**SUGGESTED LOCAL CHURCH POLICY**

From Brotherhood Mutual – The River Conference Insurance Provider

MAKE YOUR HARASSMENT POLICY TRANSPARENT

Harassment policies should clearly outline your organization’s goals for promoting a safe and welcoming workplace. A clear plan and guiding documents help set appropriate procedures to safeguard the organization and its employees. Effective policies should educate employees, state that accusations are taken seriously, and outline that allegations of harassment are investigated thoroughly.

BOLD POLICIES PROTECT PEOPLE AND MINISTRIES

Many Christian ministries want to take a bold stance against sexual harassment in the workplace. The damage that can result in terms of personal, professional, legal, reputational, and moral, can destroy a Christian organization, such as a church, school, or college. Effective written policies are a baseline from which a culture of transparency and accountability flourishes.

DEVELOP EFFECTIVE POLICIES

Developing effective policies begins with a clear definition of harassment. Even if it seems intuitive, it’s important to state clearly the types of behaviors that are not acceptable.

“An effective harassment policy should educate and train employees to recognize and report. Encouraging employees to report, backs up your statement that it won’t be tolerated,” said Kathleen Turpin, vice president, human resources at Brotherhood Mutual.

Sexual harassment exists when submission to the conduct is a condition of employment (stated or implied), is used for making employment decisions, substantially interferes with work performance, or creates an intimidating or hostile work environment.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

LOCAL SOCIETY, (the “SOCIETY”) is committed to creating and maintaining a ministry and work environment free of sexual harassment. As such, the SOCIETY prohibits sexual harassment of its employees, volunteers and constituents in any form. Employees, volunteers, and constituents must not engage in such prohibited conduct. Any Employee, volunteer and constituent determined to be responsible for unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Sexual harassment is an assault on a person’s privacy and integrity. Sexual harassment can also destroy the ministry itself through a decline in morale, loss of respect for the responsible party and through grieving God’s blessing. All employees and constituents must be allowed to work and do ministry in an environment free of unwelcome sexual overtures.

Sexual harassment includes conditioning another employee’s or ministry job status – continued employment, promotions, salary increases, or work assignments, for instance – on giving sexual favors. It also includes unwelcome sexual advances between co-workers and constituents, such as requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

Prohibited unlawful sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

* Unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments;
* Visual conduct such as derogatory and/or sexually-oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings, screen savers or gestures;
* Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movement or interfering with work;
* Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of continued employment, or to avoid some other loss, and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favors; and
* Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

Any Employee, volunteer or constituent who is aware of any instances of sexual harassment should report the alleged act immediately to his or her supervisor or Lead Pastor . In the event that the allegations involves the lead Pastor or any of the immediate relatives of the Pastor, please contact the conference Superintendent. Any employees, volunteer or constituent who believes he or she has been subject to sexual harassment should do the same. If the employee, volunteer, or constituent is uncomfortable in discussing the matter with the supervisor or if the supervisor is not available, the employee, volunteer or constituent should report the alleged act immediately to the Superintendent of The River Conference of the Free Methodist Church. Employees, volunteers or constituents are encouraged to be prompt in reporting such behavior.

Any report or complaint should include details of the incident or incidents, names of the individuals involved and names of any witnesses. A thorough and objective investigation of the allegations will take place immediately and will be handled as confidentially as possible. Upon completion of the investigation, the appropriate parties will be notified of the findings.

If it is determined that unlawful harassment has occurred, effective remedial action will be immediately taken in accordance with the circumstances involved.

The SOCIETY will not retaliate against any employee, volunteer or constituent for filing a complaint and will not tolerate or permit retaliation by management, employees, co-workers or constituents.

All employees, volunteers and constituents shall sign a disclosure document stating they have read, understood and will comply with stated policy.

All employees and volunteers are required to take the Sexual Harassment Training offered by Brotherhood Mutual and shall submit their completed Sexual Harassment Training offered by Brotherhood Mutual.

I have read the above stated policy and indicated my understanding and compliance by my signature below.

Name Printed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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