

Anti-Harassment Policy

Let us not take thought for our separate interests, but let us help one another.

A member of OSSTF/FEESO has the right to a workplace and union environment free from harassment and bullying.

Harassment and discrimination are not joking matters. They have a destructive effect on the workplace environment, individual well-being, and union solidarity. Such actions are not only destructive, they can be illegal.

Harassment and discrimination can take many forms and may be verbal, physical or psychological. They can involve a wide range of actions including comments, gestures or looks, pictures, messages, touching, or more aggressive actions. These acts may be indirect or overt; they may be isolated or repeated.

Inadvertent, hidden and systemic harassment and discrimination must be identified and addressed. The roots of systemic harassment and discrimination include but are not limited to racism, sexism, and homophobia and transphobia. OSSTF/FEESO does not condone harassment or discrimination on the basis of age, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, socio-economic status or mental or physical disability.

Acts of harassment and discrimination are always degrading, unwelcome and coercive. They are always unacceptable.

As members of OSSTF/FEESO, our goal must be to protect human rights, to promote mutual respect and trust, and to foster inclusion.

We cannot condone or tolerate intimidating, demeaning, hostile and aggressive behaviour against another member. We cannot condone these behaviours when we witness them.

As OSSTF/FEESO members, we must speak out against this conduct and stand together to protect human rights. We must take action.

OSSTF/FEESO is committed to strengthening member solidarity, and in addition to representing members' interests in the workplace, takes seriously its own responsibility to ensure that members are treated with respect and dignity at all provincially sponsored OSSTF/FEESO events and meetings.

Any member who feels targeted by harassment or discrimination must be able to speak up and know their concerns will be responded to immediately in accordance with OSSTF/FEESO Bylaws and the Resolution and Complaint Process as found in the OSSTF/FEESO Policies and Procedures."

Anti-Harassment Procedure

A member who believes s/he has been the target of harassment or discrimination at a provincially sponsored OSSTF/FEESO meeting or event is encouraged to take immediate action to ensure this behaviour is stopped.

As a first step, the member should make it clear to the perpetrator that s/he finds the behaviour offensive, and ask that it be stopped. This can be done personally, either in writing or verbally, or with the assistance of a third party.

If the behaviour recurs or persists, or if the member does not feel safe in approaching the perpetrator directly, s/he should speak with the designated officer(s) and ask her/him to act.

If no officer has been designated, the member should speak with the Secretariat in charge to ask that one be appointed.

The designated officer(s) will investigate the complaint promptly, including separately interviewing the parties involved and any witnesses, with a view to resolving the problem informally. During this process, the designated officer(s), with the approval of the General Secretary, may remove the respondent temporarily from the meeting if circumstances warrant.

The investigation shall be handled confidentially; however, all complaints will be reported by the designated officer(s) to the General Secretary.

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the complainant will be asked to put the complaint and all relevant information in writing.

If the complainant chooses to provide such a written complaint, it will be submitted to the General Secretary for action and it shall be the joint responsibility of the General Secretary and the Secretariat in charge to conduct an investigation, determine if the behaviour falls under the definition of harassment, and decide on appropriate remedial action. While conducting the investigation, the general secretary and Secretariat will be informed by an understanding of the systemic roots of discrimination and harassment as expressed in the OSSTF/FEESO Equity Statement.

The parties involved will receive a written report stating the findings and any action taken.

Resolutions may include but are not limited to apologies, mediation, warnings, temporarily limiting access, or removal/exclusion from the meeting or event. If a decision is made to remove or exclude that member, and where this member is representing a bargaining unit or district, a confidential letter outlining the reasons for this decision will be sent to the president of the appropriate body. The General Secretary shall keep a confidential file of all records and reports related to the investigation of written complaints for a period of five years.

Decisions may be reviewed by the Appeal Committee of Provincial Council on the request of a member, as outlined in the OSSTF/FEESO Policies and Procedures.

None of the above restricts a member's right to file a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission or make a complaint to police.