

# **POLICY TITLE: Anti-Discrimination & Harassment Policy**

## Summary & Purpose

LifeHouse Church recognises its moral and legal responsibility to provide a working environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. The church will under no circumstance tolerate any discrimination or harassment and will take appropriate action against anyone who breaches this policy.

Although this is a general document, churches and other religious organisations are exempt from certain clauses of the Act. For example, we can seem to be “discriminating” against someone who does not hold the same beliefs as us (muslim or gay), especially in a teaching role, however this is not the case. If at any time you need clarity in this area, it is advised you speak directly to a ministry team leader.

## Definitions

“Discrimination and harassment occur when a person is discriminated against or harassed in the workplace and in certain areas of public life:

- Because of their race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, as defined under the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 or
- Because of their sex, marital status, pregnancy as defined under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 or
- Because of a disability as defined under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 or
- Because of age as defined under the Age Discrimination Act 2004 and
- Some grounds under the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986.”

## Objectives

The church is committed to a strategy which eliminates discrimination and harassment including:

- Creating a working environment which is free from discrimination and harassment and where all members of the church are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect
- Implementing training and awareness raising strategies to ensure that all employees and volunteers know their rights and responsibilities
- Providing an effective procedure for complaints, based on the principles of natural justice
- Treating all complaints in a sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner
- Guarantee protection from any victimisation or reprisals
- Encouraging the reporting of behaviour which breaches the discrimination and harassment policy
- Promoting appropriate standards of conduct at all times.

## Responsibilities of the church

All leaders at LifeHouse Church are responsible for ensuring volunteers are not harassed or discriminated against within the church. It is their responsibility to role model appropriate behavior as outlined in scripture, and communicated in our Growth Track course.

### Responsibilities of employees and voluntary workers

All employees and volunteers are responsible to comply with the policy and bring any policy breaches to the attention of their ministry leader.

### Procedure

Anyone who believes they are being subjected to the prohibited conduct should where possible raise the matter promptly directly with the person they believe is behaving inappropriately. Otherwise the matter should be raised with their immediate ministry leader.

Any complaint will be taken seriously, and dealt with in an impartial, confidential and prompt manner.

Breaches of this policy will result in any of the potential outcomes:

- Undertaking that the unacceptable behavior shall cease
- Coaching
- Verbal Warning
- Apology
- Dismissal from duties
- Reporting of potential criminal behavior to police