## WORKPLACE HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY

[Organization Name] is committed to providing and maintaining a respectful workplace that is free from harassment, including psychological harassment. The organization is dedicated to ensuring a physically and psychologically safe work environment for all employees.

Every employee is entitled to employment free of workplace harassment, and all employees have an obligation not to engage in such behaviour. Employees are encouraged to report any incidents of workplace harassment, bullying, or discrimination, and must conduct themselves in a manner that respects the rights and dignity of everyone they come into contact with while carrying out their tasks.

Harassment in the workplace will not be tolerated. [Organization Name] will investigate all complaints of workplace harassment and take appropriate corrective action for any person under its direction who subjects an employee to workplace harassment.

This policy is not intended to discourage, prevent, or preclude a complainant from exercising other legal rights under any other law.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all [Organization Name] employees, management, volunteers, contractors, clients, vendors and visitors at any of [Organization Name]’s workplace(s).

DEFINITIONS

“Bullying” – A form of harassment, sometimes referred to as psychological harassment. Typically, it is a repeated, targeted pattern of behaviour that is intended to, or ought to reasonably be known to cause fear, intimidation, humiliation, distress or other forms of harm. The impact may be physical or mental, damaging a person’s body, feelings, self-esteem, reputation or property. Bullying may be obvious or subtle, direct or indirect, and can occur in person, in writing, or through the use of technology such as social media, text or email.

“Discrimination” occurs when a person makes a distinction, whether intentional or not, based on a protected characteristic, actual or perceived, as set out in Section 5 of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act, that has the effect of imposing burdens, obligations or disadvantages on an individual or a class of individuals not imposed upon others or which withholds or limits access to opportunities, benefits and advantages available to other individuals or classes of individuals in society.

“Workplace harassment” means a single significant occurrence or a course of repeated objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, or action in the workplace, including bullying, that, whether intended or not, degrades, intimidates, or threatens. Workplace harassment includes, but is not limited to:

* harassment or bullying based on any personal characteristic, including those set out in Section 5 of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act; and
* inappropriate sexual conduct, including sexual solicitation or advances, sexually suggestive remarks or gestures, circulating or sharing inappropriate images, or unwanted physical contact (See: “Sexual harassment”).

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to:

* Exclusion – Intentionally shunning or ostracizing a person or group (e.g., isolating others by ceasing communication, denying or dismissing their presence, purposely excluding them from decisions, conversations, or work-related events without justification).
* Physical harassment – Any unwelcome physical behaviour such as threatening or offensive gestures, physical intimidation, coercion, assault, practical jokes, or “horseplay” that is reasonably likely to cause discomfort or humiliation.
* Racial harassment – Objectionable behaviour motivated by race, colour, citizenship, place of origin, ancestry, ethnic background, or creed. Examples include ethnic jokes, racial slurs, insulting depictions, or disparaging remarks about ethnic differences in appearance or habits.
* Verbal harassment – A pattern of demeaning comments directed at or used against an employee that is likely to affect their professional reputation. Includes insults, slurs, obscene statements, innuendoes, profanities, and unflattering stereotypes.

Harassment does not include any action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of an employee or the workplace.

“Sexual harassment” is a form of workplace harassment and includes inappropriate sexual conduct such as sexual solicitation or advances, sexually suggestive remarks or gestures, circulating or sharing inappropriate images, or unwanted physical contact. Sexual harassment may be a single incident or a series of incidents, and may be coercive or subtle in nature. It includes reprisals or threats of reprisal for rejecting a sexual solicitation.

POLICY

This policy applies to harassment that is based on the prohibited grounds under the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*. This includes age, ethnicity, colour, religion, faith, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, handicap, ethnic, national, or aboriginal origin, family status, marital status, source of income, and political belief, association, or participation.

Additionally, this policy addresses workplace harassment which does not fall under the prohibited grounds.

[Organization Name] encourages any of its employees who witness or who are victim to harassment, bullying, or discrimination to bring forward the information as soon as possible so that an investigation may immediately commence.

In pursuit of a harassment-free environment, [Organization Name] is committed to fully preventing and/or addressing any instances of harassment, including sexual harassment, by:

* Providing education and training to ensure that all employees understand their rights and responsibilities regarding harassment;
* Ensuring that supervisors understand how to respond to incidents of harassment, including how to collect information, how to act, how to deal with confidentiality, how to document, and how to keep records;
* Methodically monitoring or adjusting [Organization Name]’s systems for any barriers, including any barriers regarding any protected grounds laid out in *the* Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act* and [Organization Name]’s Human Rights Policy;
* Reviewing the workplace harassment prevention policy and program with the Occupational Health and Safety Representative/Committee;
* Providing a procedure for reporting complaints (outlined below) that is fair, timely, and effective; and
* Ensuring to promote appropriate standards of conduct.

This policy also prohibits any person at [Organization Name] who is able to grant or deny a benefit to another employee from sexually soliciting or making advances on that person. This could include co-worker to co-worker, or supervisors and managers to employees. Further, any reprisals for the rejection of these advances are not permitted.

In addition, any employees who experience harassment while in the course of work for [Organization Name] have the right to file a complaint without any fear of reprisal. [Organization Name] will ensure that an investigation is conducted into any incidents or complaints of workplace harassment, as appropriate.

