



Safeguarding God's People in the Workplace

Policies Prohibiting Sexual Harassment

2025

Sexual Harassment Policy for Employees and Supervisors

The Episcopal Diocese of Texas prohibits and will not tolerate sexual harassment of personnel in congregations, schools, and other organizations that operate under the authority of the diocese.

A. Definition

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature in which:

1. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or relationship with an organization in the diocese;
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by the individual is used as a basis for employment or other decisions affecting that person; or
3. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or abusive working environment.

B. Examples of Sexual Harassment

Examples of unwelcome conduct which may constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:

Physical Conduct

- Sexual touching
- Kissing
- Unwelcome casual hugs
- Massaging necks, shoulders, backs
- Being in someone else's "space;"
- Unwelcome displays of romantic or sexual affection
- Aggressive physical contact or assault
- Leering
- Obscene or vulgar gestures including gestures simulating sexual acts, "shooting the finger," kissing the air toward someone, or licking the lips in a sexually suggestive or provocative manner

Verbal

- Off-color jokes
- Sexual language or references
- Proposition
- Suggestive or insulting sounds
- References of a sexual nature about any person
- Gossip/speculation about a person's sexuality, sexual practices, pregnancy, or virility
- Request for dates
- Remarks about anatomy

- Bragging about sexual conquest
- Inquiries about sexual conduct
- Terms of endearment
- Use of curse words or vulgarity
- Sexual innuendo

Visual and Non-Verbal

- Posters
- Photographs
- Cartoons or drawings, including those that depict nudity, sex acts, provocative poses, etc.
- Texts, email messages, or electronic displays of a sexual nature including inappropriate wallpaper, screensavers, or other graphics
- Possession of pornography or inappropriate materials of a sexual nature on the property of a diocesan organization or on its computers, or the display, duplication, or transmission of pornography or such materials

C. Training and Other Requirements

1. Within 30 days of hire or the beginning of service, the employer must provide a copy of *Safeguarding God's People: Policies Prohibiting Sexual Harassment* to the following individuals:
 - Heads of congregations, schools, and other diocesan organizations
 - Supervisors of employees and volunteers
 - Employees
 - Volunteers who function as staff

and such individuals must complete, sign, and return to their employer the acknowledgment form attached to the policies.

2. Safeguarding training requirements depend upon the position held by an individual within an organization, as set out in Section V and Appendix iii of *Safeguarding God's People: Policies for Safe Ministry with Adults*. As part of their Safeguarding training, the individuals listed above are required to take the Specialized Training video course, "Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace," which must be accessed through the Safeguarding Records System of the diocese and repeated every 3 years.

D. Reporting

Any persons who believe they have been the victim of any form of sexual harassment must promptly report it to one or more of the following:

- A supervisor
- Anyone in the supervisory chain
- The head of the congregation, school, or other organization
- A warden of a congregation
- Safeguarding Minister/Canon for Wellness and Care

- The Rev. Canon Sarah Gaventa
report@epicenter.org or sgaventa@epicenter.org
 512-469-1876; Secure Fax: 866-241-7050 510
 Rathervue Pl, Austin, Texas 78705
- Canon to the Ordinary
 The Rev. Canon Christine Faulstich
report@epicenter.org or cfaulstich@epicenter.org
 1-800-318-4452
 1225 Texas Ave. Houston, TX 77002

Complaints of sexual harassment may be submitted by phone, email, letter, fax, or in-person. For assistance regarding what information to include in the report, see [Confidential Notice of Concern](#).

All supervisors and decision-makers (as defined in *Safeguarding God's People: Policies for Safe Ministry with Adults*) are required to report immediately all formal and informal complaints, as well as any suspected or known policy violations, to the head of the congregation, school, or other organization, as well as to the Safeguarding Minister.

An individual may choose to attempt to resolve the situation by speaking directly to the person whose conduct is objectionable, but the individual is never required to do so. Individuals are never required to complain to their own supervisor or within their chain of command but may utilize other reporting options.

E. Investigation

All complaints of sexual harassment will be promptly investigated. Complaints will be handled on a confidential basis, except to the extent necessary to conduct a proper investigation. If the investigation substantiates the complaint, immediate corrective action designed to stop the harassment and prevent its reoccurrence, up to and including termination of employment, will be taken.

F. Retaliation

Persons who in good faith reports sexual harassment or provides information related to a complaint will not as result be retaliated against or adversely treated with respect to terms and conditions of employment. Persons who believe that they have been subjected to retaliation in violation of this policy should report it immediately, following the process outlined above. Persons who are found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

G. Discrimination and Harassment Policy

The Episcopal Diocese of Texas prohibits discrimination or harassment toward any person based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, or disability. Violations of this policy must be reported, using the guidelines for reporting sexual harassment. All complaints will be promptly investigated, and corrective action designed to stop the harassment or discrimination will be taken.

Acknowledgment of Receipt and Review of Sexual Harassment Prevention Policies

I, (*print name*) _____,

employed by (*organization*) _____,

acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the *Policies Prohibiting Sexual Harassment* of The Episcopal Diocese of Texas.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

This acknowledgment form is to be printed, completed, and returned to the organization to be kept in the employee's records.