

Scope and Purpose

The Seminary of Christ the King (SCK) is committed to fostering a learning environment free from discrimination. SCK recognizes that all people are created equal, in the image of God, each with inimitable characteristics deserving of dignity (*cf.* Genesis: 1:27). As taught in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, all human beings share equal dignity, having been redeemed by Christ's sacrifice and called to the same divine beatitude.

In fidelity to [Catholic Social Teaching](#) (CST), SCK condemns all forms of unjust discrimination as contrary to the dignity of the human person and the Church's moral doctrine. SCK recognizes that any form of unjust discrimination is incompatible with Catholic moral principles and is in violation of the [BC Human Rights Code](#). SCK gives pre-eminence to the tenets of the Catholic faith, consistent with the protection afforded in the BC Human Rights Code and the [Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver's Policy on Pastoral Conduct for Priests and Deacons Engaged in Ministry](#).

The purpose of this policy is to prevent unjust discrimination on grounds protected by the BC Human Rights Code and to address violations of Catholic moral principles. It also provides procedures for handling complaints, remedying situations, and imposing discipline when such discrimination does occur. Concerns regarding discrimination that do not involve any of the grounds prohibited by the BC Human Rights Code are not covered by this Policy.

Application

This policy applies to all Abbey Members, major seminarians, faculty, staff and volunteers. This policy applies to all aspects of seminary operations, including admissions, curriculum, pastoral assignments, and community life.

What is Unjust Discrimination?

This policy upholds the Church's commitment to treating all persons as made in the image of God (*imago Dei*), and complying with provincial law to protect against prohibited grounds of discrimination. Unjust discrimination refers to any distinction, exclusion, or preference based on one or more protected characteristics that adversely affects an individual's opportunity, access, or treatment in seminary life, formation, or activities, without a bona fide justification rooted in the essential nature of Catholic priestly formation.

SCK distinguishes between legitimate ecclesial requirements (e.g., adherence to celibacy or doctrinal assent, which are intrinsic to the vocation) and impermissible bias that violates fundamental human rights and is not justified by reasonable standards or accommodations.

Principles

As a Catholic institution committed to social justice, SCK integrates the seven foundational principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) into all its operations, ensuring alignment with the BC Human Rights Code's emphasis on equality, non-discrimination, and respect for human dignity. These principles, derived from Scripture, Magisterial teaching and human reflection, provide a moral framework that complements the Code's protections against discrimination based on protected personal characteristics.¹ By upholding these principles, SCK fosters an inclusive environment that promotes human flourishing, solidarity, and the common good while complying with legal standards for fair treatment in employment, services, education, and community engagement.

In accordance with the Catholic Social Teaching and the BC Human Rights Code, the following principles of equity and inclusive education are upheld in all SCK operations:

- **Dignity of the Human Person** affirms that every individual, created in God's image (Gen 1:27), possesses inherent and inviolable dignity, which forms the basis for all social relations and rights. It rejects any form of discrimination or exploitation, insisting that persons are always ends in themselves, never means to an end.
- **Common Good** is the sum of social conditions that enable all people, especially the vulnerable, to achieve their full potential and flourish together.
- **Solidarity** recognizes our interconnectedness as one human family, calling for mutual support, fraternity, and active commitment to the welfare of others, particularly the marginalized. It transforms interdependence into the virtues of justice and charity.
- **Subsidiarity** holds that decisions should be made at the most local level possible, empowering individuals, families, and communities while higher authorities intervene only when necessary to support, not supplant, the freedom and initiative of individuals, etc.
- **Participation** is the right and duty of every person to engage actively in social, economic, political, and cultural life, contributing to the common good according to his or her abilities and roles. It demands inclusive structures that listen to and empower all, especially the disadvantaged.
- **Universal Destination of Goods** asserts that the earth's resources and material goods are intended by God for the benefit of all humanity, not just a select few. This principle underscores the inherent dignity of every person and prioritizes the common good, ensuring that private property rights are always subordinate to the needs of the human family.

¹ Personal characteristics protected in the BC Human Rights Code include: Age; Family status; Marital status; Physical disability; Mental disability; Race, colour, place of origin, and ancestry; Indigenous identity; Sex; Gender identity or expression; Sexual orientation; Religion; Criminal conviction unrelated to the relevant issue; Political belief; Lawful source of income.

