

Policy:	Respectful Workplace		
Owner:	VP People, Communications & External Affairs		
Endorsed By:	VP People, Communications & External Affairs Executive Leadership Collaborative	Endorsement Date:	2025-10-14 2025-10-21
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations at London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) to create a respectful work environment and promote respectful behaviours between staff/affiliates.

AUDIENCE

This policy applies to all LHSC staff and affiliates, including individuals working at LHSC funded through an external source, credentialed professional staff, clinical fellows, residents, students, volunteers, and contract workers. It applies to work being conducted both onsite at LHSC owned and rented properties and remotely.

This policy does not apply to patients, essential caregivers, and visitors, however LHSC recognizes that time in the hospital can create enormous stress. Refer to the [Patient Rights and Responsibilities](#) for LHSC's expectations on a mutually respectful partnership between patients and health care providers and highlights the expectations of patients, care partners/visitors, and staff during any interactions at or with LHSC.

POLICY

LHSC is dedicated to providing a respectful, inclusive, and healthy work environment that reflects our shared values of Teamwork, Compassion, Curiosity, and Accountability.

The healthcare environment is very challenging, with numerous stakeholders, multiple pressures, and conflicting demands, and at times significant emotion. It can be easy to lash out at others. Regardless of these stressors, everyone has a right to be treated with respect and to feel safe. This is a shared responsibility.

Respect for one another is more than just being polite and courteous. It means expressing appreciation, valuing differences, apologizing when you are wrong and admitting when you don't know or need help. It requires sensitivity, empathy, patience, honesty, openness, humility, and a willingness to listen.

Behaviours that may be disrespectful include but are not limited to the following:

- Careless humour or sarcasm
- Incivility, rudeness
- Stereotyping based on age, gender, culture, race, etc..
- Interrupting or walking away when someone else is talking
- Yelling and shouting

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- Rolling one's eyes when another is speaking
- Insulting or putting someone else down
- Gossiping, talking behind someone's back
- Profanity, especially when directed at someone else
- Sabotaging or taking credit for someone else's work
- Refusing to offer help when needed
- Maliciously excluding or isolating others

If anyone experiences or witnesses these behaviours, or others that they feel are disrespectful, they have a duty to act as outlined below. Failure to challenge such behaviours may result in them continuing and even escalating. In doing so, it is important to remember that people have different thresholds and tolerances for what they consider to be disrespectful behaviour, what might be disrespectful to one may not feel that way to another.

In some cases, such behaviours may be serious enough to violate provisions of the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) or the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#). In these situations, refer to [Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination](#) policy or the [Workplace Violence Prevention](#) policy for guidance.

Guidance is also available through various professional colleges and associations which outline standard that members are expected to adhere to (including but not limited to the CCHL [Code of Ethics](#), CNO [Code of Conduct](#), CPSO policy on [Professional Behaviour](#), etc. Failure to adhere to these standards may result in an individual being reported to the respective College.

Non-compliance with this policy may be cause for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or loss of appointment or affiliation with the organization and reporting to legal and/or regulatory authorities.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Executive Leadership:

- 1.1. Are held to the highest level of accountability to define, model, and promote respectful workplace behaviours and live the values of LHSC.
- 1.2. Are accountable to build and sustain good working environments built on the foundation of respectful behaviour.
- 1.3. Will hold others accountable for their behaviour and act when appropriate to assist others to comply with the requirements of this policy and exhibit professional respectful behaviour.

2. All Leaders:

- 2.1. Are accountable to model and promote respectful workplace behaviours and live the values of LHSC.
- 2.2. Are expected to build and sustain good working environments built on the foundation of respectful behaviour.
- 2.3. Are expected to set expectations for respectful workplace behaviour in their areas of responsibility, hold staff and affiliates accountable for their behaviour, and follow up with appropriate investigation and remedial actions when required, seeking assistance from partners such as HR, Medical Affairs, NPEI when needed.
- 2.4. Will document and address employee behaviours in a timely manner that do not align with LHSC's values and the Respectful Workplace Policy.

