
Respectful Workplace

Policy number:	01-03-04
Effective date:	May 7, 2026
Last review date:	May 7, 2026
Accountable division:	Human Resources/HR Business Partner Manager
Approved by:	Leadership Team

Policy Statement

The City is committed to fostering and maintaining a respectful and inclusive work environment that honours diversity and protects the rights, dignity and self-worth of all persons by ensuring that the Workplace is free from Workplace Harassment, Discrimination and Reprisals.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Document the City's commitment to providing a work environment that is free from Discrimination and Workplace Harassment while fostering respect and protecting the rights of all persons in accordance with legislative requirements
- Foster a Workplace culture where every Employee, recognizing diversity across colour, disability, gender expression, gender identity, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and all other grounds protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code, experiences belonging, respect and equitable opportunities through intentional and systemic inclusion
- Establish that detailed procedures are set out in an associated Respectful Workplace Employee Guide, and
- Detail roles and responsibilities

Scope

This policy applies to City Workplaces and all Employees, volunteers, suppliers, contractors, consultants, visitors and members of Council.

For all unionized Employees, all Workplace matters will be addressed in accordance with the applicable collective agreement.

Respectful Workplace Program

The City's Respectful Workplace Program consists of this policy, the Respectful Workplace Employee Guide and additional supporting resources. The resolution of complaints under this policy will be handled in accordance with the City's Respectful Workplace Program.

For concerns related to violence in the Workplace, please refer to Corporate Policy and Procedure - 01-07-01 - Workplace Violence as part of the Respectful Workplace and Workplace Violence Program.

Legislative Requirements

This policy is in compliance with the following:

- The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code*
- *Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and
- The *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

Related Policies and Guides

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Respectful Workplace Employee Guide
- Corporate Policy and Procedure - 01-07-01 - Workplace Violence
- Workplace Violence Employee Guide
- Corporate Policy and Procedure - 03-12-01 - Whistleblower Program
- Corporate Policy and Procedure – 01-03-07 - Standard of Behaviour
- Council Code of Conduct

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

“Bullying” is a form of personal harassment involving aggressive behaviour by a person or group that is typically repeated over time. It is intended to cause harm, fear and distress or create a negative environment for another person. Bullying includes, but is not limited to:

- Abuse of power
- Humiliation or embarrassment
- Persistent and unjustified criticism
- Exclusion and/or isolation
- Threats
- Rumours/gossip
- Inappropriate use of social media, and
- Microaggressions

“City” refers to the Corporation of the City of Mississauga.

“Complainant” is a person who makes a complaint or raises an allegation. They are an individual who reports that something inappropriate, or against Policy has occurred.

“Discrimination” means treating a person unequally, rather than treating the person fairly on the basis of individual merit. Discrimination can be either intentional or unintentional and is usually based upon personal prejudices and stereotypical assumptions related to at least one of the protected grounds set out in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, including:

- Age
- Ancestry, colour, race
- Citizenship
- Ethnic origin
- Place of origin
- Creed
- Disability
- Family status
- Marital status
- Gender identity, gender expression
- Record of offences
- Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding), and
- Sexual orientation

“Employee” includes all unionized and non-union employees employed by the City, regardless of status.

“Investigator” means the person(s), who may be an internal or external party, appointed by the City to investigate a complaint and/or incident.

“Manager/ Supervisor” means any individual responsible for directing the work of others.

“Reprisal” is where an Employee retaliates or threatens retaliation against an individual due to raising an issue under this policy, filing a complaint, acting as a witness, or intentionally pressures another person to lie or provide less than full cooperation with an investigation.

“Respectful Workplace” means an inclusive, safe and healthy Workplace that results in the preservation of equal dignity and creates a culture that supports an individual’s physical, emotional, social and psychological health and safety.

“Respondent” is a person who is alleged to have engaged in the behavior or action being complained about. This is an individual responding to an allegation made about them.

“Workplace” means any land, premises, location or thing at, upon, in or near which a worker works. For clarity, this includes all locations where Employees conduct City business or social activities and where their behaviour may have a subsequent impact on work relationships, work environment and/or performance. This includes when Employees are working remotely, including from home.

