

## WORKPLACE HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY

### 1. Policy Statement:

Southridge Community Church is committed to working with its Workers to provide a safe workplace. Southridge Community Church believes in the prevention of harassment and violence, and promotes a violence-free workplace in which all people respect one another and work together to achieve common goals. Any act of harassment or violence committed by or against any member of our workplace or member of the public, is unacceptable. Southridge Community Church will not tolerate any acts of harassment and/or violence and will take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent violence, and protect Workers from acts of harassment and violence. Appropriate remedial, disciplinary, and/or legal action will be taken according to the circumstances.

Southridge Community Church is committed to:

- (a) Investigating reported incidents of workplace harassment and/or violence in an objective and timely manner;
- (b) Taking necessary action to respond to those incidents; and
- (c) Providing support for complainants.

### 2. Scope:

The Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy applies to all Workers, contractors, vendors, volunteers, students, clients/customers and visitors to the workplace.

### 3. Definitions:

Employer: a person who employs one or more Workers, or contracts for the services of one or more Workers, and includes a contractor or subcontractor who performs work or supplies services, and a contractor or subcontractor who undertakes with an owner, constructor, contractor or subcontractor to perform work of supply services.

Supervisor: a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a Worker.

The Act: The Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Worker: a person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation. Worker includes, but is not limited to, part-time, full-time or casual employees, owners, independent contractors or sub-contractors.

Workplace: any land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which a Worker works.

Workplace Harassment: means

(a) engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known as unwelcome.

(b) workplace sexual harassment.

Workplace Sexual Harassment: means

(a) engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known as unwelcome, or

(b) making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome.

Workplace Violence: means,

(a) the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker,

(b) an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker or visitor, in the workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker,

(c) a statement or behaviour 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 to the worker.

Examples of Incidents of Harassing and Violent Behaviour:

- Shouting or using profanity
- Making racial slurs or comments
- Bullying or similar behaviour meant to intimidate, belittle or demean another
- Damaging someone's reputation through malicious rumours, gossip or other means
- Lewd remarks made verbally or electronically
- Intruding on a person's privacy by pestering, spying, leering or stalking
- Displaying any kind of weapon
- Criticizing a person persistently or constantly
- Any type of physical assault or threat of physical assault
- Vandalism of personal and/or work property
- Hitting, banging or throwing objects
- Inappropriate or unwanted touching (hair, clothes or body)

- Lies or gossip about a person's sex life, orientation or romantic activities
- Unwanted flirtatious comments or compliments

#### **4. Domestic Violence:**

The Act states:

If an employer becomes aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that domestic violence that would likely expose a worker to physical injury may occur in the workplace, the Employer shall take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the Worker.

#### **5. Responsibilities:**

All Workers are responsible for preventing and reporting acts of harassment and violence that threaten or perceive to threaten a safe work environment.

##### **(a) Employer Responsibilities:**

- Understand and uphold the principles of this policy.
- Communicate this policy and its procedures to all Workers.
- Designate a person in the workplace to act as a workplace coordinator with respect to workplace violence and workplace harassment, and prescribing the functions and duties of the coordinator.
- Complete workplace violence risk assessments to determine whether the nature of the work or work environment places, or may place, Workers at risk of violence.
- Consult with Workers by conducting risk assessments, and develop practical steps to minimize or eliminate identified risks. This can be done by conducting a Risk Assessment Questionnaire.
- Take all reasonable and practical measures to minimize or eliminate risks identified through the risk assessment process, workplace inspections, or the occurrence of an incident.
- Establish a process for reporting, investigating, documenting and debriefing incidents of harassment and violence.
- Respond promptly to all reports of harassment and violence, address immediately all incidents of workplace harassment and violence and not condone or permit any behaviour contrary to this policy.
- Ensure all known incidents of workplace harassment and violence are investigated based on the nature of each incident and the actual or potential threat the incident posed to worker safety.
- Take all reasonable and practical measures to protect Workers, acting in good faith, who report workplace harassment and violence or act as witnesses, from reprisal or further violence.

