



LEASIDE UNITED CHURCH

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Leaside United Church Violence and Harassment Policy Condensed Version for the LUC Community

Description

Leaside United Church (LUC) is a Pastoral Charge of The United Church of Canada conducting Christian ministry in the province of Ontario. As an affirming ministry, it is committed to inclusion and justice for people of all sexual orientation and gender identities and more broadly works for justice and inclusion of all peoples. This policy is grounded in **LUC's** core values of: Acceptance, Respect and Inclusiveness, and Love and Compassion.

Purpose

LUC is committed to providing safe environments, free from harassment and violence, for all who are part of the **LUC** community including congregants, volunteers, renters, visitors, consultants, service-providers and any other third parties. **LUC** will not tolerate any behaviour by any person that constitutes harassment, is violent or threatens violence. The purpose of this policy is to foster a safe, respectful environment and manage incidences of violence, harassment or discrimination should they occur.

Harassment and violence in the workplace community are prohibited by provincial law. **LUC** has a legal obligation under the ***Occupational Health and Safety Act: Violence and Harassment in the Workplace***. Ontario, 2010, and the ***Ontario Human Rights Code***.

Policy

LUC takes a position of **zero tolerance** regarding harassment, discrimination and violence. All complaints of harassment, violence or discrimination toward anyone within the church community, as defined in **Purpose**, will be taken seriously and dealt with in a spirit of compassion and justice.

It is everyone's responsibility to raise concerns about and take steps to address harassment, violence and discrimination.

Responsibility for implementation of this policy shall be vested in the **LUC Council** which will ensure awareness of this policy is raised in the LUC community and that there is a procedure to deal with complaints.

Definitions

Under the ***Ontario Human Rights Code***, **LUC** does not and will not tolerate discrimination on the bases of the following 15 grounds:

- Race
- Sex (including pregnancy and gender identity)
- Disability

- Age
- Ancestry
- Ethnic Origin
- Place of Origin
- Citizenship
- Creed
- Sexual Orientation
- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Record of offences
- Being in receipt of public assistance
- By association

Under the ***Occupational Health and Safety Act, (OHSA)*** LUC will not tolerate forms of harassment that can include, but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate or unwanted touching
- Intrusive invasions of personal space
- Inappropriate jokes (i.e., jokes made at the expense of others including race, gender, weight, sexual orientation, hair colour such as “dumb blond”, etc.)
- Pranks
- Flirtatious comments
- Damaging personal property or threats to do so
- Vandalism
- Patronizing or condescending remarks or behaviour
- Seductive behaviour
- Yelling
- Stalking

Acts of Violence (OHSA) can include but are not limited to:

- Punching, Pushing, Shoving
- Throwing an object at someone
- Pushing an object into someone
- Cutting
- Shooting
- Biting and Scratching
- Attempts to do physical harm,
- Verbal threats with intent to cause physical harm

Prevention & Response

LUC Council and the **Ministry & Personnel Committee (M&P)** will regularly disseminate information about violence and harassment by:

- Clearly displaying a copy of the ***Violence and Harassment Policy*** and related posters and announcements in a central location accessible and visible to all, as well as on the **LUC** website.

- Informing staff, volunteers, renters and those running regular programs of the policy.
- Informing all groups in the LUC community of risk factors particular to **LUC**, that make members of the **LUC** community vulnerable.

LUC Council will be responsible for implementing safety and security responses should harassment or violence or threats of harassment or violence occur.

Procedures for Incidents of Violence or Harassment / Discrimination

The **LUC** community will be provided with contact information should an incident occur.

Every member of the **LUC** community has the right to pursue a complaint without reprisal or retaliation.

If a member of the **LUC** community is involved in a situation where he or she is the victim of violence or is threatened by violence, he or she shall take appropriate actions which may include one or more of:

- requesting assistance of an employee
- calling the police
- moving to a safe area within the **LUC** building
- locking an office door, or
- leaving the office.

A **LUC** staff member, the **Chair of LUC Council**, or a **M&P** member should be advised as soon as possible.

A **Response Team** of volunteers recruited and approved by **LUC Council** will act for **LUC** to confidentially respond to reports or allegations of violence or harassment by following the **Response Procedure** developed to support this policy.

All incidents reported to and handled by the **Response Team** will be reported to **LUC Council** with appropriate protection of the privacy of all parties.

Employees, volunteers, congregants or others who, with good intentions, provide information about actions they believe to be harassing or potentially harassing, will not be subject to disciplinary actions or negative consequences should an investigation prove their report to be unsubstantiated.

A member of the LUC community reporting alleged harassment is not precluded from pursuing his or her rights under the Ontario Human Rights Code and has the right to contact the police.

This Policy was adopted by LUC Council October, 2018 and revised for clarification January 2019.