

# **Policy for the Prevention of Psychological Harassment in the Workplace**

**Septembrer 2025**

This policy, along with the diocesan “Protocol for Managing Allegation of Breaches of the Code of Ethics and Conduct, Including Instances of Workplace Harrassment” meet the requirements of article 89.19 of Québec’s *Act Respecting Labour Standards*. In this matter, they replace the Protocol for Safeguarding Against Psychological Harrasment” that had been established in our archdiocese on November 15 2018. They apply to relationships with all salaried employees of the archdiocesan corporation and the *fabriques* of the archdiocese. Moreover, they frame relationships with the many volunteers who are involved in our parishes.

By decree of 1 September 2025, each *fabrique* assembly of the archdiocese is called upon to study and adopt by resolution both this prevention policy and the treatment protocol as its own *fabrique* regulations and to implement them. A copy of its resolution will be sent to the Chancery Office.

## **I. Preliminary considerations**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Gospel invites us to be peacemakers, to hunger and thirst for justice, to practice mercy and forgiveness. We therefore need to foster collaboration, respect and harmony for all in our workplaces, at both diocesan and parish level. Unfortunately, psychological, physical and sexual violence can occur in these environments. This violence contradicts the teachings of Jesus and undermines the credibility of the Christian community's witness. Consequently, the leaders of these communities - the diocesan team, mandated

parish teams and *fabrique* assemblies - are firmly committed to preventing it and, when it occurs, to putting a stop to it. The prevention policy and the protocol for managing allegations are important tools in achieving this vision.

#### **DEFINITION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HARRASSMENT**

Québec's *Act Respecting Labour Standards* defines workplace harassment as:

*Any vexatious behaviour*

- *in the form of repeated conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures,*
- *that is hostile or unwanted,*
- *that affects an employee's dignity or psychological or physical integrity*
- *and that results in a harmful work environment for the employee.*

*For greater certainty, psychological harassment includes such behaviour in the form of such verbal comments, actions or gestures of a sexual nature.*

*A single serious incidence of such behaviour that has a lasting harmful effect on an employee may also constitute psychological harassment.<sup>1</sup>*

Here are some examples of psychological harassment:

- Preventing someone from expressing themselves;
- Isolating them;
- Bringing them into disrepute
- Discrediting them;
- Threatening and assaulting them;
- Destabilising them.

The following situations do not constitute psychological harassment:

- The normal exercise of management rights
- Labour disputes that are subject to sound management;
- Work-related stress;
- Difficult working conditions and work constraints.

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<sup>1</sup> *An Act Respecting Labour Standards*, 81,18

## GLOSSARY

Please consult the document « Protocol for Managing Allegation of Breaches of the Code of Ethics and Conduct, Including Instances of Workplace Harrassment ».

## II. Policy components

### 1. RANGE OF APPLICATION

This policy applies to all paid staff and volunteers of the Archdiocese of Gatineau and its *fabriques*, at all hierarchical levels, particularly in the following places and contexts:

- workplaces, including teleworkplaces, where applicable;
- any other place where people are likely to be in the course of their employment (e.g. common areas on the employer's premises, during meetings, training, travel);
- during work-related social activities.

This policy also covers communications transmitted or received by any means, technological or otherwise, in a work context (e.g. social media, e-mail, text messages, posters, letters).

### 2. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Preventing harassment is an essential task for archdiocesan and church leaders. In this way, they protect their employees and volunteers, while protecting themselves from any recourse. By making a clear commitment to prevention, they are demonstrating that they have never consented to violence, harassment or discrimination. They also show that they have acted with all due diligence to combat it and that, if this has not proved sufficient, they have taken all measures to resolve the situation.

The purpose of this policy is to guarantee conditions conducive to respect for the integrity of the person and equality among all persons in all the activities of the various entities that are part of the Archdiocese of Gatineau. Compliance with this policy is a sign of the collective will not to tolerate any form or manifestation of psychological harassment or violence of a sexual nature in our workplaces.

The protocol that accompanies this policy is an essential working tool for dealing with any complaint in this area. The dissemination and implementation of the policy and the protocol are therefore essential and help to make each environment accountable.

The implementation of this policy is based on:

- unconditional respect for the physical, psychological, moral and spiritual integrity of the individual;
- tolerance of difference as an asset, not a threat;
- justice and equity;
- solidarity, mutual support and courtesy;
- the five values of the Code of Ethics and Conduct of the Archdiocese of Gatineau:
  - o respect for human dignity
  - o autonomy and self-determination,
  - o personal safety
  - o confidentiality and
  - o integrity and loyalty

### **3. ROLES AND RESPONSABILITIES**

**The archbishop:**

- on the recommendation of the Diocesan Council for Safe Environments, approves the policy and protocol and encourages their implementation throughout the diocese;
- appoints the Safe Environment Co-ordinator;
- appoints the members of the Allegations Management Team;
- more specifically, appoints the diocesan respondent for allegations of psychological harassment;

**The Episcopal council (for the archdiocese) and the *Fabrique* assemblies (for the parishes)**

- maintain a working environment that fosters personal dignity, self-esteem and integrity;
- Inform the members of its staff and all those who contribute to its mission about this policy; and
- ensure that all new employees are aware of the existence and application of this policy.

**Staff, both salaried and volunteer:**

It is the responsibility of all staff to behave in such a way as to maintain a workplace free from psychological or sexual harassment. Staff members :

- contribute to maintaining a harassment-free workplace by adhering to the Code of Ethics and Conduct of the Archdiocese of Gatineau;
- respect people in their work;
- participate in the mechanisms put in place by the employer to prevent and put a stop to harassment;
- report any situation involving harassment to their local leaders as soon as possible.

**The coordinator of training for safe environments:**

- prepares the training procedures and resources needed to develop the prevention of psychological harassment;
- collaborates with the workplace in the delivery of these initiatives and resources.

**4. PROGRAM FOR THE PREVENTION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The Archdiocese of Gatineau and its *fabriques* are committed to taking reasonable steps to provide a work environment free of any form of harassment in order to protect the dignity as well as the psychological and physical integrity of individuals. To this end, they will put in place measures to identify, control and eliminate the risks of psychological or sexual harassment. With the support of the coordinator of training for safe environment, they :

- a) distribute this policy in such a way as to make it accessible to all its staff by:
  - publishing it on the diocesan website,
  - posting it in a place accessible to all staff
  - with a copy to each salaried employee;
- b) maintain continuous vigilance with regard to risks and risk factors that could lead to situations of harassment, in particular the situations mentioned in Appendix 1 of this policy;
- c) ensure that all persons understand and comply with the policy;
- d) promote the archdiocesan Code of Ethics and Conduct by:
  - publishing it on the diocesan website;
  - posting it in a place accessible to all staff;
  - with a copy to each salaried employee;
- e) regularly inform staff on the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in preventing harassment, particularly at social events organised by the employer;

- f) set in place a training and awareness programme for staff and for those designated to receive and deal with allegations, which includes the following elements:
  - annual presentations of the policy in all zones of the archdiocese;
  - regular training sessions for parish delegates for safe environments;
  - workshops during the annual training for new *fabrique* members and occasional meetings of parish secretaries;
  - upon request, accompanying workplaces to help them reinforce protection against harrassment;
  - occasional updates at staff meetings;
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- g) consulting staff about specific situations that might create conditions leading to harrassment;
- h) meeting those who leave employment with a parish or the diocese to understand the motivations for their decision.