- Review annually, the effectiveness of actions taken to minimize or eliminate workplace harassment and violence and make improvements to procedures as required.
- Review annually the effectiveness of the policy and procedures and make changes as required by consulting with the Workers.
- Sign a Statement of Commitment to the Prevention of Harassment and Violence in the Workplace Form.
- Provide supportive assistance to staff, including those seeking to access the program by filing a Concern Report Form where required.

(b) Joint Health & Safety Committee Responsibilities:

- Understand and uphold the principles of this policy.
- Promote and monitor the Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Program.
- Provide supportive assistance to Workers, including filing of Concern Report Forms and Incident Investigation Forms.
- Review all reports forwarded regarding workplace harassment and violence and other incident reports as appropriate pertaining to incidents of workplace harassment and violence that result in personal injury or threat of personal injury, property damage or police involvement.
- Participate in the investigation of reported incidents that result in personal injury or have potential to result in personal injury.
- Recommend corrective measures for the improvement of the health and safety of Workers.
- Respond to Worker concerns related to workplace harassment and violence and communicate these to management.
- Participate in the review of the policy and guidelines for continuous improvement.
- Sign a Statement of Commitment to the Prevention of Harassment and Violence in the Workplace Form.

(c) Worker Responsibilities:

- Understand and uphold the principles of this policy – all Workers must accept, as a professional responsibility, their own role in helping to eliminate incidents of workplace harassment and violence.
- Sign a Statement of Commitment to the Prevention of Harassment and Violence in the Workplace Form.
- Complete a Concern Report Form and submit it to the Employer for any conduct that causes an individual concern.

## **6. Reprisal:**

Under no circumstances will any person who, in good faith, reports an incident of workplace harassment or violence, or assists in its investigation be subject to any form of retribution, retaliation or reprisal.

Any person who makes or participates in such retribution or retaliation, directly or indirectly, will be subject to disciplinary action. Persons who believe they have been or are being subjected to retribution or retaliation should immediately notify the Employer. That person may also file a reprisal complaint with the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

## **7. Risk Assessment Procedure:**

- (a) The Employer shall assess the workplace to identify risks likely to expose a worker to physical injury.
- (b) The Employer shall advise Workers of the results of the Workplace Violence Risk Assessment.
- (c) If the Workplace Violence Risk Assessment is in writing, the Employer shall make copies available to the Workers upon request.
- (d) The Employer shall reassess the risk of workplace violence as often as necessary.

## **8. Summoning Immediate Assistance:**

- (a) At the discretion of the Worker, upon witnessing or being involved in an incident of workplace harassment or violence the Worker shall immediately notify Emergency Services (9-1-1).
- (b) Upon witnessing or being involved in an incident of workplace harassment or violence the Worker will immediately notify additional Workers onsite and the Employer.
- (c) Should a volunteer at the reception desk encounter a situation with a shelter resident where he/she needs assistance, the volunteer will immediately notify shelter staff.

## **9. Reporting and Response Procedure: *(per Humaniqa.com training)*:**

### **Step 1 – Self-help**

An employee who feels that they have been the victim of harassment or discrimination in the workplace is encouraged to first use direct communication with the person engaging in the unwelcome conduct to advise them that this behaviour is not welcome.

Once that has been done, the employee should make their supervisor or the Lead Pastor or most comfortable member of the Leadership Team aware of what has transpired. Wherever possible, employees are asked to keep a written record of the date, time, details and witnesses

(if any). They should also record notes relating to any conversations they have had with the alleged harasser requesting that the behaviour stop.

### **Step 2 – Management Support and Intervention**

Employees who are not confident or comfortable with Step 1 and who believe they are victims of discrimination or workplace harassment are encouraged to report these matters to their supervisor or the Lead Pastor or most comfortable member of the Leadership Team. That person will then act as a mediator between the parties.

