

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Policy on Violence and Harassment in the Workplace

The United Church of Canada has established a policy to cover workplace violence and workplace harassment in their Human Resource Policy Manual Section 3.4 (Reference www.united-church.ca/minstaff/hr)

Each United Church in Ontario is encouraged to implement their own written policy on Workplace violence and Workplace harassment. This new policy is proposed for Thamesview United Church and meets the terms of the Ontario Health and Safety Act www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/wpvh/br_wpvh.php as amended, which became law in Ontario 15 June 2010. It is intended to apply to staff, members and adherents that interact with our staff.

PURPOSE:

Thamesview United Church is committed to providing a safe workplace and will not tolerate any behaviour by its members or staff in the course of their attendance at, voluntary effort or work effort for or on behalf of Thamesview United Church that can be considered harassment or violence of any kind. Violence and harassment are prohibited by Provincial laws.

POLICY:

The intent of this policy is to provide a safe, violence free and harassment free place of worship and work.

The church is a place of worship, fellowship and work. It is expected that members and staff will show respect for each other in the conduct of their work and in the volunteer interaction with staff.

A number of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviours can take place in the workplace including harassment, degrading comments, bullying, threats, intimidation and physical violence. Such behaviours can have a negative effect on the personal well-being of workers and their interpersonal relationship. If these behaviours are allowed to continue, the work environment may become hostile or abusive. Workers become more anxious, angry or fearful and become less productive. As an employer we need to treat complaints of harassment seriously and stop it!

Definitions:

What is workplace violence?

In law it is defined as:

“The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker. A statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat, to exercise physical force against the worker in a workplace that could cause physical injury to the worker”. The types of violence that workers could experience in the workplace include hitting, pushing, physical assault, stalking, criminal harassment, robbery or threats of violence.

What is workplace harassment?

The Ontario Health and Safety Act defines workplace harassment as:

“Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome”

This policy applies to a church member harassing staff, staff harassing another staff member or a staff member harassing a church member.

This is a complaint based policy with the intent to discourage unwelcome behaviour from occurring. Harassment and violence are unacceptable behaviours and will not be tolerated.

Procedure:

1. All incidents will be reported verbally to a member of Ministry and Personnel Committee of Thamesview United Church (hereinafter M&P) as soon as possible.
2. It is expected that the person making a report to M&P will have already told the offending person to cease that behaviour and that it has not stopped, before advising M&P.
3. Each incident will be taken seriously and will be investigated.
4. In order to minimize further distress to those involved in the process as few people as possible will be involved and every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality to the extent possible.
5. In the event that further incidents involving the same person(s) occur, and if it is deemed necessary, a report and recommendation may be made by M&P to the Thamesview United Church Council for their decision/action.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Training:

Once the policy has been approved by Council it will be the responsibility of the Ministry and Personnel Committee to make every employee aware of its existence. During the hiring (search) process for every employee, prospective employees (applicants) will be apprised of this policy and upon hiring they will receive a copy from the church office and it will be reviewed with them by M&P.

A copy of the policy will be posted on the bulletin board for members of the congregation to read. Notice of the existence of this policy will be inserted in the Church bulletin or newsletter from time to time by the M&P, or on recommendation of the Church Council.

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