ROLES

Human Resources/Employer Responsibilities

[Organization Name] and/or the human resources representative at [Organization Name will]:

* Ensure all employees are trained on this Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy.
* Provide information and training on how to recognize, prevent, and respond to workplace harassment.
* Ensure any complaints of harassment are promptly addressed.
* Investigate all complaints of workplace harassment and take appropriate corrective action respecting any person under its direction who subjects an employee to workplace harassment.
* Ensure the health and safety of workers affected by alleged harassment is restored.
* Establish and maintain a Workplace Harassment Prevention Plan, including intake, investigation, and resolution procedures.
* Ensure all those involved in the harassment prevention plan and process are trained and instructed on their roles and responsibilities.
* Determine appropriate actions in response to a finding of policy violation within the workplace, as needed.
* Respect the privacy of all discussions, interviews, and proceedings to the extent required by law and necessary for the purposes of investigation and corrective action.
* Treat all participants in the resolution process equally.
* Review the workplace harassment prevention policy at least once every three years and update it if necessary.

Manager and/or Supervisor

Managers and supervisors will:

* Support a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all employees, volunteers, contractors, clients, and visitors.
* Ensure all individuals in the workplace adhere to this Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy.
* Ensure all employees have easy access to the Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy.
* Communicate workplace harassment prevention principles to employees and serve as role models for acceptable behaviour.
* Monitor the workplace for any conduct, remarks, or other behavior that violates the organization’s policies or could result in potential complaints of harassment.
* Respond quickly and objectively to concerns or allegations of harassment, including intervening if they witness or hear inappropriate behaviour.
* Ensure all employees and complainants with a copy of the Harassment Reporting Form and support them with completing and submitting it, if needed.
* Receive and document complaints in confidence, and where applicable, escalate the complaint to the employer or a human resources representative.
* Implement reasonable safeguards to protect the complainant, which may include separating the parties or making other temporary arrangements.
* Participate in the investigation procedure, if required.
* Monitor the workplace following a complaint or mediation to ensure the harassment has ceased.
* Facilitate any mandatory training or workshops on workplace harassment prevention and encourage employee participation.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees will:

* Be familiar with this policy and direct questions to their manager or the organization’s human resources representative as needed.
* Complete Workplace Harassment Prevention training as directed by [Organization Name].
* Conduct themselves respectfully, not engage in workplace harassment, and consider the impact of their actions, inactions, words, and behaviour, regardless of intent.
* Promptly raise concerns or potential violations under this policy.
* Access available resources, such as their supervisor, manager, or the human resources representative, for support.
* Participate in good faith in processes intended to address concerns under this policy. Submitting a complaint in bad faith, including knowingly providing false information or pursuing an allegation without an honest belief, is prohibited.
* Report suspected workplace harassment or retaliation for filing a complaint to a supervisor, manager, or the organization’s human resources representative.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

At [Organization Name], complaints regarding harassment, bullying, or discrimination may be brought forward to:

* (Insert Title) or (Insert Title).
* An alternate report may be made to (Insert Title) if either of the above are the alleged harasser(s).
* Reports can be made by (Insert reporting procedure e.g., harassment reporting form, verbal method)
* Immediately upon receipt of a complaint, an investigation will be started, and additional information and context will be sought. The investigation may include:

o   A review of the details of the incident;

o   Separate interview(s) with the parties involved and any witnesses;

o   Examination of any relevant documents, emails, notes, photographs, or video;

o   A decision about whether the complaint constitutes workplace harassment; and

o   The preparation of a report which summarizes the incident, the steps of the investigation, the evidence collected, and any findings

* [Organization Name] will take appropriate measures to ensure that employees and/or witnesses involved in filing the complaint are protected, as necessary. This may include temporary reassignments or shift changes. [Organization Name] will ensure that these changes do not penalize any employee who brought forward a complaint, or any witness to the complaint.
* The employee who disclosed the complaint, as well as the alleged harasser (provided they are both employees of [Organization Name]), will be kept up to date on the investigation process.
* The complainant and the alleged harasser will be informed of the result of the investigation and any corrective action that has been or will be taken.

Confidentiality

[Organization Name] will not disclose any information obtained in relation to a complaint of workplace harassment, including personal information, unless the disclosure is:

* Required by law,
* Necessary for the purposes of investigating the complaint, or
* Necessary for the purposes of taking corrective action with respect to the complaint.

All parties involved in a workplace harassment complaint, including complainants, respondents, witnesses, managers, and support persons, are expected to treat the matter and any information they become aware of as conﬁdential. No party shall discuss the matter or associated details with other employees or witnesses. An employee may face disciplinary action if it is determined that they have failed to adhere to these conﬁdentiality expectations.

All investigation notes and full reports will be retained in a separate ﬁle and are not to be saved in employee personnel ﬁles. Investigation outcome letters and disciplinary action will be saved in applicable employee ﬁles only when the complaint has been veriﬁed and is found to be in breach of this policy.

Any reports resulting from an investigation into complaints of harassment, discrimination, or bullying are not considered to be Occupational Health and Safety reports and will not be shared.

Reviews

This policy will be reviewed as often as necessary (e.g., after serious incidents of harassment); or at least every three years and updated if needed. [Organization Name] will communicate any updates to this policy to all employees, including changes required by law, and will provide information sessions to ensure employees are informed of updates