1.1. In North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee, it is essential that certain standards of behaviour and performance are maintained to protect the smooth operation of the VEC and the well-being of its staff and learners. The disciplinary procedure outlined below is designed to ensure fair treatment for those whose job performance is below an acceptable level and for those involved in breaches of discipline.
- 1.2. Depending upon the seriousness of the case and the circumstances surrounding it, the disciplinary procedures may be entered into at any of the stages outlined below. Except for cases of gross misconduct, dismissal will not be the first step.
- 1.3. In general, particular shortcomings on the part of a staff member in meeting job requirements or standards will be initially brought to his or her attention by the immediate supervisor in informal conversations accompanied by the offer of assistance towards achieving improvement.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1. The procedure applies to all staff working with North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee.

## 3. General Principles

- 3.1. The procedure complies with the general principles of natural justice and fair procedures which include:
  - i. that details of the allegations or complaints be put to the staff member concerned;
  - ii. that the staff member concerned be given the opportunity to respond fully to any such allegations or complaints;
  - iii. that the staff member concerned is given the opportunity to avail of representation by a work colleague or Trade Union representative.
  - iv. that the staff member concerned has the right to a fair and impartial examination of the issues being investigated, taking into account the allegations or complaints themselves, the response of the staff member concerned to them, any representations made by or on behalf of the staff member concerned and any other relevant or appropriate evidence, factors or circumstances.
- 3.2. Disciplinary action may include:-
  - a verbal warning
  - a written warning
  - a final written warning
  - some other appropriate disciplinary action short of suspension without pay
  - suspension without pay
  - transfer to another task or section
  - demotion
  - some other appropriate disciplinary action short of dismissal
  - dismissal subject to the 1930 Vocational Education Act, and amendments to that act.

Generally, the steps in the procedure will be progressive, for example, a verbal warning, a written warning, a final written warning, and dismissal. Following a written warning, other

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appropriate disciplinary action may be considered in individual cases prior to dismissal e.g. suspension without pay. However, for more serious offences a written warning may be issued as a first stage in the procedure and for proven gross misconduct dismissal without notice may be recommended subject to the provisions of the 1930 Vocational Education Act, and amendments to that act.

Warnings will cease to have effect following the specified period of satisfactory conduct and will be disregarded for future disciplinary purposes. There may however be occasions where a staff member's conduct is satisfactory throughout the period the warning is in force only to lapse very soon thereafter. Where a pattern of such conduct emerges and there is evidence of an undermining of the disciplinary process, the staff member's previous disciplinary record may be borne in mind in determining the length of any future warnings.

#### **4. Procedure**

4.1. It is the intention of North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee to endeavour to resolve problems through informal means. To this end, the supervisor/manager/principal will discuss any unsatisfactory work performance or conduct with the staff member and inform him/her of the required improvements. If the staff member concerned continues to fail to achieve the required work/conduct standards, the disciplinary procedure outlined below will be invoked.

##### **4.2. Stage 1: Verbal Warning**

A verbal warning, which will be issued by the appropriate Manager, will clearly inform the staff member concerned of the standard/conduct he/she is failing to achieve and that repetition could result in further disciplinary action. The verbal warning will be issued at a meeting with the relevant Manager where emphasis will be placed on establishing the reasons for the failure to meet required standards and on assisting in the prevention of the recurrence.

4.3. A record of the verbal warning will be retained on his/her personal file and a copy will be given to the staff member. The verbal warning will be active on the personnel file for a period of 6 months. Subject to satisfactory service, the verbal warning will cease to have effect following the expiry of the 6 months and a note to that effect will be placed on the file. (See Record of Verbal Warning Letter - Appendix 4A1).

##### **4.4. Stage 2: Written Warning**

If the staff member's performance or conduct remains less than satisfactory in relation to that agreed at Stage 1, or there is a further breach of rules, a meeting will be arranged between the staff member and the Chief Executive Officer. A letter of warning, signed by the Chief Executive Officer will be issued to the staff member containing the following information:

- facts surrounding the misconduct or work standards not achieved;
- the Vocational Education Committee policy on the rule that was violated or the standards not achieved;
- details of previous meetings;
- statement that the written warning constitutes disciplinary action and failure to achieve the required standards will result in further disciplinary action;
- details of appeals procedure.

