

THE DIOCESE OF YAKIMA POLICY

REGARDING HARASSMENT

The Diocese of Yakima will not tolerate the harassment of individuals for any reason. Harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability or veteran status will not be permitted or condoned. Comments, conduct and innuendoes that might be perceived by others as offensive or harassing are wholly inappropriate and are to be strictly avoided.

In addition, the Diocese will not tolerate the harassment of diocesan personnel by non-personnel. Non-personnel includes, but is not limited to parishioners, vendors, and other visitors.

Harassment is defined as conduct which is focused on a person or group of persons including but not limited to physical or verbal abuse, unwelcome activity of a sexual nature, retaliation, as well as any behavior or action which interferes with an employee's ability to perform assignments or which creates a hostile or intimidating work environment.

The following types of harassment are prohibited and will not be tolerated:

1. Verbal Harassment – Verbal harassment includes, but is not limited to language which degrades or berates others, including but not limited to racial, religious or sexual comments or jokes, sexual innuendoes, or threats of any kind.
2. Physical Harassment – Physical harassment includes touching, pinching, slapping, hitting, slamming, throwing, kicking or threatening another person, including restraining by force or blocking the path of another.
3. Sexual Harassment – Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to sexual advances, requests for sexual acts or favors, or other verbal, physical or visual conduct of a sexual nature when:
 - a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; or
 - b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for making employment decisions affecting such individual; or
 - c) such conduct – intentionally or unintentionally – unreasonably interferes with the individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

4. Retaliation – Retaliation includes any adverse action or threat of adverse action taken or made because an employee has exercised or attempted to exercise any rights under the employment laws of the United States, Washington State, or under the policies of the Diocese. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to verbal abuse, threats, or withholding or withdrawal of pay, promotions, training, or other employment opportunities.
5. Other – In addition to the above forms of harassment, any behavior or action which interferes with an employee’s ability to perform job duties, or which results in or creates a hostile or intimidating work environment is considered harassment.

Any employee found to have violated the harassment policy will be disciplined, up to and including termination. Likewise, disciplinary measures will be applied in any instance determined to have been fabricated.

Any employee who utilizes this procedure in good faith can be assured that she/he will be free from any and all reprisal or retaliation from filing such complaints. Investigators will make every effort to strike a balance between the parties’ desires for privacy and the need to conduct a fair and effective investigation.

In the light of these clarifications, the Diocese of Yakima Policy Regarding Harassment is:

Any employee who feels that she/he has been subjected to any type or degree of harassment is to report the incident verbally or in writing to the pastor, supervisor, the Chancellor, or Vicar General within 48 hours of the incident. A written complaint should include the specific nature of the harassment and the date(s) and place(s) such harassment took place, as well as the employee’s name.

In a case of sexual harassment, a priest, deacon, or any employee, will immediately report the complaint through the sexual abuse hotline, 1-888-276-4490, so that the Sexual Abuse Policy can be implemented. Complaints of sexual harassment will be promptly and carefully investigated and will include interviews with all relevant persons including the complainant, the accused, and other potential witnesses.

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