

# **DIOCESAN POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT**



**EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA**  
Adopted April 13, 2013

## **Diocesan Policy on Sexual Harassment**

The Diocese of North Dakota prohibits sexual harassment of Church Personnel by anyone (including supervisors or decision-makers, co-workers, consultants, vendors and other non-employees). The behavior of individuals engaging in such conduct, or supervisors or decision-makers who knowingly allow such behavior to continue, will not be tolerated. All church personnel, whether supervisory or non-supervisory, and whether paid or volunteer, are prohibited from engaging in the conduct prohibited by this policy. The complete diocesan policy on sexual harassment is available on the diocesan web page.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances and requests for sexual favors. Other unwelcome conduct which may constitute sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following:

### **Verbal:**

- repeated sexual innuendos, sexual epithets, derogatory slurs, jokes that include sexual language, innuendo, references, scenarios, etc.
- propositions, threats, or suggestive or insulting sounds (for example, comments about body, sexuality, etc., including insults and innuendo) even if the comment is about someone else;
- inappropriate e-mail (for example, e-mail that includes sexual jokes or other references of a sexual nature about any person, gossip or speculation about a person's sexuality, sexual practices, sexual health, pregnancy, virility, etc.). This includes e-mail that was sent accidentally, for example by hitting the "forward" button instead of "reply," or forgetting that a particular individual or worker is on one of your group lists.

### **Visual/Non-Verbal:**

- derogatory posters, cartoons or drawings (for example, cartoons and calendars that include nudity, sex acts, provocative poses, innuendo, sexual language, etc.);
- suggestive objects or pictures (for example, photographs that include nudity, sex acts, provocative poses; wallpaper, Screensavers, or other electronic displays of a sexual nature);
- graphic commentaries; leering; or obscene gestures (for example, vulgar gestures, gestures simulating sexual acts, "shooting the finger," kissing the air toward someone or licking the lips in a sexually suggestive or provocative manner).

### **Physical:**

Unwanted physical contacts (including touching, interference with an individual's normal work movement, unwelcome displays of romantic or sexual affection, aggressive physical contact or assault); and

### **Other:**

Making or threatening reprisals to an individual who opposes, objects to or complains about sexual harassment; possession of inappropriate material of a sexual nature in the Church or its display, duplication, or transmission.

### **Such verbal and physical conduct may constitute harassment when:**

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or other Church work;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or other Church work decisions affecting such individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

## **Retaliation**

The Church will not take any action in retaliation against any Church Personnel who, in good faith and with a genuine belief that he/she has been sexually harassed, brings or voices a complaint pursuant to this Policy or otherwise opposes sexual harassment. In addition, the Church will not tolerate any retaliatory acts by other individuals.

Retaliation is a serious violation of Church policy and applicable law. If you believe you have been subjected to retaliation in violation of this Policy, you should report your complaint immediately in the manner specified in Section B below. Individuals will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination if they are found to have retaliated against an individual because such individual (1) in good faith and with a genuine belief that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment, made an honest complaint about such conduct, (2) participated honestly and in good faith in any investigation into a sexual harassment complaint, and/or (3) in good faith opposed acts of sexual harassment.

## **Reporting Suspected Sexual Harassment**

A person who believes that the actions or words of a supervisor/manager, co-worker, customer, vendor, volunteer, or other individual in the Church constitutes illegal or prohibited sexual harassment, has a responsibility to promptly report that behavior to one of the following individuals:

- a diocesan intake officer (names are posted on the diocesan web site)
- the rector or clergy person in charge of the congregation
- the senior warden of the congregation
- the Bishop

Prompt reporting enables the Church to stop the sexual harassment, before it becomes severe or pervasive.

A person who believes he/she has been the victim of any form of sexual harassment or retaliation, or has witnessed such conduct must promptly give notice of your complaint or of what you witnessed to one or more of the individuals listed above. You are not required to complain to your supervisor or within your chain of command.

In addition, to reporting the offending behavior to one of the people listed above, a person who believes he/she has been the victim of sexual harassment is encouraged to speak directly to the individual whose conduct he/she finds objectionable. He/she is not required to do this, however, and the suggestion is that the person consider doing this only if he/she is comfortable doing so. Speaking directly to the person involved with clear communication can sometimes resolve an issue immediately, as well as build greater understanding between individuals in the Church.

Allegations of sexual harassment made against the bishop may be made directly to the Office of Pastoral Development in the Presiding Bishop's Office; any such allegations reported to one of the individuals listed above will be referred to that office.