If the supervisor is the alleged harasser, the employee should report the incident of workplace harassment to the Lead Pastor or most comfortable member of the Leadership Team. If the Lead Pastor or a member of the Leadership Team is the alleged harasser, the employee should report the incident to the Chair of the Board of Elders.

### **Step 3 – Formal Complaint**

Where the unwanted behaviour continues to occur or it is not considered appropriate to the situation to approach the person engaging in the unwelcome conduct, a formal complaint must be submitted to the Lead Pastor containing a brief account of the offensive incident including when and where it occurred, the people involved, and the name(s) of any witnesses to the event. If the Lead Pastor or a member of the Leadership Team is the alleged harasser, the formal complaint should be submitted to the Chair of the Board of Elders. The employee must then ensure that they cooperate with those that are responsible for investigating the complaint. This will be completed on the Concern Report Form.

Upon receiving a formal complaint of harassment, Southridge Community Church will investigate the complaint in a timely and professional manner. Southridge Community Church will treat all complaints as confidential and will work to protect all complainants and those participating in an investigation from retaliation or reprisal. Information concerning a complaint will not be released to anyone not involved in the investigation.

The employee who has allegedly experienced workplace harassment and the alleged harasser will be informed in writing of the results of the investigation and of any corrective action that has been taken or that will be taken as a result of the investigation.

An employee found to be guilty of harassment or discrimination of any kind in the workplace will be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, dismissal.

In the event that a complaint is found to be deliberately false, trivial, frivolous, or made in bad faith, the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with established policy.

## **10. Visitor Procedure:**

During office hours, all visitors to the building must sign in and out at the reception desk.

## **11. Lock Down Procedure:**

The Lock Down Procedure will be enacted when a serious threat or intruder is in the Southridge facility.

- (a) All Workers are to be informed via intercom system by the person who notices the need for lock down; they will say: "We are in Lock Down; this is not a drill." This person will also call 911.
- (b) Workers return to the nearest room and will close and lock the doors.
- (c) Turn off all lights, close windows and blinds.
- (d) Avoid windows, doors and outer walls.
- (e) Use basic 'duck and cover' techniques.
- (f) Be prepared to wait. Remain calm and do not speculate about the cause of the lockdown.
- (g) Stay alert and be prepare to move if directed to do so.

## **12. Confidentiality:**

- (a) The Employer respects the privacy of all Workers.
- (b) Depending on circumstances it may be necessary for the Employer to disclose personal information as reasonably necessary to protect a Worker from physical injury or harassment.
- (c) If the Employer is required to disclose personal information belonging to another Worker the Employer will do so in writing and will also inform the Worker whose information is being released.

## **13. Consequences:**

Violence is a serious offence. Any Worker found to have perpetrated an act of violence may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. In addition, individuals may be subject to action under the Criminal Code of Canada.

## **14. Policy Review:**

This policy shall be monitored on an ongoing basis and shall be reviewed annually by the Employer.

## **15. Training:**

Copies of the Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy are available to all Workers upon request. Upon acceptance of employment all new Workers will receive a copy of

the Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy and sign a Commitment to the Prevention of Harassment and Violence in the Workplace Form. All Workers will be advised of the location of the following documents:

- Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy
- Commitment to the Prevention of Harassment and Violence in the Workplace Form
- Workplace Violence Hazard Assessment and Procedure
- Concern Report Form
- Incident Investigation Form
- Bill 132 and access to the Occupational Health & Safety Act

Additional training on managing conflict and aggressive behaviour will be given to those working in positions that are likely to experience such situations. Training will also be available to Workers who feel vulnerable to conflict in their positions.

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#### Document Revision Record:

Date Issued and Effective	Revision Number	Description
2019-5-28	1	Revision record added. Minor layout & grammatical changes. 10. Visitor Procedure reworded.