



The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Prince Rupert (“RCEC”) is committed to providing a workplace environment in which all individuals are treated with Christian charity and the respect and dignity to which they are entitled as persons created in the image of God.

Each individual has the right and responsibility to cooperate in the mission of the Church and to work in an atmosphere that promotes behaviour appropriate to a Catholic Christian workplace, one which is in conformity with canon and civil law, and which strives to eliminate behaviour that is incongruous with a respectful workplace. RCEC desires to ensure that each person is treated in a fair and respectful manner and, when that standard is not met, to provide a means of correcting offending conduct.

RCEC has adopted this policy to make it clear that workplace bullying and harassment will not be tolerated and such events are to be reported, regardless of who the offender may be.

Any employee found to have engaged in conduct constituting workplace bullying or harassment will be subject to correction and possibly disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. An employee who takes any retaliatory action against a person who makes a bona fide complaint, or against any person who is involved in a complaint under this policy, is likewise subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

RCEC also realizes that instances of bullying or harassment in the workplace may be committed by others outside of RCEC with whom employees come into contact in the course of their duties. RCEC has a responsibility to support and assist those subjected to that behaviour.

### **Application**

This policy applies to all clergy, consecrated men and women, employees and volunteers and contractors working on behalf of RCEC. Catholic Independent Schools of Prince George (“CISPG”) has its own policies governing these matters.

### **Definitions**

“Workplace bullying and harassment can take many forms, including verbal aggression, personal attacks, and other intimidating or humiliating behaviours. If workplace bullying and harassment is not addressed, it can lead to lost productivity, anxiety, and sometimes even suicidal thoughts or actions.” (cf. <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/bullying-harassment>)

“Disrespectful behaviour” includes any action or comment that a reasonable person would find inappropriate, demeaning, or offensive; or behaviour intended to create an uncomfortable, intimidating, or hostile environment. Disrespectful behaviour may be found to occur within or outside the workplace and may include the following:

- a. Discrimination as defined in law and any differential treatment of an individual or group on the basis of a protected ground or characteristic set out in law, and not on the basis of merit.



- b. Bullying and Harassment, which is defined by WorkSafe BC as:
  - i. any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be humiliated or intimidated, but
  - ii. Excludes any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment.”
- c. Sexual harassment, which includes unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature and which may detrimentally affect the work environment or lead to adverse job-related consequences.
- d. Personal harassment which includes:
  - i. Behaviour that is disrespectful toward others that arises from an intention to be harmful;
  - ii. Conduct that becomes a pattern of behaviour that demoralizes, humiliates, or impedes a healthy working relationship and which a reasonable person knew or ought to have known was unwelcome or harmful which includes:
    - a. Written or verbal abuse or threats
    - b. Offensive gestures
    - c. Suggestive comments
    - d. Leering and sustained staring
    - e. Patronizing or condescending behaviour
    - f. Humiliation
    - g. Remarks or comments in the presence of other persons intended to belittle or embarrass another
    - h. Abuse of authority that undermines job performance or opportunities
    - i. Bullying or cyberbullying
    - j. Disrespectful, offensive, or demeaning online postings
    - k. Vandalizing personal belongings
    - l. Spreading malicious rumours
    - m. Harmful hazing or initiation practices; and
    - n. Using derogatory language.



- iii. Environmental harassment including:
  - a. The display of offensive pictures, diagrams, or signs
  - b. Practical jokes that cause awkwardness or embarrassment

Disrespectful behaviour **does not include** consensual banter or relationships, the expression of differences of opinion, or offering constructive feedback intended as such. It also does not include the exercise of appropriate management and responsibility including performance and attendance management, providing direction or instruction, operational change, coaching, counselling or discipline by a supervisor or manager.

“RCEC” is the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Prince Rupert (civilly incorporated) and the Diocese of Prince George (canonically established), and all parishes, missions and ministries that fall under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of the Diocese. However, Catholic Independent Schools of Prince George is not considered within the scope of this document.

The “employer” is RCEC and includes its managers and supervisors, whether clerical or lay.