4.5. A copy of the written warning will be forwarded to the staff member's representative and a copy will be placed on his/her personal file. Subject to satisfactory service a written warning will cease to have effect after 9 months and a note to that effect will be placed on the file. (See Sample of Written Warning Appendix 4A2).

##### **4.6. Stage 3: Final Written Warning**

If there is no improvement in the staff member's conduct or work performance, a meeting will be arranged between the staff member and the Chief Executive Officer. A

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final letter of warning, signed by the Chief Executive Officer will be issued to the staff member making it clear that his/her employment may be suspended or terminated in accordance with the provisions of the 1930 Vocational Education Act, and amendments to that act, if there is no improvement in conduct/performance.

- 4.7. A copy of the final written warning will be forwarded to the staff member's representative and a copy will be placed on his/her personal file. Subject to satisfactory service a final written warning will cease to have effect after 15 months and a note to that effect will be placed on the file. (See Sample of Final Written Warning Appendix 4A3).
- 4.8. If, after the final written warning has issued, there is still no improvement or there are further breaches of the rules, a comprehensive report on the facts of the case will be prepared by the relevant personnel so that appropriate action can be taken.
- 4.9. The Human Resources Department can become involved at any stage of the disciplinary process as required.
- 4.10. The grievance and disciplinary procedure for senior staff e.g. Principal, Institution Manager, Programme Manager, Assistant Principal Officer, Adult Education Officer level will be identical to that for all staff with the relevant more senior officer taking responsibility for invoking the disciplinary action.

## ***5. Suspension/Demotion/Transfer***

- 5.1. If a staff member's conduct or performance still fails to improve, following a final written warning, the Chief Executive Officer may invoke a disciplinary action short of dismissal. The Chief Executive Officer will act reasonably in all cases when deciding on appropriate disciplinary action.  
A period of suspension without pay may arise at the end of an investigation that concludes that the staff member has been guilty of a breach of his/her employment contract amounting to misconduct but not gross misconduct. Similar action may be taken in cases of gross misconduct where there are mitigating circumstances. Any deduction from pay will be in accordance with the provisions of the Payment of Wages Act, 1991.
- 5.2. The procedure for informing a staff member of the disciplinary action being taken is as outlined above.

## ***6. Dismissal***

- 6.1. If the staff member's conduct or performance still fails to improve the final step of the process will be dismissal. The decision to dismiss will be made by the Chief Executive Office except in the case of staff who are subject to the provisions of the 1930 Vocational Education Act, and amendments to that act.
- 6.2. The decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing and this letter will also outline to whom any appeal against the decision to recommend dismissal should be made. (See sample letter of decision to recommend dismissal Appendix 4A4).  
In the case of teachers, dismissal is a function of the Minister for Education and Science. In the case of non teaching staff an external arbitrator may be appointed to hear the issue and make a recommendation to him /her.

## ***7. Gross Misconduct***

- 7.1. Acts which constitute gross misconduct are those resulting in a serious breach of contractual terms and might include the following:
  - theft, fraud and deliberate falsification of records;
  - physical violence, serious sexual harassment and bullying;
  - deliberate damage to property;
  - serious insubordination;
  - misuse of North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee property or name;

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- bringing North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee into disrepute;
  - serious incapability whilst on duty brought on by alcohol or illegal drug abuse;
  - serious negligence which causes or might cause unacceptable loss, damage or injury;
  - serious infringement of health and safety rules.

*This list is not exhaustive.*

- 7.2. In cases of gross misconduct the stages outlined in the disciplinary procedure do not normally apply and a staff member may be dismissed without recourse to the previous stages except in the case of teachers. If there is an allegation of gross misconduct, the staff member will be suspended on full pay pending the outcome of an investigation into the alleged breach of discipline. (See Sample Letter of Suspension Pending Investigation Appendix 4A5).
- 7.3. In the course of an investigation, the staff member concerned has the right to have all allegations brought to his/her attention and he/she also has the right to respond to all allegations. If the investigation upholds a case of gross misconduct, the normal consequence will be dismissal. The decision to recommend dismissal to the CEO will be confirmed to the staff member in writing and this letter will also outline details of the appeals procedure, except in cases where the Minister for Education and Science makes the decision. (See sample letter of decision to recommend dismissal Appendix 4A4).

