

HR POLICY AND PROCESS REVIEW
SUMMARY REPORT
PREMIER'S OFFICE, GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

May 10, 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 3

HR POLICY and GUIDE 3

APPENDIX A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY FOR POLITICAL STAFF 5

APPENDIX B GUIDE TO RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY 9

APPENDIX C SAFE WORK COMMITMENT BY THE PREMIER AND MINISTERS WORKING WITH POLITICAL STAFF 19

INTRODUCTION

This is a summary report of the HR Policy Review conducted for the Office of the Premier of the Government of Alberta by Jamie Pytel and Alex Matthews of Kingsgate Legal. The purpose of this report is to share as much information as possible with respect to the HR Review while not compromising the confidentiality around the information that was obtained to inform this review.

Kingsgate Legal was asked to make recommendations for human resources policies related to staff of the Premier's Office and Ministerial Offices at the Alberta Legislature.

Specifically outside of the scope for this review was gathering information on any outstanding litigation or speaking to Plaintiff(s) in outstanding litigation. It would be improper for them to gather that kind of information for the present purposes. Such feedback will naturally flow through any litigation that has been commenced.

Kingsgate Legal was to provide an updated policy framework to support our commitment to ensuring a work environment that is free of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination and violence. For consistency, they were asked to pursue alignment with existing respectful workplace policies applicable to employees of the Alberta Public Service and staff of the Legislative Assembly Office, bearing in mind the unique characteristics of this work environment.

CURRENT HR POLICIES

The Government of Alberta adopted a *Respect in the Workplace Policy* on January 23, 2019, and as one of the priorities in its *Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Action Plan*, commissioned a new online training program to complement this policy. The training course, called *Respect in the Workplace eCourse*, was developed with the assistance of third-party subject matter experts and made mandatory for all public service employees, as well as the employees in the Premier's Office, Ministers' Offices and Legislative offices.

Currently, political staff with respectful workplace concerns can report them to their respective Chiefs of Staff or the HR Director (or other individuals responsible for HR, referred to as the "HR Director" in the rest of this summary report). The individual currently responsible for HR is also the Deputy Chief of Staff to the Premier and has direct access to both the Premier's Chief of Staff and the Premier. Review and assessment of reported concerns is performed by the HR Director who then determines whether informal or formal resolution is warranted. Where appropriate, the HR Director may assist with informal resolution. If a formal investigation is deemed necessary, external investigation services may be engaged.

Staff who work for the Legislative Assembly Office are covered by a separate respectful workplace policy and report concerns using the processes contained in that policy.

HR POLICY and GUIDE

Attached are the **Respectful Workplace Policy** and companion **Guide** that were recommended by Kingsgate Legal for political staff. The Policy contains the overarching principles and expected requirements. The Guide contains information that will assist with interpreting the Policy and a process for administering the Policy. Separately, Kingsgate Legal provided checklists for the management and intake of complaints. The introduction of the Policy and how it works will be supplemented with **training** and **communication**.

In terms of **resolution options**, Kingsgate Legal suggested that all good programs **support and encourage informal resolution** where possible and appropriate. If informal resolution methods are unsuccessful or impossible, a **formal investigation** of the complaint is conducted. The overall goal is to restore the workplace and work relationships, while putting an end to any unacceptable conduct.

Kingsgate Legal also recommended that this framework be supported by statements containing a *Safe Work Commitment by the Premier and Ministers Working with Political Staff*, the purpose of which is to demonstrate awareness of and support for these objectives.

Kingsgate Legal noted that there are some jurisdictions in which policies have been adopted by both political staff and elected officials (for instance, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, the House of Commons of Canada, the Senate, and the United Kingdom). If there was interest in pursuing a policy for other Members of the Legislative Assembly and staff, this would require a coordinated effort by a number of participants outside of the Premier's Office.

Appendix A Respectful Workplace Policy for Staff of the Premier's Office and Ministerial Offices of the Government of Alberta

Appendix B Guide to the Respectful Workplace Policy for Staff of the Premier's Office and Ministerial Offices of the Government of Alberta

Appendix C Safe Work Commitment by the Premier and Ministers Working with Political Staff

Our thanks to those who participated in this HR review.