An “employee” is any person employed or contracted by RCEC.

A “person” includes any individual, whether or not employed in the workplace. A person may be any workplace party (employer, supervisor or co-worker) or a non-workplace party, such as a parishioner, member of the public or anyone a worker comes into contact with at the workplace.

A “complainant” is a person reporting an incident or pattern of potential misconduct. The complainant does not need to be the subject or target of that misconduct.

A “respondent” is the person alleged to have committed the misconduct, whether that person is an employee, a volunteer, a person related to or acting as agent of RCEC, parishioners or members of the public.

### **Policy Statement**

It is a violation of this policy to engage in any disrespectful behaviour. Disrespectful behaviour is not acceptable in the workplace and will not be tolerated. All persons must be consistently be treated in a fair and respectful manner.

### **Employer’s Responsibilities**

RCEC will provide a respectful environment, consistent with its mission and character, and free of inappropriate behaviour.

RCEC will expect all employees to meet that standard of conduct and will take action to correct behaviour inconsistent with that standard, including disciplinary action.

RCEC will establish, implement, communicate, and regularly review procedures that address allegations or concerns raised and will include:



- a) The process by which employees may raise a concern
- b) How the concern will be handled
- c) How the results of the process will be communicated back to the parties involved
- d) Measures to ensure that all concerns are treated confidentially, including the names of complainants and respondents to any person, except as necessary to investigate the complaint or as required by law; and
- e) Adherence to WorkSafe BC's Occupational Health and Safety policies and any applicable legislation or regulation that seeks to eliminate the risk of harm in the workplace.

### **Employee Responsibilities**

Employees will treat others respectfully and in a manner consistent with the Gospel.

Employees are required to report any violations of this policy or disrespectful behaviour using the procedures established under this policy.

Employees are required to participate in an annual respectful workplace training session which may be provided online or in-person at the discretion of RCEC.

Employees who are found to be in violation of this policy may be required to undergo additional training, complaint resolution, or disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

### **Managerial and Supervisory Responsibility**

Each manager or supervisor (clerical or lay) must act to foster a safe workplace environment free from disrespectful behaviour and shall ensure that situations of alleged or potential violations of this policy are dealt with in accordance with this policy and the procedures outlined herein.

The manager or supervisor has a duty to act whenever conduct in violation of this policy occurs, whether a complaint has been made or not.

### **Reporting Procedures**

#### *How to Report*

Incidents or complaints are to be reported as soon as is possible after experiencing or witnessing an incident. Timely reports are essential to ensure a proper investigation and resolution process.

#### *Reporting Contacts*

While any manager or supervisor may initially receive a report, reports are to be forwarded to an appropriate reporting contact depending on the nature of the complaint. A list of reporting contacts is included with the report form below.



### *Information to be Included in a Report*

Provide as much information as possible in a report, including the names of the individuals involved, any witnesses to the incident, the location and time of the incident, what behaviour and/or words led to the report. It is important to use the specific words or a clear description of the conduct in the report. Copies of emails, letters, notes, or photographs should be attached to the report, and any physical evidence (e.g. vandalized personal belongings) may also be submitted.

Forms may be accessed on the Diocesan web site or by contacting the Chancellor or the business manager.

### **Investigation Process**

Most investigations will be conducted internally. RCEC reserves the right to employ an external investigator for complaints of a complex or sensitive nature or when it seems appropriate to do so.

Investigations will:

- Be undertaken promptly, and will immediately assess whether immediate action is required to ensure the safety of a person;
- Be fair and impartial, providing complainant(s) and respondent(s) with opportunity to present their concerns;
- Be sensitive to the interests of all parties involved;
- Be focused on the finding of facts and evidence;
- Normally include interviews of the complainant(s), respondent(s) and any witnesses;
- Be considerate of requests for assistance made by any party involved in the process.

### *Roles and Responsibilities in an Investigation*

Reports may be made to the Business Manager or the Chancellor. The Business Manager and the Chancellor will meet to determine how the investigation is to proceed. In the event that a complaint is made against the Chancellor or Business Manager, the report will be received and investigation will be managed by the other party (i.e. whichever of the Chancellor or Business Manager is not the Respondent), unless the Bishop decides to appoint an alternate investigator.

