



Chats**Canada**Cats

## Policy against harassment and discrimination

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## 1. OBJECTIVES

Chats Canada Cats cares about the well-being and a harmonious work environment for all of our volunteer staff and any other people they hire or work with or collaborate with.

In this regard, the purpose of this Policy is to affirm Chats Canada Cats' commitment to prevent and stop any situation of psychological or sexual harassment within their organization, including any form of discriminatory harassment. It is also intended to establish the principles of intervention that are applied in the organization when a complaint of harassment is filed or a situation of harassment is reported to the employer or his representative.

## 2. SCOPE

The Policy outlines Chats Canada Cats' commitment to providing a safe and healthy workplace free of all forms of harassment and discrimination. The Policy applies to any person who is retained by Chats Canada Cats and to any person who works or works with them. These may include staff, managers, full-time and part-time employees, volunteers, temporary staff or contractors.

The policy adopted by Chats Canada Cats applies to the usual place of work and any other place or activity related to the work, including, for example, exhibition sites, meetings, benefit events, public events, social activities, communications carried out in cyberspace or by any other technological means, etc.

The purpose of this Policy is also to contribute to the awareness, information and training of the community to prevent harassment and discrimination, and to provide the procedure to follow in the presence of such behaviors.

## 3. DEFINITIONS<sup>1</sup>

### Psychological harassment

According to section 81.18 of the *Quebec's Act respecting labor standards*, psychological harassment is defined as "vexatious behavior manifested either by repeated behavior, speech, acts or actions, which are hostile or not desired, which is detrimental to the dignity or the psychological or physical integrity of the employee and which causes, for him, a harmful work environment".

A single serious conduct can also constitute psychological harassment if it carries such an attack and produces a continuing harmful effect for the person concerned.

### Sexual harassment and discrimination

The definition of psychological harassment included in the *Quebec's Act respecting labor standards* includes sexual harassment at work and discriminatory harassment based on any of the grounds listed in section 10 of the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*: race, color, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, marital status, age except to the extent permitted by law, religion, political beliefs, language, ethnicity or national, social condition, disability or the use of a means to overcome this handicap.

#### Criteria

To establish that there is psychological or sexual harassment, it is necessary to demonstrate the presence of all the elements of the definition:

- **Vexatious conduct**  
This conduct is humiliating, offensive or abusive to the person who suffers it. It hurts the person in his self-esteem and anxiety. It exceeds what a reasonable person considers correct in the course of his work.
- **The repetitive nature**  
Considered in isolation, a word, a gesture, a behavior may seem trivial. It is the accumulation or all of these behaviors that can become harassment. However, a serious isolated act could be considered harassment

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<sup>1</sup> Source : [cnt.gouv.qc.ca/en-cas-de/harcelement-psychologique-ou-sexuel/index.html#c8480](http://cnt.gouv.qc.ca/en-cas-de/harcelement-psychologique-ou-sexuel/index.html#c8480). Voir l'Annexe 1 pour plus de précision.

- ***Words, gestures or hostile or unwanted behaviors***  
The words, gestures or alleged behavior must be perceived as hostile or unwanted. If they are of a sexual nature, they could be recognized as harassment even if the victim did not clearly express their refusal.
- ***Violation of dignity or integrity***  
Psychological or sexual harassment has a negative impact on the person. The victim may feel diminished, devalued, denigrated both personally and professionally. The physical health of the harassed person may also suffer.
- ***Work environment rendered harmful***  
Psychological or sexual harassment makes the work environment harmful to the victim. The harassed person may, for example, be isolated from his colleagues because of words, gestures or hostile behavior towards him or her.

## 4. POLICY STATEMENT

Chats Canada Cats does not tolerate or admit any form of psychological or sexual harassment within the organization, whether:

- By managers to employees;
- Between colleagues;
- Between volunteers;
- By employees to their superiors;
- From any person associated with it: administrator, partner, supplier, visitor or other.

Any behavior related to harassment may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or removal from the organization.

Chats Canada Cats is committed to taking reasonable steps to:

- Provide a workplace free of all forms of harassment to protect the dignity and the psychological and physical integrity of the staff and any other persons whose services they retain;
- Disseminate the policy in such a way as to make it accessible to all of its staff and to all persons whose services they retain, by:
  - a) Posting in an accessible place;
  - b) The delivery or email of a copy.

- Prevent or, as the case may be, stop harassment situations by:
  - a) Setting up a confidential procedure for dealing with complaints and reports relating to situations of psychological or sexual harassment;
  - b) Ensuring understanding and respect of the policy;
  - c) Promoting respect among individuals.

## 5. EXPECTATIONS FOR STAFF

As an individual, all paid and volunteer employees in the organization, or who are retained by the organization, undertake to maintain a workplace free of all forms of harassment and discrimination.

## 6. TREATMENT OF COMPLAINTS AND REPORTS

If the person who thinks she is being psychologically or sexually harassed feels comfortable with it, he or she may first inform the person concerned that his / her behavior is undesirable and that the behavior must end. She should also note the date and details of the incidents as well as the steps she took to try to resolve the situation.

