



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

BRITISH UNION CONFERENCE
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KINDLY NOTE THAT WE ARE AWAITING NEW GRIEVANCE & DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES. THE APPENDICES WILL BE UPDATED AS SOON AS THESE ARE APPROVED.

POLICY ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL HARASSMENT

July 2009

British Union Conference

POLICY ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL HARASSMENT

HOW TO USE THIS POLICY

This policy has been arranged to make it easy for you to use. You should begin by reading the introduction which explains why the policy is important, what is meant by some key words, and what it hopes to achieve. You can then go directly to the section that applies most closely to your own context to find out what to do if there is a domestic violence or sexual harassment complaint and where you can go to get help.

Extra material is placed in the appendices so you can become more aware of the issues addressed from both a psychological and legislative perspectives.

The British Union Conference (BUC) has taken this approach in this policy to help you to apply the principles effectively in your local setting.

POLICY STRUCTURE

1. Introduction.
2. Complaints concerning members and officers of the local church.
3. Complaints concerning employees of the church.

APPENDICES

1. Understanding Sexual Harassment.
2. Understanding Domestic Violence.
3. Local Church Board Guidelines.
4. The Criteria for and Work of Designated Officers for Employee Related Cases.
5. Useful Resources.
6. Discipline and Dismissal Policy for BUC Employees.
7. Grievance Policy for BUC Employees.
8. Guidance notes on Harassment for Employees.
9. Relevant Legislation.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Beliefs

The Seventh-day Adventist Church places great importance upon family life and affirms the dignity and worth of each human being. It decries all forms of physical, spiritual, economic, sexual, emotional and physical abuse, including domestic violence. Such behaviour is intimidating, hostile and/or offensive and undermines our biblical and moral values and destroys the trust between people in our community.

Domestic violence and sexual harassment are not new. There are various accounts of abuse recorded in the Scriptures and in each case we find the family and close relatives of the victim taking action in order to appease the feelings of both themselves and the wounded.

The BUC subscribes to the following statement issued by the General Conference on Family Violence:

“The Bible clearly indicates that the distinguishing mark of Christian believers is the quality of their human relationships in the church and in the family. It is in the spirit of Christ to love and accept, to seek to affirm and build others up, rather than to abuse or tear one another down. There is no room among Christ’s followers for tyrannical control and the abuse of power or authority. Motivated by their love for Christ, His disciples are called to show respect and concern for the welfare of others, to accept males and females as equals, and to acknowledge that every person has a right to respect and dignity. Failure to relate to others in this way violates their personhood and devalues human beings created and redeemed by God.”

The church believes that such abusive behaviour is incompatible with Christianity and any profession of commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist faith. Therefore, it is inconceivable that individuals who, despite guidance and support, continue to choose to practise such behaviour, should be allowed to continue to represent the church in any capacity.

1.2 Why Have a Policy?

The church seeks to create an environment where we can all feel safe from any form of abuse and will take steps to prevent incidents of abuse and harassment from occurring. We are all responsible for providing Christ-like support for those affected.

The British Union Conference (BUC) aims to encourage reconciliation and restoration, including the adoption of positive behaviours, by providing loving purposeful support and direction. However, this is no excuse for not handling the situation or for showing indifference to the consequences of such behaviour. When domestic violence and sexual harassment occur within the church it affects not just the families but also the congregation. Similarly, if it occurs in a Seventh-day Adventist workplace it can affect the wider work environment.

In support of the above, this policy focuses specifically on domestic violence and sexual harassment.

In recognition of the global extent of these problems and the serious long-term effects upon the abused, the abuser, and their families, Seventh-day Adventists must respond to domestic violence and sexual harassment within the home, its places of employment and the church. To remain indifferent and unresponsive is to condone, perpetuate, and potentially extend such behaviour.

1.3 Policy Scope

The BUC is specifically concerned whenever these actions are carried out in Seventh-day Adventist workplaces, churches, during community activities, in the home, or within the families of pastors, ministerial employees, Bible workers, lay leaders and members.

This policy applies to pastors, ministerial employees, bible workers, elders, departmental leaders and members.

1.4 What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours or other verbal, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment also involves indecent remarks or comments about one's appearance and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature affecting an individual's employment status.

Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

You can read more about sexual harassment in Appendix 1.

1.5 What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is an assault of any kind committed by one or more persons against another within the home. This can be any incident of threatening behaviour between individuals within the home or between family members. The assault can be verbal, physical, emotional, spiritual, economic, social, or sexual, as well as active or passive neglect.

Whatever form it takes, domestic violence is rarely a one-off incident. More usually it is a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which the abuser(s) seeks power over their victim(s).

You can read more about domestic violence in Appendix 2.

1.6 Dealing with Those Affected

Victims may be afraid to report incidents and so may suffer in silence. It is important that those engaging with the victim or abuser provide a confidential and supportive environment. The church wishes to help those involved to access the support available to them both within the church and beyond. This is so that they can address the situation and move on with their lives.

Likewise members or visitors who are aware of instances of abuse should also be able to raise such issues in a confidential and supportive environment. The purpose of this policy is to help all of those affected through restoration and reconciliation whilst maintaining the church's principles and policies.

2. COMPLAINTS CONCERNING MEMBERS AND OFFICERS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

2.1 Introduction

The role of the church in these matters must be clear to all those involved. The church is concerned that the way its members and officers behave reflects its beliefs as described in Section One of this policy. The church promotes harmonious, mutually respectful behaviours within family life and between individuals.

The church, including the local church board, should not seek to replace, undermine or conflict with the legal processes that are in place for the resolution of complaints.

Complaints may come to the church board's attention in many ways and may vary in nature and severity. Nonetheless all complaints should be managed in the same way regardless of who is placing the complaint or is being complained about. This is to ensure fairness and thoroughness.

The only exception to this is where the complaint concerns the actions of an employee of the church. In this case their immediate supervisor will need to be informed and the local church board should ensure that the incident is appropriately documented and forwarded to them. The employing organization i.e. the Conference, Mission or Union office, as appropriate, will then investigate and resolve the complaint according to the guidelines for employees in this policy.