APPENDIX A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY FOR POLITICAL STAFF

**RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY
FOR STAFF OF THE OFFICE OF THE PREMIER
AND THE MINISTERIAL OFFICES
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA**

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Premier’s Office of the Government of Alberta is committed to a work environment where staff are treated with dignity and respect, and are safe from harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, and violence.

The demonstration of respect is the responsibility of every staff member within the work environment. Harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, and violence will not be tolerated in our workplace. The Premier’s Office is committed to eliminating and doing everything reasonably practicable to prevent this type of inappropriate and unacceptable behavior.

The Premier’s Office will appropriately investigate any allegations of harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, and violence and take corrective action to address these forms of misconduct.

This Policy and the processes made available to staff are in addition to and not intended to discourage the exercise of any legal rights, including those outlined in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act and Code*, and the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.

2. POLICY APPLICATION & EXPECTATIONS

This Policy applies to all staff employed in the Office of the Premier and the Ministerial Offices of the Government of Alberta.

All staff are required to comply with this Policy when carrying out work for the Premier’s and Ministerial Offices, including complying with the spirit and intent of this Policy.

3. DEFINITIONS

Workplace Harassment is objectionable or unwelcome conduct by a staff member, that the staff member knows or ought reasonably to know would harm or cause offence, humiliation, degradation, or embarrassment, or which generally causes a hostile, intimidating, or abusive work environment or otherwise adversely affects the health and safety of an employee. Workplace harassment includes bullying.

Harassment is usually a series of events or a pattern of behaviour. In some circumstances, a single incident may be serious or egregious enough to constitute harassment.

Workplace harassment does not include conduct and reasonable feedback relating to the management and performance of a staff member or the work site.

Discrimination is a type of workplace harassment related to a person's race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation, or any other protected ground of discrimination included in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.

Sexual Harassment is objectionable or unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, that a staff member knows or ought reasonably to know would cause offence, humiliation, degradation, embarrassment or would reasonably be understood to place a condition of a sexual nature on the work relationship. Sexual harassment is also a form of sex-based discrimination.

Workplace Violence is the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a staff member that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm and includes domestic or sexual violence.

Work includes work that is carried out at any time or location where a staff member is expected to be performing their job duties.

Workplace means any place where the business is carried out, and includes business travel, conferences and employer directed work-related social gatherings or events.

4. RETALIATION, COOPERATION, AND INTERFERENCE

Retaliation is any intentional action taken against anyone who, in good faith, enquires about making a complaint, makes a complaint, or participates in an investigation under this Policy. Retaliation is considered a serious breach of this Policy.

Staff are required to co-operate with, and not interfere with, the processes related to this Policy, including investigations into potential breaches of this Policy.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

Complaints and investigations made under this Policy are to be kept confidential. Staff who receive complaints or are involved in an investigation must not disclose information learned during the investigation with the exception of disclosure to the Director of Human Resources, legal counsel, or if required by law.

Where it is necessary for the Premier's Office to inform staff about a matter covered by this Policy, only information that is necessary for the purpose will be disclosed, including informing of threats of violence or potential violence.

6. ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

Staff may make anonymous complaints, but should be aware that the ability to respond to such complaints may be negatively impacted by a lack of information and in some cases the complaint may be incapable of being investigated. As fair process to all involved is required, anonymity may not be possible. Staff are encouraged to identify themselves when making complaints so the protections in this Policy can be afforded to them.

7. PROHIBITION ON MISUSE

Complaints made under this Policy must be made in good faith. Complaints found to be made in bad faith, including false, frivolous, malicious, or vexatious complaints, are a serious violation of this Policy and are considered a form of workplace harassment. If there is a finding that a complaint was made in bad faith, the complainant may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment contract.

Complaints that are found to be unfounded or unsubstantiated are not necessarily brought in bad faith. A determination will be made if the complaint was brought in bad faith.

8. CORRECTIVE ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF POLICY BREACH

When findings are made that a staff member has breached this Policy, appropriate action including corrective, remedial, or disciplinary action, up to and including termination, will be taken.