Note: Incidents that occur by way of electronic communication (e.g. unwelcome phone calls, voice mail, texts, messages on e-mail or social media and the display of offensive materials on computers, smartphones or other computing devices) will be considered to have occurred in the Workplace if directed to or from Employees and where such

conduct may reasonably be expected to have an impact on work relationships, work environment and/or performance.

“Workplace Harassment” means engaging in a course of vexatious comments or conduct against a worker in a Workplace, including virtually through the use of information and communications technology, that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Workplace Harassment may be based on one or more of the prohibited grounds listed under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

“Workplace Sexual Harassment” is a form of Discrimination based on the prohibited ground of sex under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and it is also prohibited under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Workplace Sexual Harassment means engaging in a course of vexatious comments or conduct against an Employee in the Workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comments or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome; or making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the Employee and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome. For examples of Workplace Sexual Harassment, please refer to the Respectful Workplace Employee Guide.

Note: Workplace Harassment and Workplace Sexual Harassment are not defined by intent, but rather by how the behaviour would be perceived or would impact a reasonable person’s perception of the behaviour. The alleged harasser does not need to be someone with power or authority over another individual. Harassment can occur between worker to worker, supervisor to worker, supervisor to supervisor and or worker to supervisor.

Bullying, Discrimination, Workplace Harassment and Workplace Sexual Harassment under this policy do not include:

- Differences of opinion, interpersonal conflicts or unpleasant interactions, unless they involve any of the behaviours described above.
- The exercise of normal managerial functions, such as the assignment of work, scheduling, approval of overtime or vacation, management of performance and attendance, requests for medical documentation in support of absences, and the imposition of discipline, unless they involve any of the behaviours described above, or
- Reasonable action taken by Employees or Managers/Supervisors in providing direction to Employees in the Workplace.

“Trauma Informed Approach” means that the possibility of individuals experiencing past trauma is recognized, and psychological and physical safety is prioritized to avoid the risk of re-traumatization and to ensure everyone is treated with care, dignity, empathy and fairness.

Roles and Responsibilities

Managers/ Supervisors

Managers/Supervisors must:

- Foster a Workplace culture where everyone experiences belonging, respect and equitable opportunities
- Take reasonable steps to prevent the development, escalation or reoccurrence of respectful Workplace issues
- Ensure that their staff are aware of this policy and receive training, as required
- Intervene if a violation of this policy has been brought to their attention and/or has been witnessed, and:
 - Assist their staff to achieve informal resolution of concerns, where appropriate, and/or
 - Encourage and assist their staff to report respectful Workplace issues using the process set out in the Respectful Workplace Employee Guide, where appropriate, and support subsequent investigations, as required, and
- Stay up to date with required training

Employees

Employees must:

- Participate in training as required by legislation and/or the City
- Follow this policy and treat others respectfully at all times
- Report respectful Workplace issues to their manager/supervisor or a Human Resources representative in accordance with the processes outlined in the Respectful Workplace Employee Guide,
- Ensure that matters related to complaints or incidents under this policy remain confidential,
- Refrain from engaging in any form of Reprisals, and
- Co-operate with investigations and attempts to resolve Workplace disputes

Human Resources

Human Resources must:

- Provide guidance on respectful Workplace to Employees at all levels
- Coordinate training, as required
- Provide support, including physical and psychological safety to all persons involved in the investigation process
- Conduct investigations as required, determining whether the best Investigator is internal or external
- Retain and manage an external third-party Investigator, in consultation with Legal Services when appropriate
- Ensure that all investigations are thorough, confidential, objective, impartial and conducted in a timely manner, utilizing alternate dispute resolution strategies and/or a Trauma Informed Approach where appropriate, and
- Maintain accurate documentation and metrics

Investigators

Investigators must:

- Investigate complaints in a timely manner
- Utilize appropriate alternate dispute resolution and a Trauma Informed Approach where appropriate
- Exercise objectivity and impartiality throughout the investigation process
- Ensure confidentiality and address/report any confidentiality breaches as appropriate
- Maintain appropriate and accurate documentation
- Make all necessary findings of fact and report findings, conclusions and recommendations (if any) to the City, and
- Prepare outcome letters and inform the complainant and respondent of the results in writing following formal complaints or investigations

Members of Council

Members of Council must:

- Stay up to date with required training
- Report complaints involving Employees, volunteers, suppliers, contractors, consultants and/or visitors to the applicable Manager/Supervisor or a Human Resources representative
- Report formal complaints involving another Member(s) of Council to the Integrity Commissioner, and
- Cooperate in investigations

Contractors, Consultants, Suppliers, Volunteers and Citizen Member of Committees

All Contractors, Consultants, Suppliers and City Volunteers and Members of Committees must actively promote a work environment free from Workplace Harassment and Discrimination, refrain from contributing to or engaging in any acts of Workplace Harassment and Discrimination and cooperate in any investigations.

