

From First Presbyterian Church of Waco Texas 2026

Reality of Harassment Policy

HARASSMENT

The Church is compelled to respond to the reality of harassment of any form and of any kind, not limited to that based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity and sexual orientation), age (40 or older), disability, genetic information or veteran status, or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, and local laws. Comments, conduct, and innuendoes that might be perceived by others as offensive or harassing are wholly inappropriate and are prohibited in the workplace.

In addition, the Church is compelled to respond to the harassment of Church personnel by non-personnel on Church premises.

Harassment is conduct which is focused on a person or group of persons, including but not limited to, physical or verbal abuse, unwelcome activity of a sexual nature, and retaliation, as well as any behavior or action which interferes with an employee's ability to perform assignments or which creates a hostile or intimidating work environment.

The following are various types of harassment that are prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Inappropriate Communication – Inappropriate communication involves any language that is unnecessarily loud or degrades or berates others, including but not limited to, racial, religious, or sexual comments or jokes, sexual innuendoes, inappropriate personal questions, or threats of any kind, whether communicated orally¹ or in writing. Inappropriate communication also involves offensive or inappropriate written materials including, but not limited to, pictures, letters, email messages, graffiti, etc.

Physical Contact - Physical contact includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate touching, hitting, slamming, throwing, kicking, or threatening another person, including restraining by force, or blocking the path of another or feigning to do so

Interference or Hostile Environment - Interference or hostile environment includes any behavior or action which is degrading or interferes with an employee's ability to perform work or which results in or creates a hostile or intimidating work environment.

Sexual Harassment - Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual acts or favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- o Submission to such conduct is either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment.
- o Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- o Such conduct is severe and pervasive and has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or

¹ Writing is verbal unless through sign language.

offensive work environment.

Retaliation - Retaliation includes any adverse action or threat of adverse action taken or made because an employee has exercised or attempted to exercise any rights under the employment laws of the United States or Texas or under the policies of the Church. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, verbal abuse, threats, withholding or withdrawal of pay, promotions, training, or other employment opportunities.

It is important that employees clearly understand the serious effects of harassment. Your behavior may result in personal liability, as well as liability to the Church.

If you feel you have been harassed or discriminated against, you are encouraged to immediately inform the alleged harasser that the behavior is unwelcome. In many instances, the person is unaware that their conduct is offensive and when so advised, can easily and willingly correct the conduct so that it does not recur. If this informal discussion with the alleged harasser is unsuccessful in remedying the problem, or if you do not feel comfortable with such an approach, you must immediately report the incident orally² or in writing to your supervisor, the Church Administrator, a pastor, or the head of the Church's Personnel Committee.

Complaints of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation policy violations will be promptly and carefully investigated, including interviews with all relevant persons. Investigators will conduct an objective investigation that strikes a balance between the Church's need to conduct a full investigation and an employee's desire for privacy. Dissemination of the investigation and its results should be restricted to individuals with legitimate "need to know" this information regarding the complaint(s) and resulting investigation. Employees who utilize this procedure are assured that they will be free from any and all reprisal or retaliation from reporting such violations or cooperating in an investigation.

Any employee found to have violated the *Harassment* Policy will be disciplined, up to and including termination of employment. FPCW will use a procedure for management of issues that is similar to the Society for Human Resource Management Policy – Anti-harassment Policy and Complaint procedure.

² See #1 above.