This is necessary so that the church can act as a responsible employer in accordance with employment law. If the local congregation has employed someone directly, for example the church cleaner, and they are involved in a complaint then it will fall to the local church as their employer to progress the complaint using the guidelines for employees. The local church board can contact their Conference or Mission office for advice as needed in these cases.

Those affected are encouraged to participate, as they are able, and with support if needed, in the first stage which seeks to make it clear to the perpetrator that the behaviour complained of is undesired. A flow chart of the complaint management process is at the end of this section.

2.2 Stage One – The Incident

Domestic Violence

Where domestic violence has occurred for the first time, it is advisable for the family to openly discuss the situation, seek to identify causes without blame and agree on the way forward. Victims and families may need support in dealing with these situations. The Family Ministries and Ministerial Association Departments at Union, Mission and Conference level provide a family counselling service to help families resolve these situations. Contact numbers for these departments and external local support help lines can be found in Appendix 5. The victim may choose to have a family member or responsible person with them when they inform the perpetrator that their abusive actions are unacceptable.

Sexual Harassment

Where sexual harassment has occurred for the first time it is advisable for the victim to make known to the perpetrator that such conduct is offensive and request that the action does not take place again.

This first step enables the individual when possible to follow the biblical counsel, of speaking with the individual concerned first.

2.3 Stage Two – The Complaint

If the victim reports another incident or wishes the initial incident to be progressed as a complaint by the church the following steps should be taken.

1. The Bible recommends that if the first one to one approach fails then two or three people from the church should meet with the alleged perpetrator to provide guidance and encouragement to change. In support of this the church recommends that the victim should approach trusted individuals such as their Pastor or Elders and discuss the matter with them. They will then look into the matter, with the assistance of the Designated Officer if needed, and counsel the individuals concerned. If this intervention results in a renewing of relationships with each other and Christ, including ending the undesired behaviour, then the matter will be laid to rest. If the alleged perpetrator continues to behave in a way that is contrary to the standards required of the disciples of Christ, then the matter must be referred to the church board for action.
2. The complainant may prefer to discuss their complaint with a member of their conference/mission Family Ministries/Women's Ministries team instead. In this case a written complaint should be submitted to the church board and the Designated Officer will use this as the basis for their investigation.

The Designated Officer should not be closely connected to those involved. Where there are concerns of propriety or safety the designated person may request that the board selects a second person of suitable character to work with them throughout the case.

2.4 Work of the Designated Officer

The Designated Officer will investigate the complaint. This means speaking to all the parties concerned including any witnesses. Upon completion the Designated Officer should present to the board or pastor and elders a concise and impartial report and answer to questions raised. Appendix 4 describes the selection criteria for, and work of, the Designated Officer and provides additional guidance for local church boards.

2.5 The Church Board's Ruling

The board must communicate its decision and the reason for it to those concerned. Regardless of the decision made, the board must ensure the outcome is communicated promptly, sensitively and privately to those concerned. As is normal practice, this may be done by the pastor or an elder provided neither is associated or implicated in the case in anyway.

If the victim or perpetrator wishes to make further representation directly to the board, because they feel that they have been misrepresented or have something new to add, they should be offered a chance to do so. Alternatively, they may prefer to explain their concerns through the Designated Officer or in writing through her/him. Any additional representation must be heard and the board's response communicated promptly.

As with any potential disciplinary church matter there are a number of possible outcomes. For example:

1. The complaint is valid and indicates a breach of the behaviours expected of church members.
2. The complaint is truthful but does not describe behaviour which falls short of church standards.
3. The complaint is false and there is reason to believe the board has been misled.

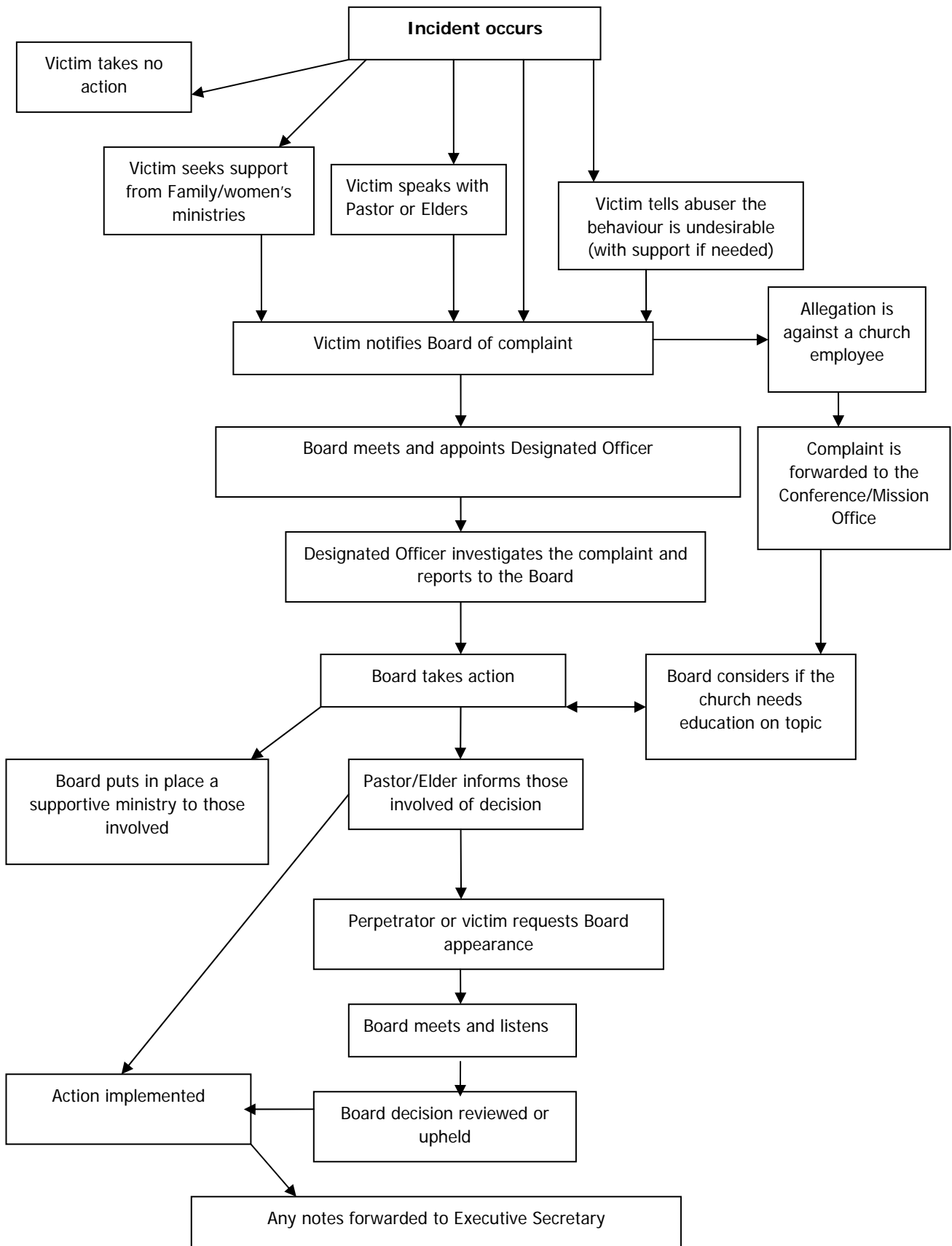
It is for the board to determine the most appropriate way to uphold the principles of the church whilst assisting those involved in understanding and embracing appropriate behaviours. Nonetheless there may be occasions

