

# **Workplace Bullying & Harassment Prevention Policy**

Version 1

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Roman Catholic Bishop of Nelson

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

RATIONALE .....	1
DEFINITIONS.....	1
Bullying and Harassment .....	1
Committee .....	2
Diocese .....	2
POLICY .....	2
PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES.....	2
Prevention Strategies .....	2
Reporting Procedures .....	3
Response Strategies.....	3
Remedial Action.....	4
Retaliation .....	5
Further Information.....	5
RESOURCES .....	5
SCHEDULE A: WORKPLACE BULLYING & HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FORM .....	6

## RATIONALE

The Diocese of Nelson is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment where people are treated, and treat each other, professionally and respectfully in their interactions and where the dignity of all individuals is upheld. When personal conflict occurs, a process is in place to allow the conflict to be effectively resolved.

In addition to this broad objective, this policy is intended to comply with WorkSafeBC's policies on the prevention of workplace Bullying and Harassment.

## DEFINITIONS

### Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and Harassment:

- a) includes any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards an employee that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that employee to be humiliated or intimidated, but
- b) excludes any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of employees or the place of employment.

Examples of conduct or comments that might constitute Bullying and Harassment include:

- Verbal aggression, name-calling and personal insults
- Vandalizing personal belongings
- Sabotaging work
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Humiliating initiation practices / hazing
- Personal attacks
- Aggressive / threatening gestures
- Cyber-Bullying (through email, text messaging, social networking, and websites)

These actions can be overt and obvious or covert and subtle and would be considered by a "reasonable person" to be unacceptable.

Bullying and Harassment is not:

- Expressing differences of opinion
- Offering constructive feedback
- Making a legitimate complaint about another employee's conduct
- Reasonable management action, including decisions about:
  - Job duties and work to be performed
  - Workloads and deadlines
  - Layoffs, transfers, promotions, and reorganizations
  - Work instruction, supervision, or feedback

- Work evaluation
- Performance management
- Discipline, suspensions, or terminations

## **Committee**

The Safe Environment Advisory Committee, appointed by the Bishop, is responsible for investigating allegations of abuse and Harassment in the Diocese and for making recommendations to the Bishop or appropriate authority on actions to be taken.

## **Diocese**

Diocese is the Roman Catholic Diocese of Nelson including parishes, missions, prayer houses and schools. Diocese refers to either the Diocesan office or its delegated authority.

# **POLICY**

Workplace Bullying and Harassment is not acceptable and is not tolerated in the Diocese. All Diocesan employees must be treated in a fair and respectful manner.

Diocesan employees must:

- not engage in the Bullying and Harassment of other people;
- report Bullying and Harassment whether observed or experienced; and
- apply and comply with the Diocese's policies and procedures on Bullying and Harassment.

This policy statement applies to all employees, including permanent, temporary, casual, and contract. It applies to interpersonal communication, as well as electronic communication.

Pastors, School Administrators and Diocesan Directors must ensure that the provisions of this policy are communicated and understood.

This policy must be reviewed annually with employees.

# **PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES**

All employees have a responsibility to prevent and address workplace Bullying and Harassment situations.

## **Prevention Strategies**

Each Diocesan workplace must ensure that all employees are educated about and understand this policy.

What employees can do to stop workplace Bullying and Harassment:

- Listen to the target
- Don't gossip
- Offer support (e.g. employee assistance program, counsellor)
- Document details of what you see to share in an investigation (dates, details, witnesses)
- Tell the bully/harasser to stop

## **Reporting Procedures**

### **How to Report**

Diocesan employees must report incidents or complaints of workplace Bullying and Harassment. To report a formal complaint, employees must use the *Workplace Bullying and Harassment Complaint Form* (Schedule A).

### **When to Report**

Incidents or complaints shall be reported as soon as possible after experiencing or witnessing an incident. This allows the incident to be investigated and addressed promptly.

### **Reporting Contact**

Incidents or complaints shall be reported to the Delegate or Deputy Delegate. For contact information, refer to the Diocesan website ([www.nelsondiocese.org](http://www.nelsondiocese.org)).

