

GRACE UNITED CHURCH, Caledonia

Policy and Procedure Manual

Policy Title	WORKPLACE VIOLENCE & HARASSMENT	Policy Number	PPM-E4.1
Date of Approval by Council	February 21, 2018 <i>*Replaces PPM-E1.1, PPM-E2.1, PPM-E3.1</i>		
Revision Dates	May 19, 2021; May 16, 2024	Date of next Review	May 2024

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to implement policies, measures, procedures and programs to reduce, manage and prevent harassment and/or violence in order to foster an environment of safety and mutual respect at all levels of the church.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Grace United Church Caledonia will not tolerate any behaviour by any person including but not limited to its members, adherents, lay employees and ministry personnel, and elected members or volunteers – that constitutes harassment, or is violent or threatens violence.

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

Definitions:

All complaints of harassment or violence toward anyone in 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.

Harassment is defined as any unwanted physical, sexual, or verbal conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known as 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 exercise of physical force or attempt to cause physical force by a person against a worker in the 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 a worker, in the workplace, that could cause physical injury.

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It is everyone's responsibility to raise concerns about harassment, violence, and discrimination within the workplace. It is also everyone's responsibility to take steps to address harassment, violence, and discrimination in the workplace.

Procedures:

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 with the person who is behaving inappropriately, to tell them that their behaviour is unacceptable and is being experienced as unacceptable by the complainant.
3. If the behaviour does not stop or the complainant is unable to speak to the respondent (the person behaving inappropriately), then a complaint should be provided in writing with detail as to the date of the incident(s), location, any witnesses, and a description of the incident(s).
4. The complaint should be sent to the Ministry and Personnel (M&P) chairperson (or designate) if the complaint involves a paid employee or contracted employee. Otherwise, the complaint should be sent to the Council chairperson (or designate).
5. The M&P chairperson (or designate) or Council chairperson (or designate) will assess the complaint and the applicability of this policy to respond to the complaint. If there are other processes available to address the complaint, those may be recommended by the appropriate chairperson (or designate). Such other options could include mediation, a facilitated conversation, or other forms of dispute resolution. The appropriate chairperson (or designate) will advise the Council Executive that a complaint has been received, and the process being followed.
6. The complaint will be provided to the respondent at the earliest possible opportunity by the appropriate chairperson (or designate).
7. If the complaint is being made about either the Council chairperson or M&P chairperson, the complaint will be sent to the M&P or Council chairperson not the subject of the complaint.
8. Pastoral care will be offered to the parties.
9. The appropriate chairperson (or designate) ("the investigator") will lead an investigation, and will meet with the parties to the complaint in person; if there are any witnesses, conversations with the witnesses may be conducted in person or over the phone. The appropriate chairperson should seek advice and or/assistance as necessary, including the United Church *Office of Vocation* or the *Horseshoe Falls Regional Council* Executive Minister.

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10. The investigator will prepare a report with recommendations to resolve the complaint, and the report will be provided to Council Executive.
11. The appropriate chairperson will communicate the resolution and recommendations, as appropriate, to the parties. Personal information will not be provided about any party, and all information will be held in as much confidence as is possible while still ensuring fair process.
12. If the complainant or respondent, who are paid employees or contracted employee(s), are not satisfied, then the complaint can be forwarded to the Office of Vocation or the Regional Council Executive Minister, for further follow up in accordance with the *Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence Response Policy* of The United Church of Canada.

Implementation

- A risk assessment for workplace violence will be conducted every three years following renewal of this policy. The risk assessment team will be sponsored by M&P; the team will have three team members, with at least one being a paid employee.
- A plan will be developed and executed to address identified risks.

Training and Communication:

- For paid employees, training will be provided as part of the yearly performance review, with the trainee providing written confirmation that they understand this policy and actions required in the event of an occurrence of harassment or violence.
- For volunteers, yearly training will be provided via their respective Committee chairperson (who will have participated in the update of this policy at Council, or who can solicit the assistance of M&P). This training should occur soon after the committees are installed during the church year.

POLICY REVIEW:

Time Frame: Every three years

Committee Responsible: Ministry & Personnel
All policy revisions require Council approval.

May 2024 update:

- Updated references
- Replaced E4.1 addendum (United Church Policy) with reference to United Church website

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CROSS REFERENCES:

Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence Response Policy, The
United Church of Canada, 2022

<https://united-church.ca/sites/default/files/2020-10/harassment-policy-2020.pdf>

The Ontario Health and Safety Act (OHSA) R.S.O.1990, amended 2023, c.15, sch.5

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o01>