***SAMPLE HARASSMENT POLICY***

Trinity seeks to maintain a caring, Christ centered environment free of any type of harassment. Harassment of any member, adult or child is prohibited. Harassment is contrary to the religious and moral tenets of Trinity. In addition, such harassment can negatively affect a person’s sense of being and dignity.

It is a violation of Trinity’s policy for any member, adult, youth, or child, or any person engaged by Trinity, including without limitation, staff, staff members, volunteers, and any person conducting business with Trinity to harass any member or any person who is involved with worship, church or school programs, youth functions, or any other activity of Trinity.

* + **DEFINITIONS OF HARASSMENT**
	+ Sexual Harassment

Includes the following behavior: unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; unwelcome touching, fondling, and all other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature; especially when;

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, or participation in any program or opportunity, or the effects on the students learning environment.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment opportunities, or affecting such individual’s participation in any program or opportunity, or student’s status (i.e. grades, etc.).
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating hostile, or offensive environment, or unreasonably interfering with an individual’s performance, studies, or other worship/educational opportunities.

Sexual harassment is not limited to physical acts. Sexual harassment includes all acts of harassment based upon a person’s sex. Behavior that may be experienced as intimidating or offensive, particularly when it recurs, or one person has authority over the other, may include actions such as veiled suggestions of sexual activity; offensive comments, jokes, and innuendoes; or the use of risqué’ jokes, stories or images. Sexual harassment could include inappropriate personal attention given to a person by any other person who is in a position to exercise authority over such person.

* + - Race, National Origin, or Differences

Harassment based upon race, national origin, or differing abilities including ethnic slurs, or other verbal and/or physical conduct related to a person’s race, national origin, or any other behavior which interferes with a person’s work performance or educational environment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

* + **HARASSMENT REVIEW BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

The Trinity Harassment Review Board will consist of four members that will include the Coordinating Pastor, the congregation’s Executive Director, and one female staff member, and one female congregational member. The Executive Director will designate the two female members that will serve on the review board. The Harassment Review Board will be accountable to Trinity Church Council.

* + **REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE**

Each staff person, member, student, and volunteer is responsible for creating an atmosphere free of harassment during all activities of Trinity. It is also their responsibility to recognize and seek resolution to any incidents of harassment observed during any activities of Trinity.

In a Christian church, school, and child care center, when offense is given, all members –Pastors, staff, lay leaders and others---are bound by their obedience to the Lord of the Church to follow the procedures which Christ himself set forth in Matthew 18: 15-18. MT 18:15 "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. 16 But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' 17 If he refuses to

listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. MT 18:18 "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Recognizing that in certain situations of harassment the victim may find it difficult to confront the alleged offender, the person who feels that he or she has been the victim of harassment is then encouraged to report the incident to the Review Board to assist in the resolution of the complaint. Any person while involved in a ministry related activity, and any staff member, member, volunteer, or other person witnessing an incident of harassment during a ministry related activity, is encouraged to report the incident immediately. All reports of harassment during any Trinity related activity will be promptly investigated.

* + **INITIATING A COMPLAINT**

Any person who feels that he or she is, or has been, the object of harassment, or any person witnessing any harassment, should promptly report the incident to their lead staff person. In the event their lead staff person is involved in the harassment, the incident should be reported to the Harassment Review Board.

Steps are to be taken immediately by either the lead staff person or the Harassment Review Board to ensure the reported harassment will not be possible while the incident is investigated and in the case of the lead staff person report the complaint to the Harassment Review Board.

Reports, complaints, and questions should be addressed to one of the members of the Review Board. The person who receives the report will, in turn, report the incident to the other members of the review board for purposes of investigation. Should one of the members of the Harassment Review Board be the offending party, that person will be removed from the Review Board during the investigation of the complaint. Trinity prohibits any retaliation against any person for filing a complaint under this policy, or for assisting in a complaint investigation.

* + **FILING COMPLAINT REPORTS**

Should a harassment complaint be received, the contacted Review Board member shall prepare a written summary of the reported incident or incidents, based on discussions with the complainant. The complainant will be informed of this documentation and initial the summary as a means of verifying the facts.

* + **ACTION PENDING INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINT**

The Harassment Review Board shall be notified that a harassment complaint has been received and will investigate this in a confidential manner. They will inform the accused of this complaint. If the accused asks who the complainant is, they may be informed per the discretion of the Review Board. Depending on the seriousness of the complaint, interim measures, if determined by the Review Board as appropriate, may be taken before the complaint is fully investigated, including suspension of the alleged offender from attendance in certain activities and, if the alleged offender is a Trinity staff member may include suspension from work. All persons notified will be directed to maintain strict confidentiality. In addition to the above temporary actions, the Review Board shall comply with any reporting and other requirements of federal, state and local laws and regulations. A request for outside use of resources, or internal direction from the Church Council or Ministerial Staff may be considered.

* + **INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINT AND RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The Harassment Review Board will investigate the complaint by questioning the alleged offender and any witnesses identified by the complainant. After a thorough investigation the Review Board will prepare a written report, stating their conclusions. The report will include the complaint, those parties affected, and the Review Boards recommendation, including any corrective action.

Corrective action may include, 1) Counseling with the offender (s), 2) Probation with warning or suspension or discharge for continuing or reoccurring offenses, 3) Suspension with or without pay (depending on the seriousness of the offense), 4) Discharge for cause. 5) Church discipline.

If the result of the investigation does not substantiate the complaint, both the complaint and alleged offender will be so advised. Prior to the implementation of any corrective action, the offender will be given the opportunity to rebut the investigation findings in an interview with the Review Board.

* + **RECORDING OF INVESTIGATIVE MATERIALS**

A confidential file shall be established for each complaint made and kept on file in the church office in the office of the Parish Administrator. This will include the initialed complaint and the investigative report, along with recommendations and actions taken. The documentation of action will also include outcomes and results.

* + **COMMUNICATION OF HARASSMENT GUIDELINE**
		- A copy will be kept in the church office, school office, and Early Childhood Learning Center and will be available electronically
		- Will be provided to new staff during their orientation process. Will be in serviced on a biannual basis or sooner if changes are made for all staff members.
		- Is available upon request.