when the behaviour/incident is such that the membership or officer status of the individual may have to be reviewed. The church supports the right of all individuals to submit complaints. However, due to the serious effect such an investigation and any resulting action may have on the life and faith of an individual, anyone who knowingly submits an unfounded complaint or lies to the church board may find themselves the subject of board scrutiny and action.

The church board should also consider how best to enable and support those concerned in building their relationship with Christ and in Christ with each other. The board's minutes should refer to the action taken and not the details of the complaint and should be managed in accordance with the BUC Data Protection policy.

2.6 Resulting Documentation

Once the complaint procedure is complete any relevant documents from the board's action, such as interview notes or reports should be forwarded to the executive secretary at the conference or mission office for secure storage. This removes from the local church the burden of secure filing or transfer of documents between officers over the years whilst ensuring the retention of records in case of litigation. The executive secretary will initiate the secure destruction of any forwarded material at the appropriate time.



3. COMPLAINTS CONCERNING EMPLOYEES OF THE CHURCH

3.1 The Employing Organization's Role

The role of the employing organization in these matters must be clear in the mind of all those involved. The church is concerned that the behaviours of its members, officers and employees reflect its beliefs as described in Section One of this policy. Therefore it promotes harmonious, mutually respectful behaviours within family life, and between individuals at church and at work.

However, as an employer, it also seeks to conform to employment legislation and best practice as this does not conflict with its beliefs. In no way does the church seek to replace, undermine or conflict with the legal processes that are in place for the resolution of complaints. Its role is to develop and implement policies and practices that ensure compliance within the employing organization.

This includes the management of complaints, support of those affected and when necessary to challenge failure to conform through policy review, educational measures and, on an individual level, the application of disciplinary processes. The involvement of the church in dispute processes at local church level is therefore a separate activity and under a different governance framework to that of the church as an employer.

Specifically as a church it encourages member and local church participation, involvement and open two way communication. It avoids closed decision making or secrecy. However, as an employer, it must provide a confidential and consistent employment experience and so can only engage with the membership on generic issues of policy, but not on individual cases.

3.2 The Work Environment

The BUC recognises its responsibility as an employer to maintain a working environment that is free from abuse of any kind. All staff are entitled to a working environment which respects their personal dignity and which is free from abusive conduct. It will endeavour to achieve this by creating a culture of mutual respect and making known to employees that such behaviour will not be tolerated.

Specifically the BUC is committed to safeguarding its members and others in the community from sexual harassment or domestic violence carried out by church employees regardless of their office. Such behaviour undermines the churches beliefs, standing in the community, and legislation. Therefore breaches of this policy will be considered a disciplinary offence and incidents will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

The BUC encourages those who are aware of these instances to write to the Administration or Designated Officer at the Mission, Conference or Union level as appropriate, without fear of reprisal. Such complaints will be taken seriously.

3.3 Zero Tolerance

The BUC upholds a zero tolerance attitude towards domestic violence and sexual harassment among its employees; and will provide support to the victims of such behaviour. As stated in Section One of this policy the church believes that such behaviour is incompatible with Christianity and any profession of commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist faith. It is inconceivable that individuals who choose to practise such behaviour should be allowed to continue to represent the church in any capacity. Therefore employees who following full investigation are found by a Disciplinary Hearing to have breached this policy will be guilty of gross misconduct and will be subject to disciplinary action which may include dismissal.

The BUC is determined to help create an environment of freedom from recrimination for all victims of domestic violence and sexual harassment.

The BUC demonstrates its intolerance to these types of behaviour by:

1. Publication of The Policy;
2. Developing appropriate procedures for handling such misconduct;
3. Informing the church community of their right to report incidents.

Particular importance is placed on these behaviours within the families of paid leaders regardless of where they work. These individuals hold roles that proclaim and model the church's beliefs to those around them. Due to their standing in their church and/or their work community there may be a tendency to dismiss or disbelieve the victim on account of the abuser's standing. This should be resisted for, as with any other complaint or misconduct, full investigation and resolution is necessary.

This policy describes the actions that will be taken when such cases come to light.

3.4 Prevention

In order to prevent inappropriate conduct in the workplace and its churches, the BUC shall:

1. Seek to include adherence to The Policy within its employment contracts;
2. Endeavour to maintain a working environment and local church setting free of harassment of any type;
3. Provide support for victims of domestic violence and sexual harassment in the form of counselling and mediation;
4. Challenge perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual harassment who seek to justify or cover up their behaviour;
5. Extend the opportunity for reconciliation to perpetrators who openly demonstrate changed attitudes and behaviour;
6. Provide workshops for paid and lay leaders on 'Safeguarding Against Allegations', in order to foster and maintain healthy relationships thereby reducing the factors contributing towards domestic violence and sexual harassment; Ensure employees have access to the Harassment procedure at Appendix 8
7. Include in the induction and ongoing training of newly appointed pastors and elected department leaders, the importance of exemplifying Christ-like behaviour. This will help to avoid conflict contrary to their Christian way of life;
8. Ensure that each paid and lay leader and their spouse has access to a copy of The Policy and complaint procedure;
9. Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the policy;
10. Identify the Designated Officers to whom complaints of domestic violence and sexual harassment can be made.

