

# **Anti-Harassment Policy of The Presbytery of San Fernando**

**Adopted November 25, 2025**

1. Introduction: As the Church of Jesus Christ, love is the rule of our relationships.
  - a. Jesus said, “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets,” (Matt. 7:12), and “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35).
  - b. The Book of Order states, “The Church is to be a community of love, where sin is forgiven, reconciliation is accomplished, and the dividing walls of hostility are torn down.” (F-1.0301, “The Calling of the Church: the Church is the Body of Christ”)
  - c. Because we believe this, and because we seek to live it out in all aspects of our personal and corporate life, we believe that harassment in all its forms is incompatible with who we are as followers of Jesus.

2. Who is covered by this policy?

The Presbytery’s policy prohibiting harassment applies to Pastors, Commissioned Ruling Elder and Employees of the Presbytery. The Presbytery prohibits harassment, disrespectful or unprofessional conduct by any employee of the Presbytery, including supervisors, managers and co-workers. Training in this policy will be provided in accordance with State of California requirements.

3. What is harassment?

The Presbytery of San Fernando (hereafter referred to as ‘The Presbytery’) is committed to providing an environment free of harassment, discrimination, retaliation and disrespectful or other unprofessional conduct with a person who has or is perceived as having characteristics of personality, background or choice.

- a. Prohibitions

The Presbytery also prohibits discrimination, harassment, disrespectful or unprofessional conduct based on the justified perception that anyone has been subject to harassment or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having experienced discrimination, harassment, disrespectful or unprofessional conduct because of characteristics of personality, background or choice.

In addition, the Presbytery prohibits retaliation against individuals who raise complaints of discrimination or harassment or who participate in any investigations.

All such conduct violates Presbytery’s policy.

- b. Harassment Prevention

Prohibited harassment, disrespectful or unprofessional conduct includes, but is not

limited to, the following behavior:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations, comments, posts or messages;
  - Visual displays such as derogatory and/or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures;
  - Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching, intentionally blocking normal movement or interfering with work;
  - Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests or sexual advances as a condition of continued employment, or to avoid some other loss and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favors;
  - Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment discrimination, retaliation or other unprofessional conduct; and
  - Communication via electronic media of any type that includes any conduct that is prohibited by state and/or federal law or by Presbytery policy.
- c. Sexual harassment does not need to be motivated by sexual desire to be unlawful or to violate this policy. For example, hostile acts toward an employee because of their gender can amount to sexual harassment, regardless of whether the treatment is motivated by sexual desire.

Prohibited harassment is not just sexual harassment but harassment based on any protected category.

d. Non-Discrimination

The Presbytery is committed to compliance with all applicable laws providing equal employment opportunities. This commitment applies to all persons involved in Presbytery operations. The Presbytery prohibits unlawful discrimination against any job applicant, employee or unpaid intern by any employee of the Presbytery, including supervisors and coworkers.

Pay discrimination between employees of the opposite sex or between employees of another race or ethnicity performing substantially similar work, as defined by the California Fair Pay Act and federal law, is prohibited. Pay differentials may be valid in certain situations defined by law. Employees will not be retaliated against for inquiring about or discussing wages. However, the Presbytery is not obligated to disclose the wages of other employees.

e. Anti-Retaliation

The Presbytery will not retaliate against a member or employee for filing a complaint or participating in any workplace investigation or complaint process and will not tolerate or permit retaliation by management, employees or co-workers.

*f.* Reasonable Accommodation

Discrimination can also include failing to reasonably accommodate religious practices or qualified individuals with disabilities where the accommodation does not pose an undue hardship.

To comply with applicable laws ensuring equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability, the Presbytery will make reasonable accommodations for the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or an employee unless undue hardship would result.

Any job applicant or employee who requires an accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of the job should contact Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Fernando and discuss the need for an accommodation. The Presbytery will engage in an interactive process with the employee to identify possible accommodations, if any, that will help the applicant or employee perform the job.

An applicant, employee or unpaid intern who requests an accommodation should also contact the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Fernando and discuss the need for an accommodation. If the accommodation is reasonable and will not impose an undue hardship, the Presbytery will make the accommodation.

The Presbytery will not retaliate against you for requesting a reasonable accommodation and will not knowingly tolerate or permit retaliation by management, employees or co-workers.

4. How do we prevent harassment in the Church?

- a.* Jesus is our model for how we treat each other. That means we must begin by ourselves being aware of the potential harassment of others. One way is to ask ourselves before we speak or communicate, “will what I am about to say or write tend to build up the community or break down the community?” This does not preclude legitimate criticism; it does mean that when criticism is necessary, it must be done in genuine love and concern not only for the body as a whole but also for the persons involved. Jesus is our model for how we treat each other. Those in positions of power like pastors, ruling elders, and youth leaders are in a position of power, and their conduct, words and actions will be tested by Jesus’ standards.

5. Complaint Procedure:

- a.* Employees or contract workers who feel that they have been harassed or discriminated against, or who witness any harassment or discrimination by an employee, contract worker, customer, vendor or anyone else who does business with the Presbytery, should immediately report such conduct to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Fernando. Complaints may initially be oral, but must be written if the Complainant wishes to proceed to an investigation.

Please provide all known details of the incident or incidents, names of individual involved and names of any witnesses.

- b.* All supervisors or managers who receive any complaint of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, or who directly observe conduct that violates this policy, must immediately report the matter to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Fernando for potential investigation.
- c.* In response to every complaint, the Presbytery will conduct an investigation which may involve interviewing witnesses if warranted and, if improper conduct is found, the Presbytery will take appropriate corrective action.
- d.* It is a violation of this policy for anyone to attempt to discourage or prevent another from reporting discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.
- e.* All complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible. In addition, the Presbytery will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report unwelcome conduct to management or who cooperate in the investigations of such reports in accordance with this policy.
- f.* All employees must cooperate with all investigations.
- g.* To the extent that an employee or contract worker is not satisfied with the Presbytery's handling of a harassment or discrimination complaint, he or she may also contact the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Fernando to bring the matter to the Presbytery as a judicial complaint.
- h.* If any person believes that they have been the subject of harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct, bring your complaint to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Fernando as soon as possible after the incident. If assistance with your complaint, or if a person prefers to make a complaint in person, they should contact the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of San Fernando.
- i.* Complaints will be:
  - Responded to in a timely manner
  - Kept confidential to the extent possible
  - Investigated impartially by qualified personnel in a timely manner
  - Documented and tracked for reasonable progress
  - Given appropriate options for remedial action and resolution
  - Closed in a timely manner
- j.* If the Presbytery determines harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct has occurred, appropriate and effective corrective and remedial action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances involved.
- k.* Any employee determined by the Presbytery to have engaged in harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to, and including termination. Employees who engage in unlawful harassment can be held personally liable for the misconduct.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Standards of Ethical Conduct can be downloaded here: <https://pcusa.org/resource/standards-ethical-conduct>