



## **Violence Prevention Policy**

Reviewed on April 4, 2024

**Violence Prevention Policy** for the Archdiocese of Toronto.

### **Our Commitment**

The Archdiocese of Toronto is committed to providing a safe and respectful work environment for all staff and visitors. Violent behaviour is unacceptable from anyone at work or in any situation related to employment with our organization.

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, clergy, Pastors and Supervisors (henceforth referred to as “workers”) working with the Archdiocese of Toronto, including the Catholic Pastoral Centre, all parishes and other work locations. This policy is designed to ensure that our workplace is a respectful and safe place for everyone, and to prevent acts of violence from occurring on our premises or where we conduct activities.

**Workplace violence means** an individual using physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker. This also includes the attempt to exercise force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause injury and an action or statement that may be interpreted to be a threat to cause injury to a worker, in the workplace.

Workplace violence may include threatening emails, verbal statements, haranguing, hitting or trying to hit a worker, throwing an object at a worker, wielding a weapon or object in an aggressive fashion, sexual violence and fighting.

Domestic violence is considered workplace violence once it enters the place of employment. This may relate to personal relationships outside or inside an organization between workers, with a current or former intimate partner, spouse or former spouse or a family member where an individual may threaten to or attempt to physically harm the other at work.

Intent to cause harm is not always present in a situation. Workplace violence can also be involuntary if an individual reacts to a certain stimulus in their environment and causes injury to those around them.

## **What is not workplace violence?**

Minor disagreements which may appear to be aggressive or prolonged issues with differences of opinion may be misconstrued as violence and may be categorized as harassment depending on the circumstances.

Accidental injury such as a worker tripping and bumping into another person causing them to fall is not considered physical violence. Passing items in the form of a light toss but are missed are not to be considered as an object forcefully thrown at another worker.

## **Worker Rights and Responsibilities**

Workers have the responsibility to treat each other with respect. Should any employee experience violence or see another person being assaulted or abused, the incident should be reported to their Pastor, Supervisor or to the Director of Human Resources.

Workers are responsible to co-operate in the investigation of a workplace violence complaint. Anyone who investigates or gives evidence in a complaint investigation must keep details confidential to respect the privacy of the affected individuals.

Workers who have a no-contact order or restraining order in place on a family member or former spouse from a previous situation, are asked to share that information with their Pastor/Supervisor and provide the Director of Human Resources with a copy of the order. The information provided will be held confidentially to the extent that the safety of workers is not compromised. Basic information may be shared if some workers are at risk of being exposed to the potential danger surrounding the order.

Any worker who experiences violence in the workplace should consult “Violence in the Workplace – Procedures following an incident” – Appendix 1 in this document.

## **Employer Responsibilities**

Supervisory personnel must ensure, as much as possible, that no worker is harmed in the workplace.

The employer will take corrective action with anyone under their direction who injures another person.

Those with positions of responsibility should take every precaution reasonable to protect workers from the potential of having domestic violence occur in the workplace.

## **Confidentiality**

The Archdiocese of Toronto and its supervisory personnel will not identify a complainant, an alleged abuser or any circumstances about a complaint, to anyone, except:

- those with an increased potential to engage with an individual who may be at risk of committing workplace violence;
- when it is necessary in investigating the complaint;
- if it is part of disciplinary action; or
- where required by law.

## **Corrective Action**

Workers who harm another person may be subject to corrective action by the employer, which may include termination of employment. The worker may be required to attend workplace behaviour training. Depending on the severity of the violence displayed, workers may face legal action and/or criminal charges.

If the investigation does not find evidence to support the complaint, no record will be kept in the file of the alleged abuser. When the investigation finds violence occurred, the incident and the corrective action will be recorded in the personnel file.

Anyone who ignores signs of violence or knowingly makes a false allegation against another worker in an attempt to embarrass, demean or intimidate another individual may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Retaliation**

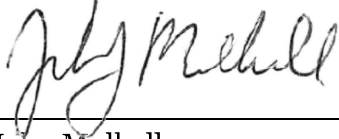
Anyone who retaliates in any way against a person who has filed a complaint, given evidence in an investigation or been found guilty of workplace violence, will be considered to have committed workplace harassment and may be subject to corrective actions described previously.

## **Education**

The Archdiocese of Toronto commits to making sure all of its employees, Pastors and Supervisors learn about workplace violence prevention and the Archdiocesan Violence Prevention Policy upon hire and at regular intervals thereafter.

## Monitoring

The Archdiocese of Toronto will monitor this policy and make adjustments whenever necessary. This includes a detailed review of the policy on an annual basis. If you have any concerns with this policy, please bring them to the attention of the Human Resources Department.



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John Mulhall  
Chancellor of Temporal Affairs

April 17, 2024

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Date

## **Appendix 1**

### **Violence in the Workplace – Procedures following an incident**

If a worker feels that she or he has been a victim of an incident of violence in the workplace, the following procedures are in place. They apply to all Archdiocesan workplaces.

Complainants are encouraged to file a complaint immediately after an alleged incident of violence.

The Pastor/Supervisor will take immediate action to resolve any situation involving violent behaviour which may include calling for emergency assistance.

a) For violent incidents:

If minor,

- Speak to your Pastor or Supervisor so that they may determine if mediation is necessary.
- The Supervisor will investigate the matter thoroughly and promptly.
- The findings of the investigation must be reported to the Director of Human Resources within ten business days. This report must include the details of the incident, facts and names of those who witnessed the incident.
- Depending on the situation and severity of the matter, appropriate disciplinary measures will be applied and the incident will be recorded on the individual's employment record in consultation with the Director of Human Resources.

b) For violent incidents:

If serious,

- Ensure the safety of all those around you.
- Seek emergency assistance – Contact Police to report the incident and medical assistance, if needed.
- Report to and inform your Pastor or Supervisor.
- Contact the Director of Human Resources as soon as possible to assess who should be involved in the situation (may include the Ministry of Labour).
- The incident will be investigated promptly and thoroughly by the Police and by the Director of Human Resources.
- Depending on the severity of the matter, appropriate disciplinary measures will be applied and the incident will be recorded in the individual's employment record in consultation with the Director of Human Resources.

### **Additional Resources:**

Understanding the laws surrounding Workplace Violence and Harassment:

<http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/wpvh/index.php>