## **8. Appeals**

- 8.1. All staff members have the right to appeal against disciplinary action.
- 8.2. An appeal against an oral warning, written warning or suspension should be made, in writing, to the Head of Human Resources, within 10 working days of the disciplinary action, stating the reasons for the appeal. He/she will arrange that a full review of the facts is carried out, which will normally include a further meeting with the staff member and Manager concerned. Following this review, he/she will reply in writing outlining the outcome of the appeal. A copy of this letter will be forwarded to the staff member's representative.
- 8.3. If dismissal is being recommended, the employee has a right to a full hearing by the Chief Executive Officer before a decision is taken. An appeal against a recommendation for dismissal should be made, in writing, to the Chief Executive Officer within 10 working days of the date of decision to recommend dismissal.
- 8.4. The Chief Executive Officer will arrange that a full investigation will be carried out within 4 weeks, which may include a meeting with the staff member and Line Manager concerned. Following this review, he/she will reply in writing outlining the outcome of the appeal. A copy of this letter will be forwarded to the staff member's representative.

## **9. General**

### **9.1. Staff on Probation**

North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee may extend the probationary period where it is considered that performance/conduct is not satisfactory. If during the normal probationary period, the staff member on probation is considered to be unsuitable, there will be no cessation of employment prior to at least a verbal warning being issued. However, the situation will be constantly reviewed during the probationary period and sufficient training will be provided to ensure that the staff member on probation reaches the standards expected.

If the probationary period is extended, there will be no cessation of employment on the grounds of unsuitability until at least a written warning has been issued.

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Disciplinary Matters in relation to a staff member on probation will be processed by his/her Principal/Manager in the first instance.

**9.2. Temporary Staff (with less than 12 month's service)**

During the first 6 months of employment, if a temporary staff member is considered to be unsuitable his/her employment will not be terminated until at least a verbal warning has been issued.

After 6 months continuous service, employment will not be terminated until at least a written warning has been issued.

Disciplinary Matters in relation to a temporary staff member will be processed by his/her manager.

**9.3. Casual/Seasonal Staff**

Casual and seasonal staff shall be dealt with in relation to discipline and suitability as under (9:2) above.

**9.4. Substance Abuse**

While serious incapability whilst on duty brought on by alcohol or illegal drug abuse is considered by North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee as gross misconduct, the policy of the North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee is to provide support and assistance to staff members with alcohol and drug related problems. This support will be provided to a staff member in confidence on an individual basis.

If performance or behaviour is still affected, as a result of the staff member refusing to accept the assistance of the Vocational Education Committee or, failure of the rehabilitation programme, the disciplinary procedure outlined above will apply.

**9.5. Criminal Charges or Convictions outside Employment**

These are not treated as automatic reasons for dismissal. The main consideration for North Tipperary VEC will be whether the offence is one that makes the staff member involved unsuitable for the particular type of work.

The Vocational Education Committee will consider the seriousness of the conduct before determining on appropriateness of disciplinary procedures.

**9.6. Absenteeism:**

North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee has an Absenteeism Management Programme in place outlining the mechanism for reviewing of individual absences. The review mechanisms identified in the programme will be utilised together with the appropriate use of the disciplinary process. However, other disciplinary action measures outside of the disciplinary procedures may be considered and these include:

- temporary removal of uncertified sick leave privilege;
- forfeiture of sick pay;

North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee disciplinary policy, as outlined above, will be invoked where there is evidence that a staff member has deliberately breached the Committee's sick leave guidelines, for example by:

- not reporting sickness in the correct way; or
- taking sick leave when he/she is not sick.

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## Appendix 4A1

### ***Sample Record of Verbal Warning Letter*** (Only issued after Verbal Warning has been issued)

#### ***Date***

Dear

I refer to your attendance at a disciplinary meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of your representative \_\_\_\_\_ and (outline all personnel in attendance at the meeting e.g. Human Resources Representative).

I am writing to confirm the action taken at that meeting when you were given a verbal warning under the first stage of North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee Disciplinary Procedure.

This warning will be placed on your personal file but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a period of 6 months provided your conduct improves/performance reaches a satisfactory level.

The nature of the unsatisfactory conduct/performance was

The conduct/performance improvement expected is

The time scale within which the improvement required is

The likely consequence of further misconduct or insufficient improvement is a written warning.

You have the right to appeal against this decision in writing to the Head of Human Resources, within 10 working days of the date of this disciplinary warning.

Yours sincerely

Line Manager

*CC Staff Representative*

CC Human Resources

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## Appendix 4A2

### **Sample Written Warning Letter**

Date

Dear

I refer to your attendance at a disciplinary meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of your representative \_\_\_\_\_ and Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, (outline all personnel in attendance at the meeting e.g. Human Resources Representative).