3.5 Challenging Incidents

The church recognises that individuals may wish to discuss the incident with the alleged perpetrator before making a formal complaint, in order to make it clear that the behaviour is undesired. However, the church does not require this before a complaint may be made.

3.6 Formal Complaints

The BUC views domestic violence and sexual harassment as very serious. Where a complaint under the grievance or harassment policies brings to light breaches of this policy, then the disciplinary policy of the employing organization will be applied. The following notes are supportive to the Disciplinary Policy and do not replace them in any way. If the Disciplinary and Dismissal Policy changes then this document is superseded by that change and so individuals applying this policy should ensure they have the current version.

The Harassment Policy and the Grievance Policy both explain the way in which employees may raise complaints. Employees may opt to use either and should be issued with both. If the Harassment Policy is not mentioned then all complaints from church employees regarding the conduct of other employees, members of the church or the public will be treated as grievances under the Grievance Policy at Appendix 7.

All complaints will be treated as confidential and must be made in writing. The Designated Officer will be appointed to conduct any investigation required and ongoing support should be made available.

3.7 Third Party Complaints (Whistle-Blowers)

Complaints may be received through the local church, direct from the alleged victim, or from concerned third parties. All complaints must be in writing.

Anyone who witnesses an incident of domestic violence or sexual harassment can make a complaint to the designated officer of the employing organization, in confidence and without fear of recrimination. If the complainant is another employee it should be clear whether they wish this to be treated as a grievance. If so they should put the complaint in writing in accordance with the Grievance Policy. It should then be investigated and managed as such to resolve their complaint. If misconduct on the part of an employee came to light as the result of a grievance, it would trigger the disciplinary process.

3.8 Witnesses

The designated officer can also interview any witness as directed by the complainant or the person accused. The individual's fear of recrimination must be addressed; however, the complaints and/or evidences can only be accepted if they are provided in writing.

However the complainant and witnesses should be made aware that if the complaint is followed through to the Disciplinary Hearing and Tribunal Stage then it is possible that the person complained of may see the complaint. This is also true of any interview notes made. This is necessary so that the alleged perpetrator can understand and answer any allegations against them and is considered an essential element of a fair legal process.

3.9 The Investigation

In view of the special nature of these complaints the employing organization will identify designated persons, who will investigate the complaint and provide a report to the line manager. The characteristics of, and work required by a Designated Officer is explained in Appendix 4. The investigation should be prompt and discreet. The alleged perpetrator can be suspended or moved to other duties whilst the investigation is underway. Support for both the victim and the person accused should be arranged by the Designated Officer. If the police are involved in the complaint then the Designated Officer will notify The Administration and will be the liaison point. Any information or advice received from the police will form part of their report unless immediate action by the employing organization is required. In these cases the Designated Officer must alert the Executive Secretary to this immediately.

When using information received from whistle-blowers, witnesses, the complainant or alleged perpetrator the designated officer carrying out the investigation must be guided by the facts only and not perceptions or suppositions.

If there are insufficient or no grounds the accused and the complainant will be informed that this is the case by the line manager. In these cases the line manager will put in place an ongoing supportive ministry for those involved if required as the work of the Designated Officer is now complete. This ministry should aim to assist both those making the complaint and those having a complaint made against them to move beyond this fact and be restored and reconciled.

In these situations if it is necessary because of the situation the line manager will work with the employee to develop a plan to ensure that the local church or work environment is not negatively affected by this incident and any learning points are assimilated.

3.10 The Disciplinary Committee

The content of the investigation report will determine whether there are sufficient grounds for a disciplinary hearing. This judgement will be made by a member of The Administration. If there are grounds, a Disciplinary Committee will be called and the employee will receive an invitation to attend. They will have a right to be accompanied as stated in the Disciplinary Policy and will also be given a copy of the complaint.

As in all disciplinary cases a right of appeal exists. It should also be noted that, just as at local church level, the outcome may be varied. In severe or persistent cases the Disciplinary Committee may need to consider the

implications for the membership status of the employee also. In the case of those in spiritual leadership positions this would have an obvious effect upon their ability to continue to serve the church in their current capacity. In all cases the award issued by the Disciplinary Committee will take into account the role of the offender, the severity of the incident and any current disciplinary awards for similar offences. The complainant, local church or workplace does not have a right to be notified of the outcome of the Disciplinary hearing as this is personal to the employee. They will however have been notified if their complaint was upheld or not.

In all cases where continued employment is recommended, the Disciplinary Committee will consider how to assist the individual grow beyond the behaviour and attitudes complained of as part of their judgement. If the nature of the incident indicates dismissal then this responsibility will fall to the Ministerial Director who will be able to support the employee spiritually after they have left the organization while they become settled in a local church.

Where employees are retained the records of this incident should be kept for the time indicated by the Disciplinary Hearings decision. In any event they should not usually be retained in the employee's file for more than a year where the individual has satisfactorily discharged their disciplinary award.

3.11 Documentation and Process

It is of great importance that the relevant disciplinary procedures are strictly adhered to as the outcome may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment or removal from office. Care must be taken that all meetings and discussions are clearly documented and all parties are aware of the actions being taken, as appropriate. It should be borne in mind that where these actions are later dealt with by an internal appeal committee or an external employment tribunal, the panel will request copies of all documents outlining the actions taken by the employer and the employee.

3.12 Reinstatement into Office

Where the outcome of these investigations lead to an amicable solution and/or the individual, after an agreed period of time, shows a measurable change of behaviour reinstatement into office may take place. Care must be taken to ensure that the safety and welfare of both parties are supported.

3.13 Reconciliation

Where changes in attitude and behaviour create the possibility for reinstatement and new beginnings, a ministry of reconciliation shall be provided on behalf of all persons involved. Assistance shall also be extended to families who are in grief over relationships, that for whatever the reason cannot be restored. Steps will be taken to handle the spiritual renewal necessary for the victim who will be attempting to understand and trust the person accused. It will also be necessary to provide long term support for families of domestic violence. The healing requirements of the community of believers will also be taken into consideration.

