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ANTI-VIOLENCE, BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Purpose

Christ First United Church is committed to providing a safe, productive, and healthy environment for work, worship and study. In pursuit of this goal, Christ First United Church will not tolerate any behaviour that constitutes violence or threat, harassment, discrimination, or bullying by Christ First church members, adherents, employees, ministry personnel, elected members, or volunteers.

Harassment and violence in the workplace are prohibited by federal and provincial laws and the laws of the church.

Policy

All complaints of harassment, discrimination, or violence toward anyone within the church – including lay employees or ministry personnel, and elected members or volunteers—will be taken seriously and dealt with in a spirit of compassion and justice. Any person who feels discriminated against or harassed can, in all confidence, and without fear of reprisal, personally report the facts directly to the Chair/s of Ministry and Personnel.

Definitions

- **Harassment** is defined as any unwanted physical, sexual, or verbal conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwanted, and is a form of **discrimination**. Harassment may involve a wide range of behaviour, from verbal innuendo and subtle suggestions to overt demands and physical abuse, and it includes psychological harassment. **Sexual harassment** is defined as any attempt to coerce an unwilling person into a sexual relationship, to subject a person to unwanted sexual attention, or to punish a refusal to comply.
- **Violence** is defined as the exercise of physical force or attempt to cause physical force by a person against a worker in a workplace that causes or could cause injury. It also includes statements or behaviours that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat, to exercise physical force against the worker, in the workplace, that could cause physical injury.

Christ First United Church will do everything it can to protect the privacy of the individuals involved and to ensure all parties are treated fairly and respectfully. Neither the name of the person reporting the facts nor the circumstances surrounding them will be disclosed to anyone whatsoever, unless such disclosure is necessary for an investigation of disciplinary action. All records of harassment and subsequent investigation are considered confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone except to the extent required by law. In cases where criminal proceedings are forthcoming, appropriate representatives will assist police agencies, lawyers, insurance companies, and courts to the fullest extent.

Procedure

1. All complaints of harassment or violence will be taken seriously and will be investigated.
2. If the person complaining (the complainant) is able to do so, they should communicate directly to the person who is behaving inappropriately (the respondent), to tell them that their behaviour is unacceptable and is being experienced as unacceptable by the complainant.
3. Consultation between the complainant and either their representative or the chair of Ministry and Personnel should occur in order to support and give guidance with potential strategies to deal with the situation.
4. If the behaviour does not stop or the complainant is unable to manage the situation then a complaint should be provided in writing with detail as to the date of the incident, location, any witnesses, and a description of the incident(s) to the Chair of Ministry and Personnel.
5. The Chair of Ministry and Personnel will inform the respondent of the complaint and invite the respondent to reply in writing to the complainant's allegation, and the reply will be made known to the complainant before the investigation proceeds further.
6. The Chair of Ministry and Personnel consults with the Chair of Council who recommends two other members of council, who are not related in any manner to the parties named in the complaint. Along with the chair of M&P, these two members will promptly investigate the incident and recommend actions to address the complaint. If the situation warrants, they shall consult with knowledgeable professionals as deemed necessary.
7. Upon completion of the investigation, the Chair of Ministry and Personnel will inform both the complainant and the respondent in writing of the findings of the investigation and any corrective action that will be taken as a result of the investigation. Where practicable, the complainant and respondent will receive notification of the results of the investigation within 10 days of the investigation being completed.

8. The Chair of Ministry and Personnel will ensure that appropriate records of complaints and any investigation are kept, including;

- A copy of the complaint and details about the incident;
- A copy of the respondent's reply and details about the incident;
- A record of the investigation including all notes;
- A copy of the investigation report (if any);
- A summary of the results of the investigation that was provided to both parties;
- A copy of any corrective action taken to address the findings of the investigation.

9. It is the responsibility of all parties to protect from unnecessary disclosure the details of the incident being investigated and the identities of the complainant and respondent.

10. Should the investigating committee in collaboration with knowledgeable professionals be unable to bring a resolution to the issue they will refer the matter to the Regional Executive Minister for guidance and direction (Chair).

11. If no resolution can be found at a local level and the Chair of Ministry and Personnel, in collaboration with the Chair of Council, determines that a formal complaint is required (based on the investigation of the incident) the Chair shall proceed in accordance with the Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy of the United Church of Canada, a copy of which is available at: <https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/harassment-policy.pdf>

Reference:

This policy was adapted from the Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy of the United Church of Canada:

The United Church of Canada (2019). Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy. Toronto. Available at: <https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/harassment-policy.pdf>