Having reviewed the submissions made at this meeting I am writing to inform you that you are being issued with a written warning under the second stage of North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee Disciplinary Procedure. The second stage of the Disciplinary Procedure is being invoked at this time as you were given a verbal warning on \_\_\_\_\_.

This written warning will be placed on your personal file but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a period of 9 months provided your conduct improves/performance reaches a satisfactory level.

The nature of the unsatisfactory conduct/performance was

The conduct/performance improvement expected is

The time scale within which the improvement required is

The likely consequence of further misconduct or insufficient improvement is a final written warning.

You have the right to appeal against this decision in writing to the Head of Personnel, within 10 working days of the date of this written warning.

Yours sincerely

CEO

CC Staff Representative

CC Human Resources

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## Appendix 4A3

### **Sample Final Written Warning Letter**

Date

Dear

I refer to your attendance at a disciplinary meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of your representative \_\_\_\_\_ and Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, (outline all personnel in attendance at the meeting e.g. Human Resources Representative).

Having reviewed the submissions made at this meeting I am writing to inform you that you are being issued with a final written warning under the third stage of North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee Disciplinary Procedure.

The third stage of the Disciplinary Procedure is being invoked at this time as you have previously been given a verbal warning on \_\_\_\_\_ and a written warning on \_\_\_\_\_.

This final written warning will be placed on your personal file but will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a period of 15 months provided your conduct improves/performance reaches a satisfactory level.

The nature of the unsatisfactory conduct/performance was

The conduct/performance improvement expected is

The time scale within which the improvement required is

The likely consequence of further misconduct or insufficient improvement is suspension/dismissal.

You have the right to appeal against this decision in writing to the Head of Human Resources, within 10 working days of the date of this written warning.

Yours sincerely

CEO

CC Staff Representative

CC Human Resources

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## Appendix 4A4

### ***Sample Letter of Recommendation for Dismissal/Summary Dismissal***

Date

Dear

I refer to your attendance at a disciplinary meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of your representative \_\_\_\_\_ and Mr/Ms \_\_\_\_\_, (outline all personnel in attendance at the meeting e.g. Human Resources Representative).

I note that you have already been issued with a verbal warning on \_\_\_\_\_, a written warning on \_\_\_\_\_ and a final written warning on \_\_\_\_\_. The nature of the unsatisfactory conduct/performance was

I note that in the course of the disciplinary procedure your conduct/performance continuously failed to reach satisfactory levels.

In view of the above and taking into consideration all submissions in this case, I confirm that I am recommending the termination of your employment with North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee.

**OR**

The disciplinary procedure arises from an incident on \_\_\_\_\_ that is considered by North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee to be an act of gross misconduct. The details of the incident are as follows:

Having investigated the matter and considered all the relevant evidence I am of the opinion that an act of gross misconduct has taken place. Accordingly, I confirm that I am recommending the termination of your employment with North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee.

You have the right to appeal this recommendation, in writing to the CEO, within 10 working days of the date of this letter.

Yours sincerely

**CEO**

CC Staff Representative  
CC Human Resources

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## Appendix 4A5

### ***Paragraphs to be included in a Letter of Suspension pending Investigation***

In order to allow North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee to investigate the matter fully I confirm that you are suspended, on full pay, to facilitate the investigation. Your period of suspension commences on \_\_\_\_\_ (*Date*) and will continue until the investigation is completed.

You may be required to attend an interview in the course of the investigation in the near future. You may bring along a recognised trade union representative or a colleague of your choice to this interview.

Once the investigation has been completed you, together with your trade union representative or colleague of your choice, will be invited to attend a meeting to inform you of the findings of the investigation and to give you an opportunity to respond to same before a decision is made on what action, if any, may be taken.

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## Appendix 4A6

### ***Sample Notice of Suspension***

Date

Dear

I refer to your attendance at a disciplinary meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of your representative \_\_\_\_\_ and Mr/Ms \_\_\_\_\_, (outline all personnel in attendance at the meeting e.g. Human Resources Representative).

I am writing to confirm that, having considered all of the evidence, I have concluded that you have been

(a) guilty of a breach of your employment contract amounting to misconduct but not gross misconduct;

**OR**

(b) guilty of a breach of your employment contract amounting to gross misconduct. However I am aware of mitigating circumstances.