3.14 Repeated Incidents

Any further incidents must be managed in the same way as above. That is in accordance with the steps outlined in the BUC's Dismissal and Disciplinary Procedures Appendix 6. However, if these complaints are upheld by the Disciplinary Committee *before the original disciplinary award* expires then the Disciplinary Committee may decide to escalate the level of award issued to press home to the employee the seriousness of the situation and the importance of them addressing their behaviour and attitudes.

Any employee who fails to comply with the requirements of the church and is consequently subjected to repeated disciplinary hearings and awards for the same offence may eventually be dismissed. This can be the case for relatively minor initial infringements due to the repetitive nature of offending and the employee's refusal to follow the employing organizations reasonable requests to desist and fulfil their contractual terms and conditions.

If the time period that the disciplinary award stated has expired and the employee fulfilled the requirements placed upon them then the documentation relating to the complaint, investigation and hearing should usually be removed from their file. If another incident occurs it should be treated as the first incidence was and the

investigation, line manager and disciplinary hearing should not be biased by or made privy to their previous behaviour. This is because if they had responded positively to the outcome of the disciplinary process, changing their behaviours and attitudes as requested, they should be given a fair chance and not be judged on the basis of past "repented of and forgiven for" actions.

Appendix 1

REACTIONS OF THOSE INVOLVED IN SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1. The Victim

Those who experience sexual harassment may at first disbelieve that the action took place. They may try to understand the reason for the other person's behaviour or even ask themselves if they had in some way contributed to the situation.

The victim may then decide to dismiss the action as a misunderstanding and take no action either to make known to the perpetrator their disapproval of such behaviour or to file an official complaint with an appropriate person. This delay in action can be taken by the perpetrator as acceptance of the unwanted behaviour.

Someone who experiences sexual harassment can become nervous, stressed or show fear of being alone with persons of the opposite sex. There may also be a deterioration of their performance at work or within the church community. Some may also become socially withdrawn.

2. The Perpetrator

The perpetrator of sexual harassment often demonstrates behaviours that are acceptable to themselves but not to their victims.

They often take the victim's nervous smile as acceptance of their behaviour. Victims who react instantly are often referred to as being too sensitive.

Those who perpetuate sexual harassment are sometimes unaware of the harm they are causing and treat rebuttals as overreaction on the part of the victim.

Persistent perpetrators usually need help from authority figures to understand that what they are doing is wrong and needs to change.

3. Effect on the Membership

Acceptance that domestic violence and sexual harassment exist in the local church can be difficult for the local pastor and members. The following statements of disbelief and rumours may be heard:

- "This does not happen in my church!"
- "But he/she is one of my best church workers"
- "I hope my spouse has not been talking"
- "I must respect the members' privacy"
- "Not my Sabbath School teacher!"
- "I knew there was something odd about that one"
- "Have you heard . . . ?"
- "That is the one they were talking about"

Ignoring signs and complaints of domestic violence and sexual harassment can only help to perpetuate the problem and be seen as condoning the actions. It can also result in misrepresentation of God's love, lack of trust in and respect for leadership, lack of faith in the family of Christ and litigation.

Appendix 2

REACTIONS OF THOSE INVOLVED IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

1. The Abused

Those in abusive relationships often stay with their partner in the hope that the abusive behaviour will stop. They may stay together because they have grown up believing that the family must remain together at all costs. Others are often economically dependent on the abusive partner, and are unsure of life outside marriage and the challenge of becoming a lone parent. Some may even convince themselves that living with an abusive partner is better than living alone.

In many cases a person who has been abused will find themselves making statements or asking questions, which results in the involuntary protection of their abuser. An individual experiencing abuse will often use the following phrases:

“Who do I tell?”
“The members love him/her”
“Nobody cares anyway!”
“It was my fault!”
“It would not happen again”
“I cannot leave the children”
“We married for better or for worse, didn’t we?”
“I must protect my family unit”
“No one will believe me!”
“I would rather not talk about it”
“It was an accident”
“They did not mean it”
“He/she will lose their job”

This behaviour of self-doubt, blame and protection is borne out of fear for the victim’s own safety and that of others. The abuser may then use this reaction as an excuse for their personal behaviour.

It is unfortunate that domestic violence and abuse also occurs within the homes of the leaders of our churches. In these circumstances the incidents are less likely to be reported because of the abuser’s position. The abused may also doubt whether or not their complaints will be heard or believed. The BUC acknowledges the reluctance of the abused in these homes to seek help and their feelings of isolation in the situation. The BUC is committed to providing appropriate support as needed for families in abusive relationships.

2. The Abuser

The abuser will often seek to control their environment by arousing fear and acting in ways which the abused person finds intimidating, often using violence to achieve this end. Their initial attempt at seeking control in this manner may bring feelings of remorse and a resolution not to take such an action again. Some abusers remain distressed by their actions and are successful in overcoming such behaviour. Abusers may have themselves experienced abuse and therefore view their own behaviour as acceptable. However, knowledge of this should not be used to excuse or accept such behaviour.

Domestic violence is rarely a one-off incident. Some of the characteristics demonstrated by abusers are impulsiveness, temper tantrums, jealousy, possessiveness, excessive dependence on their partner and a need to keep strong control over family and spouse’s activities.

Unfortunately, the majority of abusers ‘feed’ on the protection afforded them by their victims. They will often mirror the statements made by the abused.

Statements made by abusers are often:

“If you tell anyone I will . . . !”

"You made me do it"
"I could not help myself"
"It will not happen again"
"What goes on in my home is private"
"If you tell anyone, I may lose my job, and then where will we be?"
"No one will believe you"
"You can never leave me"
"It was only once"
"No one else will have you"

3. What About the Children?

Children who witness domestic violence or are themselves subject to abuse often experience delayed development, truancy, poor communication, low self-esteem, lack of self-respect and other emotional problems including self-harm.

Constant exposure to abuse can also result in the child growing up to believe that this form of behaviour is the norm and could lead to their becoming an abuser in later life. Relatives, neighbours and others may not be aware of domestic violence but children, in these situations, cannot escape the effects.