When a complaint is received, the Complainant and the Respondent and any witnesses to an alleged violation must participate in the investigation process so as to permit the employer to make any determination regarding any alleged violations of this policy and implement any corrective action to address a violation of this policy.

Respondents **who are not employees** cannot be compelled to participate in any process, and any participation is voluntary. However, RCEC may impose restrictions on a Respondent in these cases subsequent to any determination made by the investigator.

### *Bad Faith Reports*

Any person making a complaint in bad faith, frivolously, or in retaliation against another person who has raised a complaint or is involved as a witness, is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.



### *Investigation Reports*

The complainant(s) and respondent(s) will be advised of the outcome of the investigation and a final report will be provided by the investigator to RCEC with recommendations for any corrective action.

### *Record-keeping requirements*

Ongoing investigation documents will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the Chancellor or in the office of the Business Manager. Once the investigation is complete, the entire file will be transferred to the confidential archives of the Diocese with a reference note to be included in the appropriate personnel files.

These procedures are to be reviewed annually.



# Respectful Workplace Complaint Form

<b>Name and contact information for the complainant:</b>	
<b>Name of the person(s) the complaint is about:</b>	
<b>Detailed statement:</b>	
<i>Please describe the incident in as much detail as possible, including the names of all parties involved; the names of any witnesses to the incident; the location, date and time of the incident; details about the incident, including any specific actions, behaviours or words used; and any other relevant details that may be helpful in the investigation. Use additional pages as required and attach any supporting documents such as emails, notes, and photographs; you may also submit other physical evidence (e.g. vandalized personal belongings).</i>	
<b>The completed form should be sent to:</b>	
Fr. John Garden, Chancellor jgarden@pgdiocese.bc.ca	James Fowlie, Business Manager jfowlie@pgdiocese.bc.ca



# Respectful Workplace Complaint Process

Upon receipt of an allegation of workplace bullying or harassment, the Chancellor and/or the Business Manager will ensure that a complete and thorough investigation is conducted into the allegation to determine whether workplace bullying or harassment has occurred.

All complaints of workplace bullying or harassment will be investigated promptly, impartially, thoroughly, and as discreetly as possible.

The investigator will keep a running record of steps taken in the course of the investigation using the template below or some similar form of record.

## **Interview of Complainant**

1. The Person(s) receiving the complaint will interview the employee making the complaint, informing the employee that RCEC takes these matters seriously, is appreciative of the fact that the employee came forward regarding the complaint, and that the allegations will be investigated.
2. The investigator will take detailed notes or make a recording (with the consent of the interviewed party) regarding the incident(s) (nature, frequency, dates, etc.), the relationship of complainant to alleged harasser, the response of the complainant to the alleged harasser, and whether or not anyone else witnessed the incident(s) or were made aware of the incident(s); whether or not they feel safe at this point. Questions may include:
  - Who, what, when, where, and how: Who committed the alleged harassment? What exactly occurred or was said? When did it occur, and is it still ongoing? Where did it occur? How often did it occur? How did it affect the person?
  - How did the person react? What response did s/he make when the incident(s) occurred or afterwards?
  - How did the harassment affect the person? Has her/his job been affected in any way?
  - Are there any persons who may have relevant information? Was anyone present when the alleged harassment occurred? Did s/he tell anyone about it? Did anyone see her/him immediately after episodes of alleged harassment?
  - Did the person who committed the alleged harassing behavior harass anyone else? Does the person making the complaint know whether anyone complained about harassment by that person?
  - Are there any notes, physical evidence, or other documentation regarding the incident(s)?
  - How would the person making the complaint like to see the situation resolved?
  - Does s/he know of any other relevant information?
3. The investigator will tell the employee that s/he will begin the investigation, inasmuch possible, within the next 24 hours; and that s/he will also keep the complaint and investigation on a “need-to-know” basis as part of the investigation. Some information will have to be revealed to the person accused, in order to adequately investigate the incident(s).