9. SEEKING INFORMATION / MAKING A COMPLAINT

Detailed information regarding the interpretation of this Policy, making an informal or formal complaint, and the investigation process, is available in the companion **Guide** to this Policy.

Staff may also obtain information about this Policy and Guide by contacting their Supervisor, Chief of Staff, or the Director of Human Resources.

10. INVESTIGATIONS

Complaints will be dealt with promptly, and in a confidential and impartial manner. An investigation may be initiated when the allegations, if proven true, could be a violation of this Policy, and when there is sufficient information to conduct the investigation.

11. TRAINING

All staff must complete training on this Policy as directed from time to time by the Director of HR and/or the Premier’s Chief of Staff.

12. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Policy came into effect on _____, 2022.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY STAFF

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read and understand this *Respectful Workplace Policy* and I agree to conduct myself in accordance with its provisions.

Date

Electronic or In-Person Signature

*To be signed by staff when hired and annually thereafter

**GUIDE to the
RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY
FOR STAFF EMPLOYED BY
THE OFFICE OF THE PREMIER AND THE MINISTERIAL OFFICES
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA**

INTRODUCTION

This Guide provides additional information for staff for interpreting and understanding the Respectful Workplace Policy (RWP), and information on the complaint and investigation process.

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

The RWP defines harassment as:

Workplace Harassment is objectionable or unwelcome conduct by a staff member, that the staff member knows or ought reasonably to know would harm or cause offence, humiliation, degradation, or embarrassment, or which generally causes a hostile, intimidating, or abusive work environment or otherwise adversely affects the health and safety of an employee. Workplace harassment includes bullying.

Harassment is usually a series of events or a pattern of behaviour. In some circumstances, a single incident may be serious or egregious enough to constitute harassment.

Harassment can come in many forms and be carried out in a variety of ways. It can be a **single incident**, **many incidents** or a **pattern of conduct**.

Understanding the **context** within which the conduct occurred is often important when determining if harassment occurred. Someone's **intention to harass** is irrelevant if in fact the conduct amounted to harassment.

Common **examples of harassment** include:

- Conduct that is belittling, demeaning, condescending, insulting, or humiliating
- Malicious gossip or spreading false information
- Abuse of power, such as the improper use of seniority, influence, or power to undermine or harm someone, their career, or their performance

- Conduct that is threatening, improperly coercing, or intimidating
- Repeated aggressive or negative gestures or actions, such as leering, glaring, or eye-rolling
- Angry yelling or shouting, particularly when directed at an individual or group
- Ganging up on an employee in an intimidating manner
- Singling out or targeting an individual in a malicious or inappropriate way
- Socially isolating or deliberately excluding a person or group from work-related activities
- Jokes or taunting that negatively targets or isolates a person or group
- Mobbing or ganging up on an individual
- Bullying, such as repeated negative conduct aimed at a specific person or group, including cyberbullying
- Persistent, inappropriate, unwelcome inquiries about an individual's personal life
- Intentionally sabotaging or interfering with someone's work or ability to do their work, including withholding information or excluding someone from attending meetings or receiving relevant communications that are essential for them to do their job
- Derogatory comments, insults, jokes or inappropriate questions or conduct based on race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, sexual orientation or political affiliation, or other protected grounds of discrimination included in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*

Workplace harassment does not include conduct and reasonable feedback relating to the management and performance of staff or the work site.

Legitimate workplace actions are not harassment when carried out respectfully and in good faith. These may include:

- Performance feedback, including discussions about performance expectations
- Criticism of work
- Supervision and assignment of work, and direction on how it is to be completed
- Requests for updates or status reports
- Approval or denial of time off

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The RWP defines sexual harassment as:

Sexual Harassment is objectionable or unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, that a staff member knows or ought reasonably to know would cause offence, humiliation, degradation, embarrassment or would reasonably be

understood to place a condition of a sexual nature on the work relationship.
Sexual harassment is also a form of sex-based discrimination.

Sexual harassment involves non-verbal, verbal or physical actions of a sexual nature.

