

Whom to contact:

When the person complained against is a minister, the appropriate contact is the clerk of presbytery:

(name)

(address)

(phone number)

When the person complained against is a member or leader in a congregation, the appropriate contact is the minister of the congregation:

(name)

(address)

(phone number)

If you don't know the names of these people, contact:

Susan Shaffer
Ministry and Church Vocations
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive
Toronto ON M3C 1J7
Phone: (416) 441-1111
1-800-619-7301

The Policy of
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
for Dealing with Sexual Abuse
and Sexual Harassment
is available (\$6.00) from
The Book Room
50 Wynford Drive
Toronto ON M3C 1J7
Phone: (416) 441-1111
or 1-800-619-7301
Fax: (416) 441-2825
e-mail: bookroom@presbyterian.ca
or can be found on the Church's
website:
www.presbyterian.ca/resources/online
under Official Documents,
Policies & Logo.

The Church is called
to share God's love
and to seek
God's justice.

The Church is a place
where sexual abuse
is not tolerated.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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The Presbyterian
Church in Canada

A safe place

The Church in all its extended ministries is to be a safe place in the community, a place where it is known that sexual abuse is not tolerated. This is part of our Christian witness to the community. Therefore, groups using the church premises for their activities are also subject to this policy. All those who serve the Church, especially clergy, church leaders, staff and volunteers, are expected to adhere to Christian ethical principles in their sexual conduct and in their exercise of authority and power.

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The Church's policy

It is the policy of The Presbyterian Church in Canada that sexual abuse or sexual harassment of any kind by church leaders, staff or volunteers will not be tolerated.

Because of the serious consequences of sexual abuse or sexual harassment, the Church will make every effort to ensure that such abuse or harassment does not occur within its jurisdiction. When complaints of sexual abuse and/or sexual harassment arise, the Church will respond with seriousness, sensitivity and concern for all involved, and will recognize the necessity of dealing with both accused and complainant in a fair and just manner. Every allegation will be investigated and acted upon according to the church's policy for dealing with sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse includes:

- ◆ any unwanted sexual contact.
- ◆ sexual intercourse, genital contact, petting, fondling, sexually suggestive language or the display of pornography.
- ◆ sexual assault and other sexual offences involving children or young persons as defined in the Criminal Code of Canada.
- ◆ sexual harassment.
- ◆ spousal violence.

What is sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is defined as:

- ◆ a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to have been known to be unwelcome, including repeated sexual remarks or physical contact that is degrading;
- ◆ sexual advance or solicitation made by a person who is in a position to grant or deny a benefit to another;
- ◆ the threat of or an actual reprisal by a person in authority against a person who has rejected a sexual advance from that person in authority.

Limitations on leaders

Church leaders are in positions of authority and trust. They cannot be in a sexual relationship with any person for whom they have a leadership/pastoral role.

For instance, it is not acceptable for

- ◆ a youth leader to date a member of the youth group.
- ◆ a minister to have sexual contact with a person under his/her pastoral care.

In the case of a complaint

If you believe you are a victim of sexual abuse or sexual harassment:

- ◆ Take it seriously.
- ◆ Make it clear to the person that the behaviour is not wanted. Say no, firmly, without smiling or apologizing.
- ◆ When abuse occurs, write exactly what happened or what was said and sign the statement. Save any letter or notes sent by the abuser/harasser. Keep both the statement and notes in a secure place.
- ◆ Contact someone who will help. (See next panel for whom to contact.) Your complaint will be taken seriously.

If you receive information about an alleged sexual abuse from a person who believes s/he has been a victim or from another person:

- ◆ Take it seriously.
- ◆ Contact the appropriate authority. (See next panel for whom to contact.)

If someone makes a complaint of sexual abuse or sexual harassment against you:

- ◆ Ensure that an appropriate official in the presbytery or in the session of the congregation is informed about the complaint. (See next panel for whom to contact.)

For all complaints

The presbytery or session will:

- ◆ investigate and act upon the complaint according to the church's policy.
- ◆ provide pastoral care to the complainant, the person complained against and their families.
- ◆ provide advisors if requested.

The complainant and his/her family and the person complained against:

- ◆ should not engage in negotiations.
- ◆ should not meet privately.