

Richland Monthly Meeting Anti-Harassment Policy and Procedures

Richland Monthly Meeting's Anti-Harassment Policy.

Richland Monthly Meeting is committed to creating and maintaining an environment for its members, attenders, staff, volunteers, committee members, and program participants which is free of discrimination and harassment. Demeaning actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, ethnicity, ability, age, veteran status, political preference, any other traits central to one's identity, or any other reason prohibited by law will not be tolerated. The policies and procedures contained herein are a witness to that commitment.

Harassment is unwanted behavior generally involving the exercise of formal or informal power by someone over another person. What one person might consider an innocent comment or behavior could be experienced as harassment by another person, particularly if the behavior is repeated. Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome or offensive sexual comments, advances, requests of sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a harassing nature directed to a person.

We need not refrain from offering hugs to friends or making comments about a friend's appearance. But we should be sensitive to the possibility that another might be made uncomfortable by such behavior. Before making physical contact, a person should ask the other person's permission for the contact.

Richland Monthly Meeting embraces the practice of enthusiastic consent. We expect everyone who participates in any activity of Richland Monthly Meeting to follow this practice. Enthusiastic consent requires that we go one step beyond simply asking before we touch someone or before we say something that we think might be sensitive. We also need to pay close attention to the body language of people with whom we are interacting. Even if someone says yes, their body language might be saying no, or they might seem reluctant. If someone seems reluctant even though they are saying yes, we take this into account before following through on what we have requested. We wait for consent that is enthusiastic and that clearly states in words and body language that, for example, someone wants a hug or to talk about a sensitive topic.

Managing Serious Conflicts Not Based on Harassment

Conflicts between individuals not involving harassment are normally handled through less formal means than by the procedures set forth herein. However, a conflict within Richland Monthly Meeting might prove resistant to less formal methods, have an explosive or particularly harmful nature, and/or require the kind of investigation and resolution described below.

Overall Anti-Harassment Procedure

If you feel harassed or uncomfortable by the comments or behavior of another person during a Richland Monthly Meeting meeting for worship, meeting for business, committee meeting,

potluck, or other activity of the Meeting, and if you feel able, you can tell this person clearly that you find their behavior objectionable and ask them to stop it.

If someone tells you that they have been offended or embarrassed by something you did or said, please simply apologize and be mindful so as not to repeat the objectionable behavior. Intention is different from impact, so always be respectful and open when your impact was different than you intended.

If you feel unable to confront the person or find that they repeat the objectionable behavior despite your request to stop it, please approach the Clerk of Meeting or the Clerk or other member of the Care and Worship Committee and inform them of the situation.

If you witness or are told about a situation involving possible harassment, first check in with the person who appears to have experienced the harassment. If they feel uncomfortable about the behavior, encourage them to confront it or report it.

If the harassment involves a person who is under the age of 18 or an active participant in a child care or youth program, please refer to the Richland Monthly Meeting Child Protection Policy.

The Care and Worship Committee Response to a Reported Incident of Harassment

Informal Procedure:

You may simply want an opportunity for a confidential discussion of the incident. You should contact the Clerk of the Care and Worship Committee or one of its members for help with how to handle it. If this discussion is sufficiently helpful, and you are able to stop or avoid further objectionable behavior, no further steps will be taken unless it is determined that the nature of the complaint is serious enough to warrant further action such as a formal procedure.

Formal procedure:

You may want a formal investigation and more assistance in dealing with the perceived harassment. The Care and Worship Committee will initiate the formal procedure in any case which it deems sufficiently serious. In this event, both the complainant and the alleged harasser will be notified of such a decision.

In a formal procedure the following steps will be taken:

1. The Care and Worship Committee will ask you to submit a written, signed, and dated complaint. This complaint may be brief, but it should include:

- name(s) of the alleged harasser and date(s) of the incident(s),
- a description of the objectionable behavior,
- the context in which it occurred,
- the names and contact information for any other persons involved,

- your feelings,
- how you wish the problem to be resolved.

2. When such a complaint is received, the Care and Worship Committee will select a subcommittee of two or more of its members not involved in the allegations to meet with the complainant in confidence to discuss the alleged harassment. The Care and Worship Committee will also appoint a clerk of this subcommittee.

3. The subcommittee will investigate the complaint. Such investigation will always include, but not be limited to, a meeting with the complainant and with the alleged harasser separately. The subcommittee may also meet with any witnesses to the alleged harassment.

4. After the subcommittee completes its investigation, it will reach a decision as to the merits and gravity of the complaint and how to handle the situation. If it is determined that harassment occurred, possible resolutions include:

- a. The subcommittee may find that the offending comments or behavior were unintentional and misunderstood and propose a plan of reconciliation of the parties, which could include use by one or both parties of a clearness committee as provided in Faith and Practice.
- b. Asking the harasser to acknowledge and stop the offending comments or behavior;
- c. Requiring the harasser to stay away from the person who experienced the harassment;
- d. Requiring the harasser to attend any Meeting activity in the company of an adult member of the Care and Worship Committee if the complainant is expected to be in attendance;
- e. Barring the harasser from further Meeting activities.

5. The subcommittee will prepare a written report of its findings and recommendations and present this to the full Care and Worship Committee.

6. The Care and Worship Committee will consider the report of the subcommittee and decide how to resolve the matter. The Committee will include its findings and decision of the action to be taken in a written report and may include the report of the subcommittee by reference. It shall retain that report and the report of the subcommittee confidentially in its records.

7. The Care and Worship Committee through the subcommittee will communicate its findings and the action to be taken to the complainant and to the alleged harasser in a meeting with each individually. If that cannot be arranged, then the communication will be through email or if that is not available then through certified mail.

8. The Care and Worship Committee shall be responsible for overseeing implementation of the resolution in continuing consultation with the Clerk of Meeting.

9. Complaints will be treated with confidentiality and discretion. Confidentiality will extend to the charging party, to the person accused of harassment, and to any witnesses and to all documentation resulting from the investigation.

10. Every effort will be made to protect persons making bona fide complaints from any kind of retaliatory action.

11. All credible allegations of harassment of minors shall be reported to law enforcement authorities as required by Pennsylvania law.

Approved by Meeting for Business on August 27, 2023.