Common **examples of sexual harassment** include:

- Sexual advances, demands or placing sexual conditions by a superior or someone who could influence, or is reasonably perceived as being capable of influencing, another person's employment conditions or work opportunities
- Stalking
- Displaying, posting or sharing sexual images
- Inappropriate staring, ogling, leering or whistling
- Inappropriate or unwanted physical contact such as touching, patting, or pinching
- Requesting sexual favors, physical contact, or dates
- Abuse of power to secure sexual favours, physical contact, or dates
- Persistent expression of sexual interest after being informed that such interest is unwelcome
- Unwelcome or objectionable remarks or questions about a person's sexuality, sex life, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical attributes or appearance
- Sexual comments, stories, jokes, practical jokes, gestures, or nicknames of a sexual nature that cause discomfort, humiliation, or embarrassment
- Persistent and unwelcome sharing of information about one's own sex life or sexual interests
- Derogatory terms, taunts, threats or other language that is sexual or gender-based
- A threat of reprisal or actual reprisal against someone who has refused a sexual invitation
- Actions or comments of a sexual nature that are not directed at a particular person but create an offensive or hostile work environment
- Indecent exposure
- Sexual assault

Consensual relationships sometimes develop in the work environment. Consent to sexual activity must be free, informed, and ongoing. Any prior sexual activity does not, in and of itself, constitute consent for a subsequent sexual activity. An individual may withdraw consent at any time before or during sexual activity. It is the responsibility of the individuals to ensure they first have consent before making any kind of sexual contact with another individual and to cease contact if consent is withdrawn or informed to be unwelcome.

DISCRIMINATION

The RWP defines discrimination as:

Discrimination is a type of workplace harassment related to a person's race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation, or any other protected ground of discrimination included in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.

Discrimination in the work context can be against an individual or systemic. It can be direct or indirect. It often relates to the terms, conditions or privileges of employment.

Examples of **discrimination** can include:

- the use of slurs, epithets, stereotypes, euphemisms, references, or a focus on characteristics associated with a protected group
- how policies are applied towards the protected group versus others
- decisions related to hiring, promotions, or advancement
- how work or positions are assigned
- denying access to training, services, or facilities
- subjecting someone from a protected group to excessive, unjustified performance management or monitoring
- interference with or denial of opportunities for advancement and promotion

Staff should be mindful of conduct suggesting **implicit bias** (also known as **unconscious bias**) within the environment. As well, some conduct can accumulate to create a discriminatory environment, such as repeated **micro-aggressions** (indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of underrepresented groups).

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

The RWP defines workplace violence as:

Workplace Violence is the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of an employee that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm and includes domestic or sexual violence.

Workplace violence can come in many forms and be carried out in a variety of ways. It is a serious issue and should be reported immediately.

Some **examples of workplace violence** include:

- Threatening behaviour such as shaking fists, destroying property or throwing objects

- Verbal or written threats, including threatening to attack someone, sending threatening communications that express an intent to inflict harm
- Physical attacks such as hitting (directly or with an object), shoving, pushing, or kicking
- Threats including coercion
- Angry violent outbursts
- Domestic violence, which often consists of a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom that person has or has had a personal relationship. If acts of domestic violence, such as physical violence, emotional or psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, or stalking happen in or otherwise affect the workplace, such conduct can be addressed under the RWP.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The RWP says the following with respect to confidentiality:

Complaints and investigations made under this Policy are to be kept confidential. Staff who receive complaints or are involved in an investigation must not disclose information learned during the investigation with the exception of disclosure to the Director of Human Resources, legal counsel, or if required by law.

Where it is necessary for the Premier’s Office to inform staff about a matter covered by this Policy, only information that is necessary for the purpose will be disclosed, including informing of threats of violence or potential violence.

Confidentiality in RWP matters **in this work environment is especially important**, as failing to maintain confidentiality can cause widespread and permanent damage to those involved.

Breaching confidentiality is considered a **very serious breach** of the RWP.

RETALIATION

The RWP defines retaliation as:

Retaliation is any intentional action taken against anyone who, in good faith, enquires about making a complaint, makes a complaint, or participates in an investigation under the RWP. Retaliation is considered a serious breach of the RWP.

Retaliation can come in many forms that may be unique to the circumstances. It must be shown to be intentional and must be against the person or group who brought forward a complaint or participated in an RWP-related process.