### **What to Include in the Report**

Provide as much information as possible in the report, such as the names of people involved, witnesses, where the events occurred, when they occurred, and what behaviour and/or words led to the complaint. Attach any supporting documents, such as emails, handwritten notes, or photographs. Physical evidence, such as vandalized personal belongings, can also be submitted.

## **Response Strategies**

If an employee is being bullied or harassed, the situation shall be addressed through a conflict resolution process. The intent of the process is to resolve conflict between people. The process offers the individuals involved in the conflict the opportunity to resolve the conflict directly with the other party or through a formal complaint.

### **Option 1: Speak with the offending person directly**

The complainant is encouraged to speak directly with the offending person to resolve the conflict. In many cases, the person may not have realized his/her actions or comments created an issue for the individual. Most reasonable people will change their behaviour when they discover it is creating issues for others.

Following scripture and the words of Christ (Matthew 5:23-25), it is important to make every effort to speak directly with the individual allegedly giving offense. The informal meeting can be

facilitated by a colleague or someone who is trusted; this meeting is an informal process of trying to resolve an issue.

If you are the target of, or witness to, Bullying and Harassment:

- Tell the bully what behaviour was inappropriate
- Make it clear the behaviour is unwanted and unacceptable
- Stay calm
- Don't retaliate
- Report it

If you choose Option 1, you are not required to complete the *Workplace Bullying and Harassment Complaint Form*. However, you must inform your supervisor of the action that you took. Should the Bullying and/or Harassment continue, the complainant must make a formal complaint.

### **Option 2: Formal Complaint**

The complainant shall complete the *Workplace Bullying and Harassment Complaint Form* and submit it to the Delegate or Deputy Delegate.

The Committee shall conduct a confidential investigation of the complaint in order to determine the facts and assess whether this policy has been breached.

The time taken to investigate the complaint shall begin within 5 working days and shall not normally exceed 10 working days from the date the formal complaint is filed.

The Committee may recommend that the people involved in the complaint participate in a mediated resolution. The mediator (a Committee member or third party appointed by the Committee) shall speak with the other party to determine if he/she is interested in participating in this process. Participation in this process is voluntary. If both parties agree to participate, the mediator shall help the parties explore options to resolve the issue. He/she may offer suggestions or alternatives for the parties to consider, but it is up to the individuals involved in the conflict to reach their own resolution. Discussions with mediators shall be considered confidential by all participants.

In the event of a formal investigation, the Committee may choose to retain an outside investigator to conduct the investigation.

The alleged victim and the offending person(s) shall have a right to representation during the investigation process.

### **Remedial Action**

Where a breach of this policy has been substantiated, an appropriate remedy shall be provided to the person who has been subjected to inappropriate behaviour. Corrective action shall be taken

against the person(s) who has breached this policy. This may include education or training, denying access to Diocesan facilities and activities, and/or in the case of Diocesan employees, discipline up to and including termination of employment.

### **Retaliation**

It is considered to be a breach of this policy to take retaliatory action against a person who raises a concern or files a complaint under this policy.

### **Further Information**

Any questions regarding this policy can be referred to the Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator at the Catholic Pastoral Centre (250-448-2725).

## **RESOURCES**

WorkSafe BC – Bullying and Harassment  
<http://www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/BullyingAndHarassment/Home.asp>

**SCHEDULE A:  
WORKPLACE BULLYING & HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FORM**



# Workplace Bullying & Harassment Complaint Form

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF NELSON

## Complainant Information

I am (choose one):    the alleged victim    a witness

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer (parish/school): \_\_\_\_\_

## Alleged Victim Information (if complainant is a witness)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer (parish/school): \_\_\_\_\_

## Name(s) of Alleged Bully/Harasser

\_\_\_\_\_

## Personal Statement (Describe in as much detail as possible the bullying and/or harassment incident)

Date and Time of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Location(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Parties Involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_

Details about the Incident(s) (behaviour and/or words used):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Any additional details that would help with an investigation:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Attach any supporting documents such as emails, handwritten notes or photographs. Physical evidence, such as vandalized personal belongings, can also be submitted.

Signature of Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Submit this form to the Delegate or Deputy Delegate as soon as possible**

Catholic Pastoral Centre  
3665 Benvoulin Road, Kelowna BC V1W 4M7  
Phone: 250-448-2725