Complaint Resolution

Complaints under this policy are reported and resolved in accordance with the City's Respectful Workplace Program using the process set out in the City's Respectful Workplace Employee Guide.

Any formal complaints against a Member of Council for which an investigation may be appropriate shall be submitted to the Integrity Commissioner, who may conduct an investigation.

To submit a complaint to the Integrity Commissioner, please visit this site:

<https://www.mississauga.ca/council/integrity-commissioner/>

Refer to Corporate Policy and Procedure - 03-12-01 - Whistleblower Program for information on anonymously reporting incidents of wrongdoing where there is a fear of Reprisal.

Confidentiality

All persons involved with a complaint under this policy must endeavour to ensure that the matter remains confidential. Complaints shall be investigated both confidentially and objectively, with respect for the rights of all Workplace parties involved with details shared with only those involved. Personal information will be disclosed if appropriate and will be provided on a need-to-know basis, in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Investigators must advise all persons interviewed that they are expected to treat the matter as confidential and that breaching confidentiality may lead to corrective action being taken.

Persons interviewed by the Investigator will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Records pertaining to an investigation will be retained by the City, in accordance with the City's retention by-laws.

Reprisals

Employees have the right to be free from Reprisals for reporting Respectful Workplace issues. The City will take corrective action against any Employee who retaliates or threatens retaliation against an individual due to their filing a complaint or acting as a witness or intentionally pressuring a person to lie or provide less than full cooperation with an investigation.

Support Persons

Persons involved in an investigation/dispute resolution process under this policy are generally allowed to have someone not directly involved support them, upon request. Union stewards or a support person may attend the investigation, but they cannot intervene or respond on behalf of the persons involved in the investigation. Investigators will provide individuals acting as a support person with information and resources to assist them with performing the responsibilities of this role. Should complainants and respondents wish to obtain legal advice by seeking representation of their choice, including legal counsel during the complaints process, they may do so at their own expense and outside of work hours.

Corrective Action

Violations of this policy will result in appropriate corrective action up to and including termination of employment. The types of corrective action that may be taken by the City are further set out in the Respectful Workplace Employee Guide. Corrective action may also be taken if a complaint is found to be trivial, frivolous, vexatious or has been made in bad faith, fraudulently or with malicious intent.

Revision History

Reference	Description
AC-0010-2007 – 2007 05 23	

Reference	Description
October 23, 2008	Housekeeping to reflect minor process changes by Human Rights Commission re: filing complaints.
GC-0403-2010 2010 06 09	
October 12, 2011	Housekeeping - Volunteer policy renamed to Community Group Support Program.
July 03, 2013	Council Recommendation to forward all investigations of members of Council to the Integrity Commissioner.
September 28, 2017	Major review. Policy now supported by a Respectful Workplace Program.
June 27, 2019	Scheduled annual review – no changes.
May 28, 2020	Scheduled annual review – admin changes to Workplace definitions.
June 9, 2021	Scheduled annual review – no changes.
May 11, 2022	Scheduled annual review – minor revisions to update definitions, other minor housekeeping.
June 5, 2023	Housekeeping revision to update Owner Division/Contact.
June 12, 2023	Scheduled review. No revisions.
July 10, 2023	Housekeeping revision to align policy with corporate reorganization.
January 3, 2024	Housekeeping revision to repair broken hyperlink.
February 14, 2024	Scheduled review. No revisions.
June 3, 2025	Scheduled review. No revisions.
May 7, 2026	Substantial revision to update terminology, clarify processes and procedures and to incorporate the City's commitments to Psychological Health and Safety and EDI. Aligned to the updated Workplace Violence Policy.