*The nature of the misconduct was*

Accordingly, your contract of employment with North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee is being suspended for a period of XX months. The period of suspension will be at no pay and will not be reckonable service for increment, promotion, or superannuation purposes.

You have the right to appeal against this suspension, in writing, to the Head of Human Resources, within 10 working days of the date of this letter.

Yours sincerely

CEO

CC Staff Representative

CC Human Resources

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## Appendix 4A7

### ***Sample Notice of Disciplinary Interview***

Date

Dear

I am writing to advise you that you are requested to attend a disciplinary interview on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm which is to be held in \_\_\_\_\_.

At this interview the question of disciplinary action against you, in accordance with North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee Disciplinary procedure will be considered with regard to:

You are entitled, if you wish, to be accompanied by another work colleague or recognised Trade Union Representative.

Yours sincerely

CEO

CC Human Resources

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## Appendix 4A8

### ***Sample Letter of Dismissal/Summary Dismissal***

Date

Dear

I refer to your attendance at a disciplinary meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ in the presence of your representative \_\_\_\_\_ and Mr/Ms \_\_\_\_\_, (outline all personnel in attendance at the meeting e.g. Human Resources Representative).

I note that you have already been issued with a verbal warning on \_\_\_\_\_, a written warning on \_\_\_\_\_ and a final written warning on \_\_\_\_\_. (Please list any other actions taken e.g. suspension). The nature of the unsatisfactory conduct/performance was

I note that in the course of the disciplinary procedure your conduct/performance continuously failed to reach satisfactory levels. In the light of the above Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, has recommended your dismissal. I note that you have been informed of this recommendation and that you were afforded the opportunity of an appeal.

**OR**

The disciplinary procedure arises from an incident on \_\_\_\_\_ that is considered by North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee to be an act of gross misconduct. The details of the incident are as follows:

Having investigated the matter and considered all the relevant evidence it is considered that an act of gross misconduct has taken place. In the light of the above Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, has recommended your dismissal. I note that you have been informed of this recommendation and that you were afforded the opportunity of an appeal.

I note also that no appeal has been received from you or on your behalf.

*Or*

I note also that you appealed this decision on \_\_\_\_\_.

I have examined all the evidence presented to me in respect of this case and I have agreed to accept Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_'s recommendation in relation to your dismissal.

Accordingly, I confirm that your employment with North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee is being terminated with effect from today's date.

Yours sincerely

CEO

CC Staff Representative

CC Human Resources



**Coiste Gairmoideachais**  
Thiobraid Árann Thuaidh

North Tipperary  
**Vocational Education Committee**

## Organisational Communications Strategy

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## *Introduction*

Tipperary (NR) VEC has always been convinced of the need for systematic planning and ongoing strategic development. This conviction is exemplified in the development of FIS 2020. Many of the key objectives detailed in FIS 2020 are now included in our current Education Plan 2006 - 2010. This document, which incorporates the voices of all partners and stakeholders in Vocation Education in North Tipperary, provides a grounded and realistic roadmap for the development of education in the county.

One important objective arising out of our Education Plan is to enhance the learning capacity within the organisation. To support this objective the Plan urges the development of an effective internal and external communication system which reflects the growing complexity and size of the VEC. It goes on to suggest that... *'Communication in this sense is about much more than information exchange. It is about drawing on the expertise of staff, students and Boards and sharing the expertise to maximise the use of limited resources. It is fundamentally about building and sharing our vision of education so that, as a team, we can deliver a first class education service'*. This objective is fundamental to the implementation of our Education Plan.

Coincidentally the VEC sector is meeting the challenge of modernisation and organisational change through the Partnership Process. Under the current National Development Plan *Towards 2016*, the VEC National Partnership Forum has identified Organisational Communications as an essential element for organisational development.

To address this two-fold challenge Tipperary (NR) VEC established a Communications Implementation Team to explore all aspects of Communication within and outside the organisation and design and implement a Communications Policy. The work of this Team is presented in our Organisational Communications Strategy.

David Leahy  
CEO

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## ***Background***

Tipperary (NR) VEC held an important Organisational Communications Workshop in 2005 with the dual aim of evaluating communications systems operating in the organisation and to provide direction regarding the development of a communications strategy. There was general agreement that *most, if not all processes and procedures to ensure effective organisational communication are in place*. However it was now time to systematically attend to this important dimension of organisational activity.