Children growing up in an abusive home environment can be robbed of their childhood as they may become preoccupied with ideas of how to protect their parent or siblings. They may also blame themselves for the abuser's action.

Appendix 3
LOCAL CHURCH BOARD GUIDELINES

A. The work and Role of Designated Officers in the Local Church
B. Church Board Meeting Guidelines

A. THE WORK AND ROLE OF DESIGNATED OFFICERS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

1. Selection Criteria for the Local Church Designated Officer

The designated officer must have the ability to:

- Remain calm under volatile and distressing situations;
- Remain impartial to the matter under investigation;
- Not be swayed by the office or character of those involved;
- Accurately separate facts from emotional responses;
- Prepare clear and concise reports;
- Know when to terminate an interview;
- Keep confidences.

The designated officer must also be:

- Spiritually focused;
- A good communicator;
- A church member of good and regular standing.

2. Guidance on the Work of the Designated Officer in the Local Church

Steps to be taken by the Designated Officer during an investigation:

- Prayerfully review the given information on receipt of the assignment.
- Read the additional notes on sexual harassment/domestic violence in this policy.
- Make contact with the person to be interviewed and briefly inform them that "there has been an allegation of domestic violence/sexual harassment and I would like to hear from you personally".
- Confirm with the individual a safe place and a convenient time to meet.
- On meeting with the individual strive to facilitate a supportive atmosphere without giving the impression of taking sides.
- Inform the individual of the importance of you making notes and that they will be given an opportunity to read and sign any notes if they so wish. If asked, inform them that they will not be allowed to know what another interviewee has said.
- Ask the individual to share their side of the events. Using the phrase, "Tell me about . . ." can prove to be very helpful.
- Record the facts as accurately as possible, i.e.: incident, date, time, place, witnesses, etc.
- At the end of the interview review your notes with the interviewee and let them sign them if they so wish. Give an indication of timings and let them know what will happen next.
- Ensure that you have clear notes of each interview before moving on to the next.
- After completing all interviews, prepare a summary report of the interviews for the Church Board. If typed only initials must be used in the summary report.
- Be prepared to be called to support your report at any Board meeting.

Always

- Interview the complainant first;
- Take into consideration your own personal safety when arranging interviews;
- Let the individual share their story, taking occasional pauses to confirm that you have recorded the correct details;
- Confirm, at the end of the interview, that you have accurately recorded their complaint;
- Keep any interview notes or papers concerning the complaint in one place;
- Keep all paperwork in a confidential and secure location and send them to the Conference or Mission Executive Secretary when no longer needed by the Board. Dispose of all rough notes or drafts securely.

Never

- Give details of the complaint over the telephone;
- Give your view on a situation;
- Share with the persons interviewed the answers given, either verbally or written, by other interviewees;
- Discuss or share any information with anyone apart from Board Members in confidential settings;
- Leave interview notes lying around, including at the end of Board meetings.

B GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL CHURCH BOARD MEETINGS

The Church Board

When the results of the investigation come to the Church Board for discussion the church Board must:

Always

- Prayerfully consider all sides of the complaint in an impartial manner;
- Ensure no Board Member who is connected to the incident or those involved is present as this would create a conflict of interest;
- Ensure that the purpose of encouraging reconciliation and restoration whilst maintaining the principles and policies of the church is kept in mind;
- Consider how the church can help to prevent further incidents by educating its members and the community through its programmes and activities;
- Consider how to direct all those affected to the support services available;
- Value the importance and perspective the victim places upon an alleged incident;
- Give equal consideration to any explanation provided by the perpetrator;
- Discuss the complaint in the light of this policy and the church's standards.

Never

- Trivialise any complaint or be influenced by personal likes/dislikes;
- Repeatedly postpone decisions unless more information is needed;
- Become careless in remarks outside of the Board meeting;
- Place more than a summary of the action taken in the Board's minutes;
- Fail to provide support and opportunities for reconciliation to all parties affected;
- Breach the confidentiality that both parties have a right to expect.

Appendix 4
GUIDANCE ON THE CHOOSING AND WORK OF THE DESIGNATED OFFICER
FOR EMPLOYEE RELATED COMPLAINTS

Characteristics:

The designated officer must have the ability to:

- Remain calm under volatile and distressing situations;
- Remain impartial to the matter under investigation;
- Accurately separate facts from emotional responses;
- Prepare clear and concise reports;
- Know when to terminate an interview;
- Keep confidences.
-

The designated officer must also be:

- Spiritually focused;
- A good communicator;
- A church member of good and regular standing.

Steps to be taken during an investigation:

- Prayerfully review the given information on receipt of the assignment.
- Make contact with the person to be interviewed and briefly inform them that “there has been a complaint of domestic violence/sexual harassment and I would like to hear from you personally”.
- Confirm with the individual a safe place and a convenient time to meet.
- On meeting with the individual strive to facilitate a supportive atmosphere without giving the impression of taking sides.
- Inform the individual of the importance of you making notes and that they will be given an opportunity to read and sign the document if they agree with the contents. If asked, inform them that they will not be allowed to read what another interviewee has said.
- Ask the individual to share their side of the events. Use the phrase, “Tell me about . . .” can prove to be very helpful.
- Record the facts as accurately as possible, ie: incident, date, time, place, witnesses, etc.
- At the end of the interview review your notes with the interviewee and remind them of the importance of them promptly reading, signing and returning a copy of your typed notes of the interview. Give an indication of timings.
- Ensure that you have typed the notes of each interview before moving on to the next.
- After completing all interviews, prepare a summary report of the interviews for the supervising officer or personnel department, ensuring that all interview notes are attached as appendices. Only initials must be used in the summary report.
- Be prepared to be called to support your report at a disciplinary hearing, if necessary.

Always

- Interview the complainant first;
- Take into consideration your own personal safety when arranging interviews;
- Let the individual share their story, taking occasional pauses to confirm that you have recorded the correct details;
- Confirm, at the end of the interview, that you have accurately recorded their complaint;
- Attach interview notes as appendices to the final report.