4. The investigator will tell the employee that s/he will keep her/him apprised of the progress of the investigation such as interviews, etc.
5. The investigator will document all of this and draw up a plan for the investigation.

**Interview of Respondent (“the accused”)**

1. As soon as possible, the investigator will arrange to interview the accused in a private place that is not within close proximity to the complainant.
2. At the beginning of the interview, the investigator will let the accused know that a complaint was received regarding her/his conduct, and that the investigator will need to conduct a confidential interview to investigate the claim. The investigator will take detailed notes or make a recording (with the consent of the interviewed party). Questions may include:
  - What is your response to the allegations?
  - If the accused claims that the allegations are false, ask why the complainant might lie.
  - Are there any persons (i.e., witnesses) who have relevant information?
  - Are there any notes, physical evidence, or other documentation regarding the incident(s)?
  - Do you know of any other relevant information?
3. The investigator will inform the accused that:
  - a. S/he will – and that the accused needs to – keep the complaint and investigation confidential on a “need-to-know” basis as part of the investigation;
  - b. S/he to continue to perform her or his job in a professional manner and that retaliation against the complainant is unacceptable
  - c. The investigator is committed to coming to a resolution and conclusion as quickly as possible, and will keep her/him informed.
4. The investigator will document all of this, then review and see if there are any gaps or conflicting versions of relevant events. Addressing Conflicting Accounts/Testimonies with Credibility Assessment: In the event of conflicting accounts or versions of events, the investigator will need to make a credibility assessment and document that assessment for both the accused and the complainant. A suggested format for this assessment is below:

Question for consideration	Comments regarding:	
	Complainant	Respondent
Is the testimony believable on its face?		
Does it make sense?		
Did the person have a reason to lie?		



Is there witness testimony or physical evidence that corroborates the party's testimony?		
Did the person seem to be telling the truth or lying?		
Did the alleged harasser have a history of similar behavior in the past?		

### **Determination if Harassment Occurred**

1. After completing the investigation and addressing conflicting accounts and testimonies the Business Manager or Chancellor will need to make a determination as to whether or not harassment has occurred. This involves:
  - Reviewing all interviews
  - Making credibility assessment if necessary
2. If the conclusion is that harassment has occurred, corrective and other actions need to be immediately taken and communicated to the accused and to the claimant.
3. If there is a lack of conclusive evidence to make a determination, additional preventive measures may be implemented to ensure that harassment does not take place (i.e., monitor behaviors, additional training classes)
4. If there are too many contradictions and lack of eye-witness corroboration to reach a determination, a determination may be based on the credibility assessment.
5. If there is a determination that harassment has NOT occurred (although this can usually be determined at the stage of the complaint), that needs to be communicated to both parties. training for the complainant may be in order to help understand what behaviors constitute harassment and what behaviors do not.

### **Corrective Action**

If an investigation confirms that workplace bullying or harassment has taken place, appropriate disciplinary action should result. Disciplinary actions should normally be preceded by seeking advice from the Business Manager and legal counsel.

In the event that disciplinary action of clergy needs to be taken, this will be handled by the Vicar General and/or Chancellor.

Decisions regarding corrective action may be appealed to the Bishop.



# Respectful Workplace Complaint Running Record

**Complaint:**

**Investigator:**

Date/Time	Person Contacted	Via	Notes	Initials



## Respectful Workplace Complaint Reporting Contacts

Complaints may be made to the Business Manager, James Fowlie, 250-964-5645 or [jfowlie@pgdiocese.bc.ca](mailto:jfowlie@pgdiocese.bc.ca) or to the Chancellor, Fr. John Garden, 250-964-5641 or [jgarden@pgdiocese.bc.ca](mailto:jgarden@pgdiocese.bc.ca) at the discretion of the person making the Report.

If the respondent to the complaint is one of the above persons, the complaint should be addressed to the other person or to the Bishop [sjensen@pgdiocese.bc.ca](mailto:sjensen@pgdiocese.bc.ca), who will appoint an investigator to handle the complaint and investigation.