If this first intervention is not desired or if the harassment continues, or if the person concerned does not feel able or if this proves futile, dangerous or inappropriate, the person who considers himself a victim of harassment or discrimination may report, in confidence, the situation to one of the responsible persons designated by the employer to identify the problematic behaviors and the required means.

A complaint may be made verbally or in writing. The alleged behavior and details of incidents should be described as accurately as possible, so that an intervention can be carried out quickly to stop the situation.

The responsible persons designated by the employer are as follows. At any time, the person who considers herself a victim of harassment or discrimination may, in confidence and in complete confidentiality, contact any one of them:

- Michèle Ann Desaulniers, President of Chats Canada Cats (450-365-4940);
- Other people designated by the Board.

The person who witnesses a harassment situation is also invited to report it to one of the above mentioned responsible persons.

## Deadline

Resort for psychological or sexual harassment at work must be exercised within two (2) years of the last manifestation of the psychological or sexual harassment.

## 7. INTERVENTION PRINCIPLES

Chats Canada Cats is committed to:

- Take charge of the complaint or report as soon as possible;
- Preserve the dignity and privacy of the persons concerned, that is, the person who made the complaint, the person who is the subject of the complaint and the witnesses;
- Ensure that all concerned are treated with humanity, fairness and objectivity and that adequate support is provided;
- Protect the confidentiality of the intervention process, including information about the complaint or report;
- Offer the concerned persons the opportunity to hold a meeting with them with their agreement to resolve the situation;
- Conduct an investigation without delay and in an objective manner, or assign responsibility to an external stakeholder. The persons concerned will be informed of the conclusion of this process. If the investigation cannot establish that there has been unacceptable behavior, all material evidence will be retained for two years and subsequently destroyed. The inquiry process may include:
  - Interviews with the complainant, the person who is the subject of the allegation of harassment, witnesses and anyone who may have relevant information;
  - Examination of notes, documents, administrative notes and other information that may be relevant.
- Take all reasonable steps to resolve the situation, including, but not limited to, appropriate disciplinary action.

Anyone who breaches the harassment policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. The choice of the applicable measure will take into account the seriousness and consequences of the actions and the previous record of the person who posed them. An administrator will be automatically removed from office.

A person who lays false charges for the purpose of causing harm is also subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

In handling and resolving a workplace harassment situation, no one should be harmed or retaliated against by the employer.

## 8. REVISION

Chats Canada Cats ensures that the Policy is revised as needed and provides a reminder of its existence to all staff and to all persons whose services are retained, every three (3) years.

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Michèle Ann Desaulniers  
President  
Chats Canada Cats

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Date



## APPENDIX 1 – RECOGNIZE PSYCHOLOGICAL OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Quebec's Act respecting labor standards provides criteria for determining what may be considered psychological or sexual harassment, namely:

- Vexatious conduct (offensive, humiliating);
- Which manifests itself repeatedly or in a single, serious act;
- Hostile (aggressive, threatening) or unwanted;
- Undermining the dignity or integrity of the person;
- Resulting in a harmful work environment (harmful, harmful).

These conditions include words, acts or gestures of a sexual nature.

Discrimination on any of the grounds listed in section 10 of the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* may also constitute harassment: race, color, sex, pregnancy, orientation sex, marital status, age except to the extent permitted by law, religion, political beliefs, language, ethnic or national origin, social condition, disability or the use of a means to overcome this handicap.

For example, the following behaviors may be considered harassing conduct if they meet all the criteria of the law.

### Behaviors that may be related to psychological harassment

- Bullying, cyberbullying, threats, isolation;
- Offensive or defamatory remarks or gestures about a person or his work;
- Verbal violence;
- Denigration.

### Behaviors that may be related to sexual harassment

- Any form of unwanted attention or unwanted advance with a sexual connotation, for example:
  - Insistent solicitation;
  - Glances, kisses or touching;
  - Sexist insults, rude remarks.
- Words, jokes or images with a sexual connotation by any means, technological or other.

## APPENDIX 2 – RESPONSIBLE PERSONS APPOINTED BY THE EMPLOYER

Chats Canada Cats:

- Will ensure that designated officials are properly trained and have the necessary tools at their disposal to process and follow up on the complaint or report;
- Will release working time so that the designated officials can perform the duties assigned to them.

The following persons are designated to be responsible for the application of Chats Canada Cats' Policy on the prevention of psychological harassment or sexual harassment at work and complaints treatments:

- Michèle Ann Desaulniers, President of Chats Canada Cats (450-365-4940);
- Other people designated by the Board.

These responsible persons must primarily:

- Inform staff about the company's policy on psychological or sexual harassment;
- Intervene informally to try to resolve situations;
- Receive complaints and reports;
- Recommend the nature of the actions to be taken to stop the harassment;
- Refer to the Ethics and Discipline Committee the existence of the filing of a complaint or the keeping of an investigation file.

### Commitment of the people in charge

I hereby declare my commitment to abide by this policy and ensure that my intervention will be impartial, respectful and confidential.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Michèle Ann Desaulniers

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date