

## **RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a) Help maintain a safe, healthy, respectful and productive workplace; and
- b) Help in the prevention and the management of workplace bullying and harassment.

### **2. Background**

- a) The City of Dawson Creek recognizes that workplace bullying and harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All workers will be treated in a fair and respectful manner.
- b) The Definition and examples of bullying and harassment are:
  - i. Includes any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be humiliated or intimidated; but
  - ii. Excludes any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment.
- c) Examples of conduct or comments that might constitute bullying and harassment include verbal aggression or insults, calling someone derogatory names, harmful hazing or initiation practices, vandalizing personal belongings and spreading malicious rumours. Comments may be made in person or through email or social media.
- d) Not every unpleasant interaction, instance of disrespectful behavior or workplace conflict is considered bullying and harassment. Examples of behaviours that may not be bullying and harassment, if undertaken in an appropriate manner, include:
  - i. Expressing differences of opinion;
  - ii. Offering constructive feedback, guidance or advice about work-related behavior and performance;
  - iii. Making a legitimate complaint about someone's conduct through established procedures;
  - iv. Yelling in the workplace to warn of a potential danger or to shout commands at the scene of a disaster; and
  - v. Reasonable management action including decisions relating to job duties, workloads, deadlines, transfers, work instructions or feedback, work evaluation/performance management and/or disciplinary action.

### **3. Policy**

- a) This policy applies to all City of Dawson Creek workplaces, employees, volunteers and contractors, and to interpersonal and electronic communications, such as email and social media.
- b) The City of Dawson Creek is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of its workers and any other workers present at City of Dawson Creek workplaces. The City of Dawson Creek is also responsible for providing workers with information, instruction, training and supervision, to ensure work is performed safely.
- c) Supervisors must ensure the health and safety of all workers under their direct supervision.  
Supervisors must:
  - i. Not engage in the bullying and harassment of others;
  - ii. Apply and comply with this policy on bullying and harassment;
  - iii. Promptly investigate any reports of bullying or harassment within their area of responsibility; and
  - iv. Report any bullying and harassing behavior they experience or observe in the workplace outside their area of responsibility.
- d) Workers must take reasonable steps to protect their own health and safety as well as the health and safety of others.  
Workers must:
  - i. Not engage in bullying or harassment of others;
  - ii. Report any bullying or harassing behavior they experience or observe in the workplace;
  - iii. Comply with this policy; and
  - iv. Report any bullying and harassing behavior they experience or observe in the workplace outside their area of responsibility.
- e) If bullying and harassing behavior becomes violent or involves threats of violence, then the Prevention of Workplace Violence Program applies.

### **4. Reporting Procedure**

- a) Anyone subject to, or witnessing, bullying or harassing behaviour, shall immediately report the incident to their supervisor, or the supervisor of the department where the incident was observed.
- b) If the supervisor is the alleged bully, the incident shall be reported to the Manager of the Department.
- c) Using the City's Respect in the Workplace Incident Report Form, any relevant documents to support any allegations being made, such as emails, handwritten notes, photographs, or physical evidence such as vandalized personal belongings, will be provided to aid in the investigation by the Human Resources Department.
- d) The supervisor and the manager shall undertake an immediate investigation into the alleged bullying and harassing behaviour. Alternately, the City of Dawson Creek may hire an external party to conduct the investigation.

**5. Investigation Procedure**

- a) The purpose of the investigation is to determine if bullying and harassment has occurred. If behaviour in contravention of this policy is found to have occurred, corrective action shall be taken promptly to ensure the bullying and harassment stops.
- b) Investigations shall:
  - i. Be completed promptly, and be as thorough as necessary in the circumstances;
  - ii. Be fair and impartial, providing fairness for both the complainant and respondent in evaluating the allegations;
  - iii. Be sensitive to the interests of all parties, and maintain confidentiality to the extent possible in the circumstances; and
  - iv. Be focused on finding facts and evidence, which should include interviews with the complainant, respondent and any witnesses.

**6. Training Supervisors and Workers**

- a) The City of Dawson Creek shall ensure all supervisors and workers are aware of this policy, and their responsibilities to provide a workplace free from bullying and harassment. Training for supervisors and workers shall include the following:
  - i. How to recognize bullying and harassment;
  - ii. How anyone who experiences or witnesses bullying and harassment should respond; and
  - iii. Procedures for reporting.
- b) In addition, anyone required to investigate incidents and complaints shall receive appropriate training and instruction, as bullying and harassment matters are often sensitive and challenging to address.

**7. Annual Review**

- a) The City of Dawson Creek shall review this policy annually. As part of the annual review, the City of Dawson Creek shall review any bullying and harassment incidents or complaints in the past year to determine if existing preventative steps are working, or if procedures and training must be further clarified.

**APPROVED BY COUNCIL:**

**DATE: October 5, 2020**