Some **examples of retaliation** include:

- Unjustified or excessive negative performance feedback, criticism, discipline, demotion, or termination of employment, or threats of such actions
- Withdrawal or reduction in quality of work assignments or employment opportunities
- Social exclusion or isolation
- Interfering with a staff member's ability to do their work
- Negative or derogatory comments, or other harassing conduct

Conduct Outside the Premier's Office Control

In this environment, staff may experience conduct by others that is outside the Premier's Office control. The Premier's Office will take all steps available to address this conduct, including escalating the concern to those who can address the issue. Unfortunately moving a staff member to a new assignment is sometimes the only safe or available solution to a workplace issue. When moved to another assignment in the short or long term, staff are encouraged to view this as a necessary safety measure and not retribution for making a complaint or participating in a RWP process.

Staff may experience harassment while communicating on social media as part of their roles. If they feel this is impacting their health or safety, they can report this to their Supervisor or Chief of Staff (or the HR Director as appropriate) and measures can be discussed and implemented to address these issues.

PROHIBITION ON MISUSE

The RWP says the following with respect to misuse of the RWP:

Complaints made under the RWP must be made in good faith. Complaints found to be made in bad faith, including **false, frivolous, malicious, or vexatious complaints**, are a serious violation of the RWP and are considered a form of workplace harassment. If there is a finding that a complaint was made in bad faith, the complainant may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment contract.

Complaints that are found to be unfounded or unsubstantiated are not necessarily brought in bad faith. A determination will be made if the complaint was brought in bad faith.

Staff are encouraged to bring forward complaints and have them fairly and impartially reviewed, without fear of retribution. However, the RWP should not be used as a tool to harass someone or the organization, or as a means to resolve trivial disagreements. This provision draws attention to the fact that **making a complaint is a serious matter for all involved.**

Examples of a **vexatious complaint** may include complaints which:

- have already been investigated or resolved, and are merely a repeat of earlier complaints
- are made to harass, embarrass, or otherwise negatively impact another person
- are without reasonable prospects of success
- consistently pile on new, trivial allegations during the process to unnecessarily prolong the complaint, investigation or resolution process
- are brought for an improper purpose, such as to tie up resources or deflect attention

Examples of a **frivolous** complaint include complaints which are:

- easily determined to be without merit
- speculative or have no basis in fact or reality
- objectively trivial, minor, petty, insignificant, or otherwise a waste of time and resources

Knowingly making a **false complaint** is particularly egregious given the potential short and long-term damage to the person falsely accused. False complaints are a serious breach of the RWP.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

The RWP says the following:

Where an investigation finds that a staff member has breached this Policy, appropriate action including corrective, remedial, or disciplinary action, up to and including termination will be taken.
--

A **restorative approach** is preferred when possible and appropriate. This involves the establishment or re-establishment of a respectful workplace relationship.

If there is a breach of the RWP, reasonable, proportionate and necessary actions will be taken, including:

- A requirement to apologize to those impacted by the conduct
- Performance management
- A requirement to take training, coaching or counselling
- Verbal or written reprimand

- Demotion
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Suspension or termination of employment

COMPLAINT PROCESS

Complaints can be handled **informally** or **formally**. Informal resolution is always encouraged when it is appropriate and safe to do so. However, sometimes formal resolution is the only or most appropriate approach.

It is imperative that **confidentiality** is maintained whether the process is informal or formal.

Informal Resolution

Informal resolution occurs when concerns are addressed either directly, through facilitation or mediation. This is encouraged as it can help repair, maintain, and strengthen the working relationship. Often the offending individual is unaware their conduct is causing offence. These may be difficult or awkward interactions to have, but staff are expected in most instances to attempt resolution before escalating. The goal is to have the offending conduct stop and repair the working relationship.