Never

- Give details of the complaint over the telephone;
- Give your view on a situation;
- Share with the persons interviewed the answers given, either verbally or written, by other interviewees;
- Use full names within your final report.

Appendix 5 USEFUL RESOURCES

WHERE TO FIND HELP

- Cornerstone Counselling Services (SEC Helpline) 020 7423 8050; 0845 741 3602
- NEC Helpline 0161 740 3602
- Male Advice & Enquiry Line 0845 064 6800
- Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 027 1234
- English National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247
- Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 801 0800 or www.wdah.org
- The Dyn Wales/Dyn Cymru Helpline 0808 801 0321 or www.dynproject.org
- Northern Ireland Women's Aid 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline 028 9033 1818
- Right for Women (Legal Advice) 52-54 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8RT (Tel: 020 7251 6575, Helpline 020 7251 6577)
- Woman and Men Against Abuse and Sexual Harassment, www.womaash.co.uk
- Brochures available from www.adventsource.org (For English worded version contact BUC Women's Ministries Department on 01923 672251)
 - Breaking the Silence: Are you abusing someone?
 - Breaking the Silence: Are you being abused by your boyfriend or husband?
 - Breaking the Silence: Are you being abused by your girlfriend or wife?
 - Breaking the Silence: Do you know someone who is abused? You can help?
 - Breaking the Silence: Has your child been abused?
 - Breaking the Silence: You can stop the violence and help them heal.
 - Also available from the General Conference Women's Ministries Departments Ministries
 - Breaking the Silence: Struggling to forgive one who abused you (brochure)
 - Love should not hurt – A Resource for Pastors
- www.angermanage.co.uk
- www.adventistinfor.org.uk/departments/womensministries
- <http://wm.gc.adventist.org>
- <http://adventist.org.au/life/women/issuesfacingwomen>
- http://familyministries.gc.adventist.org/Statements/statement_family_violence.htm
- http://adventist.org.au/life/family/family_issues/domestic_violence/help_and_support
- http://familyministries.gc.adventist.org/Resources/abuse_and_family_violence/christian_response.htm

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Internet Sources

- www.equalityhumanrights.com
- <http://adventist.org.au/life/family>
- www.adventist.org/beliefs/statements/familyviolence
- <http://adventistorg.au/life/women/issuesfacingwomen>
- www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime-victims/reducing-crime/domestic-violence/

Appendix 6

THE BRITISH UNION CONFERENCE POLICIES

The British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Dismissal and Disciplinary Procedure

NB: Conferences and Missions are encouraged to use their agreed disciplinary procedures

(This is a summary of the statutory procedure which is set out in full in Schedule 2 to the Employment Act 2002. This is taken from the ACAS Code of Practice).

This procedure applies to disciplinary action short of dismissal (excluding oral and written warnings and suspension on full pay) based on either conduct or capability. It also applies to dismissals (except for constructive dismissals) including dismissals on the basis of conduct, capability, expiry of a fixed-term contract, redundancy and retirement. However, it does not apply in certain kinds of excepted cases which are described in full in the ACAS code available from HR.

STEP 1 - STATEMENT OF GROUNDS FOR ACTION AND INVITATION TO MEETING

- The initiating manager must set out in writing the employee's alleged conduct or characteristics, or other circumstances, which lead them to contemplate dismissing or taking disciplinary action against the employee;
- The initiating manager must send the statement or a copy of it to the employee and invite the employee to attend a meeting to discuss the matter.

STEP 2 - THE MEETING

- The meeting must take place before action is taken, except in the case where the disciplinary action consists of suspension or instant dismissal.
- The meeting must not take place unless:
 1. The initiating manager has informed the employee what the basis was for including in the statement under Step 1 the ground or grounds given in it; and
 2. The employee has had a reasonable opportunity to consider their response to that information.
- The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
- After the meeting, the initiating manager must inform the employee of their decision and notify them of the right to appeal against the decision if they are not satisfied with it.
- Employees have the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a fellow worker or a trade union representative.
-

STEP 3 – THE APPEAL

- If the employee wishes to appeal, they must inform their appeal manager within 5 (five) working days of the disciplinary decision.
- If the employee informs the employer of their wish to appeal, the employer must invite them to attend a further meeting.
- The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
- The appeal meeting need not take place before the dismissal or disciplinary action takes effect.
- After the appeal meeting, the appeal manager must inform the employee of their final decision.
- Employees have the right to be accompanied at the appeal meeting by a fellow worker or by a trade union representative.

WHO IS MY INITIATING MANAGER AND MY APPEAL MANAGER?

The initiating manager in the case of office workers will be the Departmental Director and their appeal manager will be the BUC Executive Secretary.

Appendix 7 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

(This is a summary of the statutory procedure which is set out in full in Schedule 2 to the Employment Act 2002. It has been taken from the ACAS Code of Practice)

STEP 1 - STATEMENT OF GRIEVANCE

- The employee must set out the grievance in writing and send the statement or a copy of it to the grievance manager.

STEP 2 - THE MEETING

- The grievance manager must invite the employee to attend a meeting to discuss the grievance.
- The meeting must not take place unless:
 1. The employee has informed the grievance manager what the basis for the grievance was when they made the statement under Step 1; and
 2. The grievance manager has had a reasonable opportunity to consider their response to that information;
- The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
- After the meeting, the grievance manager must inform the employee of their decision as to their response to the grievance and notify them of the right of appeal against the decision if they are not satisfied with it.
- Employees have the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a fellow worker or trade union representative

STEP 3 - THE APPEAL

- If the employee does wish to appeal, they must inform the appeal manager.
- If the employee informs the appeal manager of their wish to appeal, the appeal manager must invite them to attend a further meeting.
- The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
- After the appeal meeting, the appeal manager must inform the employee of their final decision.
- Employees have the right to be accompanied at the appeal meeting by a fellow worker or a trade union representative.

WHO IS MY GRIEVANCE MANAGER AND MY APPEAL MANAGER?

Your grievance manager will be the Departmental Director and your appeal manager will be the BUC Executive Secretary. Where a grievance concerns the nominated grievance manager, an alternative grievance manager will be appointed by one of the other BUC Officers.

