



# Presbytery of Scioto Valley

## **PRESBYTERY OF SCIOTO VALLEY**

### **Anti-Harassment Policy and Procedure Statement**

Adopted by the Presbytery: November 18, 2025

### **Purpose and Statement**

It is the Presbytery of Scioto Valley's belief that God has created all people in God's own image and thus has made us equal in Christ (Genesis 1:26). The Church, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is given shape and life and is meant to reflect our relationship to one another and to God.

We firmly believe that God intends all human life to have worth and dignity in all relationships. Through these relationships we are bound to serve and to respect the dignity of every human being (F-1.0301). This respect and dignity afforded to all of God's creation is through the creation and maintenance of a safe environment within our community, free of harassment.

The Presbytery of Scioto Valley states its position that when harassment occurs, it is:

- an offense against the law of God;
- a dishonoring of the gospel of Jesus Christ;
- a serious breach of the fellowship which the Holy Spirit builds in the church;
- a violation of professional ethics;
- a misuse of the power of position or person;
- in many applicable circumstances, a violation of secular law; and
- a violation of the trust of a person seeking the ministry of the church.

### **Applicability**

This policy applies to staff, volunteers, and those serving on committees and commissions within the bounds of the Presbytery of Scioto Valley.

This policy may serve as a model for churches within the presbytery who are also required to have an anti-harassment policy.

## Anti-Harassment Policy and Procedure Statement

The Presbytery, in conjunction with existing policies and procedures and in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local anti-discrimination and harassment laws and regulations, enforces this Policy in accordance with the following definitions and guidelines.

### Definitions

**Verbal Harassment:** Harassment established by a pattern of unwelcome or unwanted spoken or written comments, including insults, jokes, slurs, false or misleading information, and threats.

**Nonverbal Harassment:** Distribution, display, or discussion of graphic material that ridicules, denigrates, insults, or belittles individuals or groups.

**Electronic Harassment:** The use of electronic communication to harass a person or group, including email, blogs, social networking websites, online games, forums, instant messaging, Zoom or virtual conferencing platforms, text messaging, and mobile phone pictures or videos.

**Retaliation:** Any hardship, loss of benefit, or penalty imposed on any person in response to filing or responding to a bona fide complaint of discrimination or harassment.

### Presbytery Commitments

In our efforts to create a church where all persons are treated with respect and dignity, the Presbytery of Scioto Valley commits to:

- Provide easy access to the Ethical Standards document of the PC(USA) by publishing it on the presbytery website.
- Acknowledge and thoroughly investigate all allegations of harassment using Book of Order defined processes.
- Strive to create a presbytery where harassment of all kinds is not tolerated or accepted, and where all people of God are welcome and safe.

### Formal Complaints

The Presbytery will not ignore allegations of harassment.

Because of the serious nature of any allegation of harassment, any or all formal procedures of the Presbytery and the Book of Order may be invoked.

## **Anti-Harassment Policy and Procedure Statement**

A written statement submitted in accordance with D-7.01 and received by any employee or officer of the Presbytery must be referred immediately to the Stated Clerk for processing.

Procedures for filed complaints shall be maintained on the presbytery website.

### **Policy Review**

The Council shall review this Policy and Procedure Statement annually for compliance with constitutional requirements of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and applicable laws of the State of Ohio and recommend any necessary revisions to the Presbytery for approval.

**SEE APPENDICES**

### Appendix A — Sample Actions that Describe Harassment

Sample actions of prohibited conduct may include:

- Spreading malicious rumors, gossip, or innuendo;
- Excluding or isolating someone socially;
- Intimidating a person;
- Undermining or deliberately impeding a person's work;
- Physical abuse or threats of abuse;
- Removing areas of responsibility without cause;
- Establishing impossible deadlines;
- Withholding necessary information;
- Making offensive jokes or comments;
- Intruding on privacy by pestering, spying, or stalking;
- Assigning unreasonable duties or workloads;
- Yelling or using profanity;
- Criticizing a person persistently or constantly;
- Belittling opinions;
- Tampering with personal belongings or work equipment;
- Using racist slang, phrases, or nicknames;
- Making offensive references to disability;
- Sharing inappropriate images or electronic communications;
- Making derogatory age-related comments; and
- Harassing communications through social media, email, text messaging, or other electronic means.

**Appendix B — Steps to Prevent Harassment**

1. Create a Safe Environment
  - a. Be vocal regarding the seriousness of harassment prevention.
  - b. Establish and maintain harassment policies and awareness training.
  
2. Keep a Safe Environment
  - a. Practice accountability and remain aware of behavioral changes.
  - b. Ensure insurance coverage for employment-related claims.
  - c. Address allegations using Book of Order procedures.
  
3. Annual Requirement
  - a. Review harassment prevention during officer training.
  - b. Encourage congregations to adopt and annually review similar policies.