

## **Harassment in the Workplace Policy**

### **Scope:**

This policy applies to all full-time, part-time, fixed-term, contract, and temporary employees of Riverside United Church and to all church Council, Ministry Team and Committee members, volunteers and those congregants or guests worshipping, attending an event or visiting Riverside United Church. For the purposes of the policy Riverside United Church is referred to as, "The Church."

### **Policy:**

The Church is committed to creating and maintaining a safe work environment and therefore harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Harassment is any type of behaviour that disregards the dignity and worth of other human beings as defined by law or that embarrasses and humiliates another person.

### **Definitions:**

1. Workplace

Workplace means any place where an employee is engaged in any work-related activities.

### **2. Workplace Harassment**

Our policy defines workplace harassment as, engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker or an individual who is worshipping or is on the premises of Riverside United Church or its grounds or that of its affiliate, Church of the Resurrection.

### **Complainant and Respondent**

For the purposes of this policy, "complainant" and "respondent" are terms that describe the person bringing the complaint and the person who is accused of harassment.

### **Unacceptable Behaviour:**

Harassment is not defined by an individual's intention, but rather it should be known, or ought reasonably to be known to be offensive.

Unacceptable behaviour under the policy includes but is not limited to:

- Verbal abuse or threats
- Unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendo or taunts about a person's body, race, colour, attire, marital status, sexual orientation, ethnic or religious origin, criminal record or handicap.
- Displaying or distributing offensive material
- Practical jokes which cause embarrassment Unwelcome invitations or requests
- Leering or other inappropriate gestures
- Inappropriate physical contact.

## **Compliance**

Compliance with this policy is mandatory and this policy is in accordance with all existing legislation and other policies and initiatives of the local ministry. Infractions of this policy will be considered to be misconduct and appropriate discipline will be imposed up to and including termination for cause.

## **Training**

Harassment prevention training shall be offered to all supervisors and all employees. This training will include; a review of the policy and procedures. As required, training may include workplace harassment prevention strategies and complaint resolution.

## **Procedures:**

1. If you believe that you are a victim of workplace harassment the next step is to immediately inform the person that you are not comfortable with their comments/ language/ actions and inform them to stop immediately
2. Report any incident to the Ministry and Personnel Committee. All reports will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate.
3. If asking the person to stop immediately does not solve the issue you should contact the Ministry and Personnel Committee who will work with the two parties to bring about an appropriate solution. All conversations are to be kept confidential.

### **If a solution is not found after step 3.**

4. If the situation has not gained clarity and has not come to a completion, the Ministry and Personnel Committee will either conduct an investigation or recommend that the Board or Council obtain the services of an Investigator. The Committee or Investigator will examine the allegations, advise the respondent of the proceedings and request the respondent to respond to the allegations. They will then determine the most appropriate manner of dealing with the harassment, if in their opinion the allegations are founded. This may include obtaining an apology of the respondent, and suggesting counseling and/or education for the respondent. If it is determined that, in their opinion, no harassment has taken place, the confidentiality of all parties should be maintained.
5. Discipline may be imposed.
6. You may also report the incidence of Harassment to the United Church of Canada. The Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy of the United Church of Canada is attached to this document.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Employees:**

All Employees are responsible for contributing to maintaining a safe workplace by refraining from behaviour that constitutes workplace harassment. This will include:

- Completing risk assessment as required,
- Participating in education and training sessions when requested,
- Reporting any incidents of workplace harassment or any other violation of this policy;
- Cooperating with and providing input into investigations regarding any alleged violation of this policy.

**Ministry and Personnel Committees; Church Boards/Councils:**

Church committees and governing bodies are responsible for taking steps to ensure that our workplace is free from harassment and for intervening if any violations of this policy occur. They are responsible for providing guidance and support to all employees in interpreting and understanding this policy. This will include:

- Complying with reporting, investigation and documenting procedures.
- Encouraging reporting of workplace harassment or other violations of this policy.
- Seeking advice and assistance from the Presbytery and Conference in dealing with and resolving situations.
- Ensuring that employees are trained in recognizing and responding to situations involving workplace harassment.
- Ensuring that every incident of workplace harassment is reported, investigated, and documented.
- Ensuring confidentiality is maintained at all time, unless legislation dictates otherwise or imminent danger exists.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair of Council

Date:

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Date:

Chair of Ministry and Personnel Committee