TIMESCALES

As far as possible Step 1-3 of this grievance process should be completed within 28 (twenty-eight) days of the grievance manager receiving the written grievance. This includes at least 5 (five) working days notice of any meetings with the employee so that they can arrange for a fellow worker to accompany them.

Appendix 8 BUC HARASSMENT POLICY

HARASSMENT

Any form of harassment is considered incompatible with the ethos and ideals of a Christian organisation. It can have a devastating effect on the health, confidence, morale and performance of those affected by it. It may also have a damaging effect on other staff even though they are not the object of the harassment.

A. WHAT IS HARASSMENT?

Harassment is either:

- Unwanted conduct whether verbal or not, which is of a sexual or racial nature, or other conduct based on someone's race and/or gender which affects the dignity of men or women at work; or
- Bullying of colleagues, especially junior colleagues by intimidatory behaviour; or
- Unfavourable conduct at work, whether verbal, or non-verbal towards someone based on his/her disability, which could affect his/her dignity at work.

It is no defence to claim that the incident was a one-off. A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently grave and is, in any event, always inappropriate.

Examples of harassment or bullying would include sexual or racial banter; the display of material with sexual or racial overtones (even if not directed at the complainant); sarcastic personal remarks about colleagues, especially those reporting to you; over-demanding requirements.

B. PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT

1. Informal stage

- (a) It is entirely in order for a recipient of unwanted conduct amounting to harassment to try and resolve the problem if he/she so prefers, by explaining to the individual concerned that the behaviour is not welcome, that it offends or makes the recipient uncomfortable and that it interferes with their work.
- (b) Anyone who has been subjected to harassing or bullying behaviour may seek confidential assistance from personnel who have been given the responsibility to assist. All assisting staff will receive training to enable them to advise you in devising means of preventing a re-occurrence of the unwanted behaviour.
- (c) An informal approach to an assisting staff member will be treated as completely confidential and will not result in any report to anyone within the Seventh-day Adventist organisation unless the complainant agrees.
- (d) If the complainant prefers, or finds it difficult or embarrassing to take up the matter himself/herself, the assisting member of staff will participate in an informal meeting between the individuals concerned or will, if requested, approach the individual on the complainant's behalf.
- (e) The informal stage will not result in any formal internal investigation or disciplinary action but is intended to enable you to resolve the matter yourself without it going any further in the Seventh-day Adventist organisation.
- (f) If the complainant considers that he/she may have been subjected to conduct amounting to a criminal offence (such as a sexual assault) he/she is entitled to seek the assistance of the appointed staff member to make a formal complaint to a police officer or to provide other assistance the complainant may require. In such a serious instance the appointed staff member will inform one of the designated officers of the outline circumstances of the case and will liaise with him/her to arrange special discretionary compassionate leave for the complainant, if necessary.

2. Formal stage

- (a) Where informal resolution is not appropriate, is not requested, or where the outcome has been unsatisfactory, then the complainant may bring a formal complaint to one of the designated complaints officers.

- (b) If so desired the assisting member of staff will help the complainant to prepare their complaint as well as to accompany him/her to the meetings. The complainant may also be accompanied to meetings by a fellow worker of his/her choice or a trade union representative. All complaints will be thoroughly and expeditiously investigated. They will be conducted in an independent and objective manner by someone unconnected with the allegations and at least of equal grade/status with the alleged harasser. Wherever possible investigations will be completed within two weeks of the complaint being made.
- (c) Investigations will be carried out with sensitivity and with due respect for the rights of both the complainant and the alleged harasser. All those interviewed will be permitted to be accompanied by a friend or colleague.
- (d) The importance of confidentiality will be stressed to all those interviewed and everyone will be strictly required not to discuss the complaint with colleagues or friends. Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action.
- (e) The investigation will focus on the facts of the complaint. Notes will be kept of all stages of the investigation and those interviewed will receive notes of the interview to agree. Parties will not be required to repeat distressing or embarrassing details any more than necessary.
- (f) Wherever possible, consideration will be given to ensuring that the complainant and the alleged harasser are not required to work together whilst the complaint is under investigation.
- (g) The complainant will be kept informed of the general progress of the process of investigation and will be informed whether the complaint has been upheld and is to result in disciplinary action. (The rights of the alleged harasser as to the confidentiality of the details of any disciplinary sanction will be respected).
- (h) Where a complaint has been upheld, consideration will be given, wherever possible, to permitting a complainant who is an employee to choose whether they wish to remain in their current post or to transfer. The Seventh-day Adventist employing body will seek to ensure that the complainant is not in any way penalised whether directly or indirectly for bringing a complaint and the situation will be monitored to ensure that the harassment has stopped.
- (i) Even where a complaint is not upheld, for example where the evidence is inconclusive, consideration will be given to effecting arrangements which will enable the parties not to continue to work together against the wishes of either party.
- (j) Any complaint that is unfounded and not made in good faith, for example a malicious complaint will be treated as a disciplinary offence.
- (k) Details of all formal complaints of harassment will be collated by the secretariat of the employing body. These will be annually reviewed by the administrative officers of the employing body with a view to ensuring that every effective step has been taken to prevent harassment at work and to monitor the effectiveness of the complaints procedure.

Right of Appeal

Complainants have a right to appeal and should inform the Executive Secretary if they wish to do so. Wherever practicable the appeal will be heard by a manager who is more senior or at the very least of equivalent grade to the one who heard the original complaint. The complainant will be invited to attend a further meeting and will be invited to bring along a fellow worker or trade union representative with them if they so wish. The complainant must take all reasonable steps to attend. After this meeting the Executive Secretary will inform the complainant of the final decision.

Appendix 9 LEGISLATION

The following legislations extend protection to victims of domestic violence:

- The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. Section 42A (5) Breach of non-molestation order is a criminal offence – A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or a fine, or both.
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997. The Act introduced new criminal offences which protects the victim from harassment (penalty for breach is six months imprisonment and/or a fine) and violence (penalty for breach is five years' imprisonment and/or a fine on indictment). Breach of civil injunction or a restraining order will attract similar penalties.
- The Children Act 2004. Provides the legal underpinning for *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* programme.

T The following legislation extends protection to victims of sexual harassment:

- The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulation 2005 (Section 4a: Harassment, including sexual harassment).