

Policy 9: Harassment, Abuse, Misconduct, and Discrimination

Policy Statement

- 9.1. Abuse or harassment of one individual by another is wrong and has no place in the community of Christ Church. The Parish Council is committed to fostering an environment where people are able to enjoy worship and fellowship free from harassment or abuse.
- 9.2. Every person who works or worships at Christ Church should be able to do so in a barrier-free environment. Any act which places a barrier on the individual's access to parish programs or activities is discriminatory and is not acceptable and is prohibited.

Definition

- 9.3. Harassment or abuse is conduct that is unwelcome, unsolicited, immoral, or unacceptable. It is any action between two people regardless of relationship or position.
- 9.4. Harassment or abuse includes but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Unwanted physical contact.
 - b. A display of offensive material.
 - c. Advances or propositions, in person or through technology (social media, e-mail, etc.) that are known or ought to be known to be unwelcome.
 - d. Comments which cause or ought to be known to cause embarrassment or offense or that are by their nature clearly embarrassing or offensive.
 - e. Derogatory or degrading remarks or comments.
- 9.5. Sexual misconduct, as per the Dioceses of NS/PEI, is "an inappropriate and immoral act between a cleric, lay worker, or volunteer and another person and occurs whenever a member of the clergy, lay worker, or volunteer uses their position of authority for the purpose of securing sexual gratification". The act may be consensual or non-consensual.
- 9.6. Sexual misconduct is "unsolicited, unwelcome, non-reciprocal sexual overtures or conduct, either physical or verbal" and includes "sexually oriented humour or language, questions or comments about one's sexual behaviour or preference, unwelcome or undesired physical contact, inappropriate comments about one's clothing or body or repeated requests for dates or social engagements".
- 9.7. The Nova Scotia Human Rights Act defines discriminatory practices as those "based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or conviction for an offense for which a pardon has been granted".

Application

- 9.8. This policy applies to all clergy, staff, parishioners, volunteers, and visitors of Christ Church.

Implementation

- 9.9. The policy on sexual misconduct established by the Diocese of NS/PEI is to be adopted and applied in the Parish of Christ Church.
- 9.10. The Parish Administrator/ SafeR Church Liaison will provide support and education on matters of harassment, abuse, misconduct, and discrimination to members of the parish and all volunteers involved in programs or activities sponsored by the parish.
- 9.11. Where any person becomes aware of an incident which might constitute harassment, abuse, or discrimination, they should report it to the Parish Administrator/ SafeR Church Liaison and/or the Executive Committee. If they do not feel it appropriate to report to these persons, they may report it to the Executive Director of Human Resources of VSST at the Diocese.
- 9.12. The Parish Administrator/ SafeR Church Liaison shall follow the investigation procedures found in the SafeR Church Plan.
- a. If the investigation substantiates the allegation, the accused will be removed from their position of authority pending full legal or Diocesan action.
 - b. In the interim the accused may be requested to step down from the position as a temporary measure and/or limit contact with the accuser.
 - c. If contact cannot be limited it may be necessary to provide Parochial support to one or both on those occasions when they meet.
- 9.13. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting any incident of potential harassment, abuse, misconduct, or discrimination to any appropriate authority.
- 9.14. The Diocesan policy provides direction on the healing process and all should recognize that the healing process is fundamental to rebuilding trust within the Parish.
- 9.15. The confidentiality of individuals must be maintained but certainly those cases which have widespread knowledge within the parish or which have been publicly reported will require more public support for the victim and their family, the accused's family and the congregation. In those cases where there is not common knowledge, the parish must provide support to all parties and, if necessary, refer individuals to professional counselors.