

Harassment Policy
Presbytery of Long Island
Adopted September 21, 2024

This policy is intended to comply with G-3.0106 (*Administration of Mission*).

It is the Presbytery of Long Island's belief that God has created all people in God's own image and thus has made us equal in Christ (Genesis 1:26). The Church, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is given shape and life and is meant to reflect our relationship to one another and to God. We firmly believe that God intends all human life to have worth and dignity in all relationships. Through these relationships we are bound to serve and to respect the dignity of every human being. (F-1.0301) This respect and dignity afforded to all of God's creation is through the creation and maintenance of a safe environment within our community, free of harassment.

The Presbytery of Long Island ["Presbytery"] strives to create and maintain an environment in which people are treated with dignity, decency and respect.¹ When the Presbytery gathers to do its work as a council, committees, commissions, or staff, it is committed to providing an environment that is characterized by mutual trust and is safe and free from harassment, bullying, and intimidation in any form. The Presbytery will not tolerate any type of harassment of its employees, minister members, ruling elders, volunteers, or ministry partners. Through enforcement of this policy and by education of its members and employees, the Presbytery will seek to prevent, correct and discipline behavior that violates this policy.

All members and employees of the Presbytery, regardless of their role or position, are covered by and are expected to comply with this policy and to take appropriate measures to ensure that prohibited conduct does not occur. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any member or employee of the presbytery who violates this policy. Based on the seriousness of the offense, disciplinary action may include removal from a role or position.

General Harassment

As used in this policy, the term "harassment" includes sexual harassment as well as unwelcome conduct toward an individual because of the individual's sex, race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, citizenship, or any other legally protected characteristic.

Any action may be considered harassing if it:

1. creates a hostile, intimidating or offensive work environment;

¹ See the Presbyterian Church (USA) Standards of Ethical Conduct:
https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/publications/ethical-conduct.pdf

2. unreasonably interferes with an employee's or Presbytery member's work performance; or
3. adversely impacts an individual's employment or volunteer opportunities.

Examples of harassment that may violate this policy include:

- Oral or written (including digital) communications that contain offensive name-calling, jokes, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threats. This includes comments or jokes that are distasteful or targeted at individuals or groups based on sex, race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, citizenship, or any other legally protected characteristic.
- Nonverbal conduct, such as staring, leering and giving inappropriate gifts.
- Physical conduct, such as assault or unwanted touching.
- Visual images, such as derogatory or offensive pictures, cartoons, drawings or gestures. Such prohibited images include those in hard copy or electronic form.

Sexual Harassment

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome requests for sexual favors, unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment includes conduct directed by a person at another person of the same or opposite gender. Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature includes but is not limited to the deliberate, repeated making of unsolicited gestures or comments of a sexual nature; the deliberate, repeated display of offensive sexually graphic materials which is not necessary for business purposes; or deliberate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, whether or not repeated, that is sufficiently severe to interfere substantially with an employee's work performance or to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Reporting Procedure

Employees, members, ruling elders, volunteers, or ministry partners who, in the course of the work of the Presbytery, feels harassed or subject to discriminatory employment practices should immediately report the matter to the Stated Clerk, preferably in writing. If the complaint of harassment to the Stated Clerk is not appropriate, the complaint must be lodged with the moderator of the Personnel Committee.

Reports of Sexual Abuse, which is defined by D-7.09 of the Church Discipline section of the Book of Order as sexual conduct in relation to any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone without the capacity to consent, or any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position, should follow the procedure outlined in the Church Discipline Section of the Book of Order and any Sexual Misconduct Policies of the Presbytery. Reports of this nature shall be reported to the Stated Clerk and any other authorities required by mandatory reporting laws.

Upon receipt of a report of harassment or discrimination, an investigation will be initiated by the Stated Clerk. This investigation will be handled discreetly and confidentially. The purpose of the investigation is to verify that such conduct is occurring or has occurred and to take steps to ensure that such conduct does not continue. After investigation, any Employee/Volunteer that has been found to have engaged in unlawful or prohibited harassment or conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including removal from a role/position or termination of employment. Neither the Church nor the Presbytery will retaliate against anyone for making a harassment or discrimination complaint, even if no determination is made that harassment and/or discrimination has occurred. However, anyone who knowingly makes a false claim or knowingly provides false information in the course of an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including removal from a role/position or termination of employment.

Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Shepherding Council and reported to the Presbytery at the second meeting of the year.