

## ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY (NON-SEXUAL)

### Shelter Island Presbyterian Church, New York

It is our policy that employees and others acting on Shelter Island Presbyterian Church's behalf are entitled to respectful treatment in the workplace and the church. Being respected means being treated honestly and professionally, with your unique talents and perspectives valued. A respectful workplace/church is about more than compliance with the law. It is an environment that is free of inappropriate behavior of all kinds. We are committed to providing a workplace/church environment in which the dignity of every individual is respected. Each of us should understand that incidents of harassment and inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated at Shelter Island Presbyterian Church.

**Harassing Conduct:** Harassment is unwelcome conduct toward an individual because of and not limited to his or her race, color, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability, or any other legally protected status, when the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment that negatively detracts from the purpose and mission of Shelter Island Presbyterian Church. Examples of harassment that may violate the law and will violate this policy include:

- Oral or written communications that contain offensive name-calling, jokes, slurs, negative stereotyping, heckling, or threats of any kind. This includes but not limited to comments or jokes that are distasteful or targeted at individuals or groups based on race, color, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability, or any other legally protected status.
- Nonverbal conduct, such as staring, leering and giving inappropriate gifts.
- Physical conduct, such as assault or unwanted touching.
- Visual images, such as derogatory or offensive pictures, cartoons, drawings or gestures. Such prohibited images include those in hard copy or electronic form.

**Inappropriate Behavior:** Our goal is to have a work environment where we all treat each other respectfully and professionally. **Any unprofessional or disrespectful behavior, even if it does not rise to the level of “harassment,” interferes with that goal and will not be tolerated.** Shelter Island Presbyterian Church reserves the right to respond to inappropriate behavior even where no one has complained or indicated they have been offended.

**Presbyterian Church Code of Conduct: Action Protocols:** This Code of Conduct applies to all church members, officers, staff, and volunteers. Violations will be addressed promptly and consistently, guided by Scripture and the Book of Order.

**I. Infringements (Involvement of the Pastor and Session):** An “Infringement” denotes minor or first-time violations of the Code that do not immediately threaten safety, well-being, or severe reputational harm. This includes, but is not limited to, isolated instances of:

- Unwelcome or inappropriate remarks (non-sexual).
- Disrespectful or gossiping speech.
- Minor breaches of confidentiality (non-sensitive information).
- Failure to adhere to minor procedural guidelines.

### **Actions for Infringements:**

1. **Verbal Reprimand:** Direct conversation addressing the violation, clarifying expectations, and documenting the interaction.
2. **Written Warning:** Formal written notice detailing the violation, expected corrective action, and potential escalation for future infractions.
3. **Mandatory Education/Training:** Requirement to complete specific training on church policies, harassment prevention, or ethical conduct.
4. **Temporary Restriction/Supervision:** Limited or supervised participation in specific church activities or roles.

## **II. Severe Violations (Involvement of the Pastor, Session and a representative of the Presbytery with legal background)**

A "Severe Violation" signifies conduct that poses immediate harm, significant reputational damage, or repeated Infringements. This specifically includes, but is not limited to:

- **Any form of Sexual Harassment or Sexual Misconduct:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, verbal/physical conduct of a sexual nature, or misuse of power/position for sexual gain. This includes but is not limited to child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and exploitation of vulnerable adults.
- **Discrimination:** Unlawful discrimination based on protected characteristics.
- **Retaliation:** Adverse action against individuals reporting misconduct or participating in investigations.
- **Abuse (Physical, Emotional, Spiritual):** Intentional harm or exploitation of another person.
- **Major Breaches of Confidentiality:** Disclosure of sensitive personal or organizational information.
- **Theft or Fraud:** Misappropriation of church funds or resources.
- **Persistent Non-Compliance:** Repeated Infringements after corrective actions.
- **Criminal Activity:** Any act deemed criminal under civil law.

### **Actions for Severe Violations:**

1. **Immediate Suspension:** Removal from all church duties, roles, and activities pending investigation.
2. **Formal Investigation:** Thorough, impartial inquiry, including interviews and evidence review, ensuring due process.
3. **Termination/Exclusion:** Permanent removal from church employment, volunteer roles, or membership, as appropriate.
4. **Referral to Civil Authorities:** Mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or other criminal acts to law enforcement.
5. **Professional Reporting:** Notification of relevant professional licensing bodies, if applicable.
6. **Legal Action:** Pursuit of civil or criminal charges where warranted.
7. **Restorative Practices:** Where appropriate and safe for all parties, exploring pathways for reconciliation or healing in alignment with Christian principles, but never at the expense of accountability or safety.

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### **General Provisions:**

- **Reporting:** All alleged violations should be reported immediately. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible, consistent with legal obligations and the need for a thorough investigation.
- **No Retaliation:** Retaliation against anyone for reporting in good faith or participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited and will be treated as a Severe Violation.
- **Documentation:** All reports, investigations, and actions taken will be thoroughly documented.
- **Pastoral Care:** Support and care will be offered to all parties involved, while upholding the integrity of the process.

**How to Report a Violation:** Do not assume that Shelter Island Presbyterian Church is aware of the problem. It is your responsibility to bring your complaints and concerns to our attention so that we can help resolve them. Immediately report suspected violations of this policy to the Pastor and/or the Clerk of Session.

### **Investigation and Response**

If you report a complaint of harassment or inappropriate behavior, we will investigate your concerns. Where there has been a violation of policy, we will take appropriate action to try to avoid future violations. In appropriate cases, disciplinary action (up to and including termination of employment or assigned responsibility) will be taken against those violating the Anti-Harassment Policy. We will inform parties about the status of reviewing their complaints. To respect the privacy and confidentiality of all people involved, we might not share specific details of the discipline or other action taken.

### **Session's Responsibility**

The Session, ruling and teaching elders are responsible for ensuring that Shelter Island Presbyterian provides a workplace/church free of harassment and inappropriate behavior and that complaints are handled promptly and effectively. The Session is responsible for *"leading the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love and witness"* BOO G 3:01

### **Retaliation is Prohibited**

This policy strictly prohibits any retaliation against anyone who reports a concern about harassment or other inappropriate behavior.

Approved by the Session on August 19, 2025

Signatures. \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Session Pastor

THIS POLICY WAS adapted to the needs of the Shelter Island Presbyterian Church from a sample document which was:

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