## ***Principles underpinning a communication policy for Tipperary (NR) VEC***

Our Communications Workshop provided many important insights and understandings which are incorporated into this strategy however a most important outcome was agreement regarding the 'principles' underpinning a communication policy. It is essential that our communication strategy is:

- Democratic
- Person-centred
- Ethical
- Transparent
- Relevant
- Realistic
- Quality Assured.

The following strategy aims to reflect all key insights arising from this important Communications Workshop.

## ***Our understanding of communication***

Real and genuine communication is grounded on trusting, respectful, open and honest interpersonal relationships where all partners/stakeholders are encouraged and even feel obliged to voice opinions without fear of ridicule but with a confidence that each persons' ideas are truly valued (Tipperary (NR) VEC, Communications Workshop, 2005).

## ***Underlying Conviction***

We are convinced that an effective communication strategy will enable our organisation to access the wisdom and expertise of all our educational partners. On this basis we can build and share our vision of education so that, as an organisation, we can continually provide a quality education service.

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## *The Aim*

The aim of this strategy is to develop a communication culture that enables our organisation to trust its own potential to respond confidently and effectively to the challenges associated with the provision of a quality educational experience for all our learners.

## *Priority Goals and Outcomes*

Here we detail the communication priorities which we will address through this strategy so that we can achieve the identified outcomes.

1 To facilitate authentic participation of all partners/stakeholders so that organisational objectives are agreed and implemented on an ongoing basis

1.1 Outcome - Engaged and motivated partners/stakeholders

2 To ensure that everyone who is a partner/stakeholder understands and accepts what is expected of them and what they can expect from the organisation

2.1 Outcome - Ethical and responsive partners/stakeholders

3 To communicate with stakeholders/partners using a range of media, in a manner that is timely, relevant, accurate and complete and to ensure feedback is facilitated and encouraged

3.1 Outcome - Respected and appreciated partners/stakeholders

4 To protect and enhance our organisation's image

4.1 Outcome - Loyalty and pride in our colleagues and our organisation.

## ***Actions for Goal 1***

By identifying the following specific actions we now deal with the manner in which we will put into operation the way we strengthen and develop communications throughout the organisation.

| Goal 1   | Actions  | Outcome 1  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Authentic participation of all partners/stakeholders so that organisational objectives are agreed and implemented on an ongoing basis</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Design a clear diagram and other appropriate communication media to illustrate the structure of the organisation including all Schools, Centres, and Services provided</li> <li>2 Create clear diagrams, illustrations, etc that clearly illustrate decision-making process within the organisation</li> <li>3 Illustrate points at which relevant partners can inform decision outcomes</li> <li>4 Evaluate diagrams and illustrations among relevant stakeholder/partners</li> <li>5 Produce and use a range of media brochures, handouts, presentations - to communicate this information</li> <li>6 Post information materials on the website</li> <li>7 Use Staff Newsletter to regularly update regarding structural and decision-making developments.</li> <li>8 Use a range of sources - staff meetings, notice boards, informal discussions, staff newsletter- to initiate policy developments</li> <li>9 Inform all relevant partners of decisions made on their behalf</li> <li>10 Relevant stakeholders/partners representation on policy development, consultation and evaluation teams</li> <li>11 Feedback to contributors regarding their contributions using a range of media including staff meetings, management presentations, Staff Newsletter.</li> </ol> | <p>Engaged and motivated partners/stakeholders</p> |

## *Actions for Goal 2*

| <b>Goal 2</b>   | <b>Actions</b>   | <b>Outcome 2</b>                             |
|---|--|--|
| All partners/stakeholders understand and accept what is expected of them and what they can expect from the organisation | In addition to all actions related to Goal 1<br><ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and Communicate Continuing Professional Development Policy to all Staff</li> <li>2. Inform staff of relevant staff development initiatives</li> <li>3. Explore the feasibility and practicality of acknowledging contribution of staff in each location and in the organisation</li> <li>4. Continue to hold annual Educational Conferences</li> <li>5. Collate information regarding all staff development initiatives</li> <li>6. Evaluate staff development needs on an ongoing basis</li> <li>7. Clearly inform staff of what they can expect from the organisation</li> <li>8. Clearly inform staff of their duties and obligations</li> <li>9. Facilitate an inclusive exploration of ethics in educational practice.</li> </ol> | Ethical and responsive partners/stakeholders |