A person may formally or informally complain to any of the above personnel via any of the following:

- Telephone call
- Letter
- Email

- Fax
- In-person meeting
- Filing a “Notice of Concern” (a form is available on the Diocesan website or from the Diocesan Office).

All supervisors and decision-makers are required to report all formal and informal complaints, as well as any suspected or known policy violations, including any conduct they witness, immediately to the rector or clergy person in charge of the congregation (for congregations), a diocesan in-take officer, or the Bishop, even if the alleged victim has asked the supervisor or decision-maker to keep the complaint confidential, or indicate that he/she does not wish to file a formal complaint. Church Personnel are required to report immediately any suspected or known policy violations to the rector or clergy person in charge of the congregation.

All supervisors and decision-makers are expected to act promptly and appropriately to prevent (1) sexual harassment in the Church, and (2) retaliation against those who make a good faith complaint of sexual harassment, or those who participate honestly and in good faith in either an investigation of a complaint or oppose illegal or prohibited sexual harassment in the Church.

All complaints of sexual harassment will be reviewed and investigated promptly and impartially by the Bishop and/or the Bishop’s designee. Complaints may be made orally or in writing. Once Church management receives notice of any complaint of sexual harassment, it will swiftly determine whether or not a fact-finding investigation is necessary. If it is determined that a fact-finding investigation is necessary, it will be launched promptly. If necessary, intermediate measures may be taken before completing the investigation to ensure that further sexual harassment does not occur. Moreover, the Church will protect the confidentiality of the allegations to the extent possible; however, no individual can be promised or guaranteed strict or absolute confidentiality. For example, information may have to be disclosed to those officials and/or Church Personnel with a need to know in order to carry out the purpose and intent of this Policy.

Corrective or disciplinary action will be taken against any Church Personnel found to have engaged in sexual harassment. Such action may include counseling and/or appropriate disciplinary measures, up to and including termination. The complaining party will be given notice, in a timely fashion, of the outcome of the investigation of any formal or informal complaint.

## **General Definitions**

### **1. Church Personnel**

For purposes of this Policy, the term “Church Personnel” shall mean:

- All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or otherwise who are engaged in ministry or service to the Church;
- All paid personnel (including Church employees) whether employed in areas of ministry or other kinds of services by the diocese, its congregations, schools or other agencies. For example, [fill in examples];
- Those who contract their services to the diocese, its congregations, schools, or other agencies;
- Volunteers, including any person who enters into or offers him or herself for a Church related service, or who actually assists with or performs a service, whether or not they have been

selected or assigned to do so. Volunteers include members of advisory boards, vestries, bishop's committees, boards of directors and advisory boards. For example, [fill in examples];  
e. All interns, persons in the ordination process, and persons serving in field education assignments.

## **2. Church Employees**

For purposes of this Policy, the term "Church employees" shall mean all individuals hired by the Church who are employees of the Church for purposes of federal, state and/or local discrimination and harassment laws.

## **3. Supervisors and Decision-Makers**

For purposes of this Policy, the term "supervisors and decision-makers" shall mean:

- a. All persons who have the express authority to hire, select, supervise, discipline, promote, demote, terminate, set compensation or other terms and conditions of employment;
- b. All persons who have the express authority to recruit, duly appoint, select, license, discipline, supervise, terminate, or set terms and conditions of volunteer service;
- c. All members of decision-making bodies who have the authority to approve the creation of ministries, programs, Church activities, or personnel policies or who [fill in examples];
- d. Standing Committees, Diocesan Councils/Executive Boards, Vestries, and Bishop's Committees who appoint or approve Persons Who Have Pastoral Relationships as defined in this Policy including all Standing Committees, Commissions on Ministry, Vestries, Boards of Directors for Schools, Bishops Committees and the like.

## **Education and Training Requirements**

### **1. Church Personnel**

Church Personnel are required to take training on sexual harassment and the organization's sexual harassment policy. Existing Church Personnel will be notified of this policy promptly following its adoption. Training for all Church Personnel will be incorporated into the initial Safe Church training or the refresher training which are offered regularly. This policy will be reviewed and discussed with new Church Personnel before they start work.

### **2. Supervisors and Decision-Makers**

Supervisors and decision-makers must complete training on sexual harassment, including preventing and responding to sexual harassment, within three (3) months of the effective date of this Policy, or of becoming a supervisor or decision-maker.