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- 2.5. Will seek Human Resources guidance and support in a timely manner when necessary to address employee behaviours that do not align with this policy.

3. Staff and Affiliates:

- 3.1. Are accountable to model and promote professional workplace behaviours and live the values of LHSC.
- 3.2. Are encouraged to address disrespectful behaviours in the workplace, either directly or with the assistance of a colleague, leader or Human Resources and/or Medical Affairs.
- 3.3. Are expected to participate fully in any investigation into behaviours that may conflict with the Respectful Workplace Policy.

DEFINITIONS

Affiliates – Individuals who are not employed by the organization but perform specific tasks at or for the organization, including:

- Credentialed Professional Staff means those Physicians, Dentists, Midwives and Registered Nurses in the Extended Class who are appointed by the Board and who are granted specific privileges to practice medicine, dentistry, midwifery or nursing, respectively,
- Students,
- Volunteers,
- Contractors or contracted workers who may be members of a third party contract or under direct contract with the organization, and
- Individuals working at the organization but funded through an external source.

Bullying – Bullying is a form of **harassment**. According to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, bullying is usually seen as acts or verbal comments that could psychologically or 'mentally' hurt or isolate a person in the workplace. Sometimes, bullying can involve negative physical contact as well. Bullying usually involves repeated incidents or a pattern of behaviour that is intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people. It has also been described as the assertion of power through aggression”.

Discrimination – In accordance with the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) means the less favourable treatment of persons in any aspect of employment because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or disability.

Harassment – Consistent with both the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) and the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a person that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Harassment may or may not be connected to a Prohibited Ground or Grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code. Harassment normally requires a course of conduct or behavior that persists over time; however, a severe one-time egregious incident can also constitute harassment. Harassment may include verbal/psychological abuse, bullying/cyber bullying, intimidation, offensive or discriminatory comments, jokes or innuendos, displaying or circulating offensive pictures or materials, offensive or intimidating communication, introducing or a person's privacy by pestering, spying or stalking, undermining or deliberately impeding a person's work, or withholding necessary information or purposefully giving the wrong information.

Harassment does not include the normal exercise of management's right to manage such as the day-to-day management of operations, performance at work or absenteeism, the assignment of tasks and

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the application of progressive discipline up to and including termination.

Sexual Harassment – Consistent with both the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) and the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a person because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. It also includes making a sexual solicitation or advance, or a reprisal or threat of reprisal for the refusal of a sexual solicitation or advance, where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome.

Sexual Violence – Sexual violence is a broad term that describes any violence, physical or psychological, that is carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality.

Workplace – Means any land, premises, location, or thing at, upon, in or near which a worker works. In general, if a worker is being directed and paid by LHSC to be or near a specified location to carry out a work-related function, then it is a workplace. In addition to LHSC sites, a workplace may include off-site facilities, vehicles, LHSC sponsored conferences or training, LHSC sponsored social functions or fundraisers.

Workplace Violence – Refers to:

- The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, which causes or could cause physical injury to the worker,
- An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, which could cause physical injury to the worker, or
- A statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

REFERENCES

Legislation

[Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
[Ontario Human Rights Code](#)

Corporate

[Workplace Violence](#)
[Standards for Business Conduct](#)
[Smoke-Free Environment](#)
[Conflict of Interest – Interacting with Industry](#)
[Whistleblower](#)
[Disconnecting from Work](#)
[Patient Rights and Responsibilities](#)
[Progressive Discipline](#)
[Flagging and Management of Patient, Care Partner, and Visitor Risk for Violent Behaviour](#)
[Managing Patient and Care Partner Feedback](#)
[Staff Safety Events and Hazard Reporting](#)
[LHSC Employee Assistance Program](#)
[Guidelines for Physician Performance Management](#)
[Incident Reporting and Management](#)
[Privacy](#)
[Confidentiality](#)
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Other

[Ontario Human Rights Commission](#)

[CPSO - Physician Behaviour in the Professional Environment](#)

[CCHL Code of Ethics](#)

[CNO Code of Conduct](#)

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