

## **Policy: 02 Area: Health and Safety**

Board Approval: May 21, 2024

Last Revision: 2020

Scheduled Review Date: 2027

## **Background and Purpose**

The First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto has a duty to protect the health and safety of people participating in all areas of congregational life whether within the premises of 473 Oakwood Avenue, at an off-site location, or on an online platform. The purpose of this policy is to outline the board's commitment to strive to prevent incidents of harassment, sexual harassment, and violence. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health and Safety Policy, the Safe Steps policy, and the Congregational and Workplace Prevention Program for Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and Violence.

## **Definitions**

See Schedule A

## **Policy Statement**

First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto affirms the right of all people to be free and protected from incidents of harassment, sexual harassment, and violence. FirstU is committed to providing an environment in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity, and which is free from harassment and violence. Acts of harassment or violence against or by any employee, member, or friend of the congregation will not be condoned or tolerated.

## **Policy Description**

1. This policy, and the accompanying Congregational and Workplace Prevention Program for Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and Violence, is designed to comply with all applicable legislation and regulations. It applies to all areas of congregational life at 473 Oakwood, at off-site locations, and during online communications managed by FirstU.
2. Employees and congregational participants are encouraged to raise any concerns about harassment and/or violence, and to report any incidents or threats to a trusted member of the staff, the Executive Committee or the FirstU Board. There will be no negative consequences for a report made in good faith.
3. Procedures and processes for making a report are outlined in the Congregational and

Workplace Prevention Program for Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and Violence. All reports or complaints of incidents of harassment, sexual harassment, and/or violence will be responded to in a fair, transparent, and timely manner.

4. Any information provided about an incident or complaint will not be disclosed except as necessary for the safety of members, to protect the parties involved, to investigate the complaint, to take corrective action, or as otherwise may be required by law.
5. The Board, or its designate, will regularly conduct a risk assessment of official congregational activities at 473 Oakwood and at off-site locations to identify potential risks to health and safety. Measures to control or eliminate any identified risks will be instituted.
6. The Board, or its designate, will provide regular training to senior volunteers and employees on the Congregational and Workplace Prevention Program for Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and Violence.
7. Non-compliance with this policy could lead to disciplinary action, up to and including the termination of an individual's FirstU membership, volunteer relationship, or employment with FirstU.
8. This policy, and the accompanying Congregational and Workplace Prevention Program for Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and Violence is to be posted in a visible place at 473 Oakwood.

### **Accountability**

The Executive Committee is accountable to the Board for implementation of this policy.

### **Related documents and/or relevant legislation**

- FirstU Congregational and Workplace Prevention Program for Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and Violence
- FirstU Health and Safety Policy
- FirstU Health and Safety Procedures Manual
- FirstU Safe Steps Policy
- FirstU Safe Steps Program for FirstU Toronto Volunteers & Staff: Creating a Safe Environment for All
- Ontario Health and Safety Act
- Ontario Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act

## Schedule A - Definitions

**Child abuse:** Child abuse is physical and/or emotional, and includes neglect. (*Child, Youth and Family Services Act (2017)*)

**Complainant:** A person who has made a complaint about another individual who they believe committed an act of violence or harassment against them.

**Respondent:** A person whom another individual has accused of committing an act of violence or harassment

**Harassment, including workplace harassment:** Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against another that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Harassment may be a pattern of behaviour or more than one incident; however, a single significant incident may be considered as harassment.

**Workplace harassment is not:**

- A reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the workplace
- Differences of opinion or minor disagreements between co-workers would also not generally be considered workplace harassment.

**Sexual harassment, including workplace sexual harassment:** Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Sexual harassment may include making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the other person, which is known, or ought reasonably to be known that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome. Sexual harassment may be a pattern of behaviour or more than one incident; however, a single, significant incident may be considered as sexual harassment.

**Sexual Misconduct (Religious Professionals):** While sexual misconduct may take the form of sexual harassment, it involves the additional factor of inappropriate use of power or authority for sexual purposes. The Unitarian Universalist Ministerial Fellowship committee also refers to “inappropriate, unprofessional or unbecoming” conduct in its documents regarding clergy sexual misconduct. Examples include any behaviour defined within sexual harassment but may also extend to engaging in a sexual relationship with a staff member or parishioner.

**Violence, including workplace violence:** The exercise of physical force by a person against another, that causes or could cause physical injury to the other; an attempt to exercise physical force against another, that could cause physical injury to the other; or a statement or behaviour that is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the other that could cause physical injury to the other.

**Domestic Violence:** A person who has a personal relationship with a staff member - such as a spouse or former spouse, current or former intimate partner or family member - may physically harm, or attempt or threaten to physically harm, that person at work. In these situations, domestic violence is considered workplace violence and falls within the parameters of this policy and its related programs.