## *Actions for Goal 3*

| <b>Goals3</b>   | <b>Actions</b>   | <b>Outcomes</b>                                 |
|---|--|---|
| Communicate with stakeholders/partners using a range of media, in a manner that is timely, relevant, accurate and complete and to ensure feedback is facilitated and encouraged | In addition to all actions related to Goal 1 and 2<br><ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communications will address issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Time and place</li> <li>– Language</li> <li>– Forms of media</li> <li>– Facilitating feedback.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Use informal communication as appropriate</li> <li>3. In consultation with partners/stakeholders develop ways of acknowledging and valuing the contribution of informal communications and feedback</li> </ol> | Respected and appreciated partners/stakeholders |

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### *Actions for Goal 4*

| <b>Goal 4</b>                                   | <b>Actions</b>   | <b>Outcomes</b>  |
|---|--|--|
| 3. Protect and enhance our organisation's image | In addition to all actions related to Goal 1, 2, and 3<br><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Evaluate organisational brochures, posters, logos etc with a view to creating an up-to-date, professional corporate image</li><li>2. Use all appropriate occasions and events to promote organisational achievements and plans</li><li>3. Clear guidelines developed with regard to responding to external news and media</li><li>4. PR person to be appointed in each location</li><li>5. Training in PR provided to individuals responsible for PR.</li></ol> | Loyalty and pride in our colleagues and our organisation |

## Appendix 4C

### Partnership Core Values

| Value   | VEC Policies and Procedures   | Individual Behaviours  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Teamwork</b><br/>Encourage staff to be clear on their own role and on collective responsibility to achieve success through the VEC team. Encourages and supports others in pursuit of VEC goals.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognises working in teams as the most effective way of achieving success.</li> <li>Will provide direction and support to all teams within the VEC.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands personal role in performance of duties within VEC.</li> <li>Contributes in a positive way to the performance of the team.</li> <li>Supports and encourages others in performance of team objectives.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Co-operation</b><br/>Works well with others to achieve a common aim and works to establish common ground providing support where possible.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and promote in its issues.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works to build good relationships with others.</li> <li>Finds common ground with others and works to advance VEC services.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Leadership</b><br/>Promotes behaviour that is in the best interests of the VEC, its staff and customers at all times. Motivates and encourages others to take ownership of the VEC objectives and promotes a shared vision of the future.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourages and promotes effective leadership for all staff.</li> <li>Recognises an open door policy.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates and inspires commitment to achieving shared vision of VEC.</li> <li>Builds credibility by being trustworthy and reliable.</li> <li>Encourages others working for the modernisation of the VEC.</li> <li>Motivates others to innovate and implement change.</li> <li>Takes personal responsibility for own role within in service delivery.</li> </ul>                      |
| <p><b>Participation</b><br/>Welcome all staff to actively make their contribution to the service delivery of the VEC. Each person at every level in the organisation is encouraged to participate.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitates the involvement of staff in all major initiatives in the VEC.</li> <li>Provides consultation mechanisms for the staff within the VEC.</li> <li>Encourages the participation and involvement of staff in initiatives.</li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributes to team meetings and events.</li> <li>Makes an input directly and indirectly with events arranged for employee participation.</li> <li>Facilitates and encourages others to participate and contribute.</li> <li>Ensures personal views are represented in all important initiatives.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Customer Centred</b><br/>Recognises that customers are the purpose of the VECs existence and approaches every initiative with their interests in mind.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considers the implication of all initiatives for customers.</li> <li>Develops and maintains ongoing monitoring and feedback systems to keep in touch with customer needs.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Puts customer needs at the centre of all initiatives.</li> <li>Considers the needs of customers and works to ensure they are met.</li> <li>Goes to some length to see the individual needs are met.</li> <li>Works toward improving customer service and seeks ways to deliver superior service.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Communications</b><br/>Explains the issues of the day and the outcomes expected are understood by all staff. Shares information with all stakeholders at an early stage.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures the VEC vision and purpose is understood by all those working in the VEC.</li> <li>Develops policies and structures to ensure that adequate communications structures are in place.</li> <li>Promotes and encourages open communication throughout the VEC.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains issues and expected outcomes.</li> <li>Communicates relevant information to all staff in a clear and concise way.</li> <li>Understands the communication needs of different audiences and tailors language and method of presentation to meet those needs.</li> <li>Checks that information conveyed is clearly understood.</li> <li>Regularly encourages feedback.</li> </ul> |