Informal resolution options include:

1. **Directly** by informing the other person

- In person, via private email, written note, or some other way
- If in person, be timely, wait until emotions are calmed, and do this in a private setting.
- Discussions should be factual and respectful, understanding that the other individual may not feel the same way
- The other person should be given time and space to understand the feedback and react
- The goal is restoring or creating a respectful working relationship

2. Involve your **Supervisor**

- A staff member can develop and agree on a plan with their Supervisor to address the conduct
- The Supervisor may assist with facilitating or mediating an informal resolution
- If the concern is about the Supervisor, the staff member can discuss the concern with the next level of management

3. Engage the **Director of HR**

- **This option should be used where direct resolution and speaking to a Supervisor is not possible, unsafe, inappropriate, has been unsuccessful, or where the concerned staff is a Supervisor or Chief of Staff**
- The Director of HR will then assist with trying to reach an informal resolution

Formal Resolution

If informal resolution is not possible or has been unsuccessful, the following formal steps may be initiated by the staff member:

1. Complete the **Complaint Form** available from the Director of HR (or the Premier's Chief of Staff if the Complaint is about or involves the Director of HR)
2. **Submit Complaint Form** to the **Director of HR** (or to the **Premier's Chief of Staff** if the Complaint is about or involves the Director of HR)

The person making the complaint is then called **the Complainant**, and the person complained about is called **the Respondent**.

Only complaints determined to be capable of being investigated and within the scope of the RWP will be investigated. Consideration may also be given to arriving at a facilitated or mediated resolution after a formal complaint is received.

INVESTIGATIONS

The RWP says:

Complaints will be dealt with promptly, and in a confidential and impartial manner. An investigation may be initiated when the allegations, if proven true, could be a violation of this Policy, and when there is sufficient information to conduct an investigation.

When it is determined that an investigation is needed, the investigator will:

1. Gather and review background information, and take steps to ensure relevant information is preserved.
2. Interview individuals with relevant information.
3. Prepare a confidential investigation report containing findings, made on a balance of probabilities, on whether the RWP was breached.

4. Provide a confidential summary of the findings of the investigation to the Complainant and the Respondent.

Everyone involved is entitled to **fair and due process** in the investigation.

Formal investigation reports will be kept confidential to protect the participants involved and the integrity of the process.

The Complainant and the Respondent will be informed of the results of the investigation. For privacy or legal reasons, they may not always be informed of corrective actions taken.

APPENDIX C SAFE WORK COMMITMENT BY THE PREMIER AND MINISTERS WORKING WITH POLITICAL STAFF

SAFE WORK COMMITMENT BY THE PREMIER AND MINISTERS WORKING WITH POLITICAL STAFF

The Premier's Office of the Government of Alberta and the Ministers appointed under that Office are committed to providing a work environment where staff are treated with dignity, respect and are safe from harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, and violence.

As a Minister of the Government of Alberta, along with the Premier who makes the same commitment, I undertake to promote a safe work environment for the political staff that work within my offices or other staff that interact with me and my office.

I understand that:

Workplace harassment is objectionable or unwelcome conduct that a person knows or ought reasonably to have known would harm or cause offence, humiliation, degradation, or embarrassment, or which generally causes a hostile, intimidating, or abusive work environment or otherwise adversely affects the health and safety of staff, including bullying.

Discrimination is a type of workplace harassment related to a person's race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, or sexual orientation, or any other protected ground of discrimination included in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.

Sexual Harassment is objectionable or unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, that a person knows or ought reasonably to know would cause offence, humiliation, degradation, embarrassment or would reasonably be understood to place a condition of a sexual nature on the work relationship. Sexual harassment is also a form of sex-based discrimination.

Workplace Violence is the threatened, attempted or actual conduct that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm and includes domestic or sexual violence.

I understand that:

1. If a concern about harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination or violence is brought forward relating to a political staff member, it must be kept **strictly confidential** and there is **no tolerance for retaliation** against anyone who brings forward a good faith complaint or participates in an investigation related to a workplace complaint.

2. A political staff member may seek **informal resolution** to workplace concerns. I will engage in such informal resolution requests in good faith with a view to restoring the working relationship.
3. If a staff member brings forward a **formal respectful workplace complaint**, there may be an investigation of that complaint. I will co-operate in good faith to the best of my ability with that investigation.
4. Political staff are governed by their own **Respectful Workplace Policy and Guide** which I may refer to for guidance with respect to these types of issues. I may also seek information and guidance from the Director of HR for the Premier's and Ministerial Offices.

Date

Signature

[insert name of Minister]