- **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable:** Special attention must be given to those suffering disadvantage, as an expression of Christ's preferential love. This principle urges special attention and resources for those who are poorest and most vulnerable, viewing their needs as a priority in the pursuit of justice and echoing Christ's care for the least among us.

1. Responses to Unjust Discrimination

SCK commits to unmasking and eradicating structures of injustice, in line with the Church's prophetic mission. This includes fostering an inclusive community as emphasized in *Fratelli Tutti*, which calls for societies that welcome differences and prioritize human dignity over ideologies. Education and formation at SCK employ these truths to build a culture of encounter.

- 1.1. School Community Members share responsibility for ensuring and maintaining an environment that is free from discrimination. SCK regards discrimination as a serious offence that is subject to a wide range of remedial or disciplinary measures, including dismissal or expulsion from SCK.
- 1.2. The Rector is responsible for:
 - 1.2.1. providing information, advice and assistance in a fair and impartial manner to Complainants, Respondents, or anyone else who has a concern about discrimination related to SCK;
 - 1.2.2. addressing or resolving concerns of discrimination in an informal manner, where possible;
 - 1.2.3. initiating formal complaints of discrimination, where appropriate; and
 - 1.2.4. providing education to School Community Members on the prevention and remediation of discrimination, issuing guidance on the implementation and interpretation of this Policy and its Procedures.
- 1.3. The Delegate is responsible for investigating formal complaints of discrimination that are filed under the Procedures.
- 1.4. SCK will not tolerate any retaliation, directly or indirectly, against anyone who, in good faith, complains, gives evidence or otherwise participates in a process under this Policy. SCK considers retaliation to be a serious matter because it prevents potential complainants, witnesses, and administrators from acting on their concerns.
- 1.5. Allegations of sexual assault or harassment are to be addressed under the Sexual Misconduct Policy, not this Policy.
- 1.6. Concerns that do not involve any of the grounds prohibited by the BC Human Rights Code are not covered by this Policy. Such concerns may be addressed by other SCK policies or

procedures, the SCK Code of Conduct for Seminarians, Faculty, Members and Employees, or the Seminarian Handbook, and should be referred to the Delegate.

- 1.7. Neither this Policy in general, nor its definitions in particular, are to be applied in such a way as to detract from the right and obligation of those in supervisory roles to manage and discipline employees and students.
- 1.8. The fact that a complaint is being pursued under this Policy does not preclude the Complainant from pursuing a process outside of SCK, such as filing a complaint with the BC Human Rights Tribunal. If a complaint is being pursued under another process, the party conducting the process under this Policy may elect to continue with the process under this Policy or may elect to suspend the process until the outcome of the other process is determined.

2. Confidentiality and Privacy

In order to protect the integrity, fairness, and effectiveness of the process under the Policy and this Procedure and to ensure compliance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), all participants in the process must act in accordance with the requirements set out below.

- 2.1. Individuals, including the Complainant and the Respondent, who have obtained information about an identifiable individual (Personal Information) through their participation in the process must not disclose this information to anybody except their own personal advisors or representatives, or as required by law. However, this section does not prevent:
 - 2.1.1. any participants in the process from disclosing information about themselves, or information that they have obtained outside the process;
 - 2.1.2. SCK representatives from disclosing process-related information as authorized under section 2.2.3; or
 - 2.1.3. Complainants and Respondents from disclosing the information that they have received under sections 2.3.
- 2.2. SCK will not disclose any Personal Information related to the process except to the extent such disclosure is:
 - 2.2.1. expressly authorized by the affected individual;
 - 2.2.2. to a SCK representative, if necessary for the performance of that individual's duties;
 - 2.2.3. to a Complainant, Respondent, witness, or other participant in the process, if necessary for the conduct of the process;
 - 2.2.4. to a Complainant or Respondent in accordance with sections 2.3;
 - 2.2.5. authorized by SCK for compelling health or safety reasons;

- 2.2.6. authorized by SCK to correct misleading or inaccurate information if necessary to protect the integrity of the process or SCK's investigatory processes; or
 - 2.2.7. authorized or required under law, which for certainty shall include directions received from external agencies such as the BC Human Rights Tribunal.
- 2.3. To maintain the integrity of the process under this Policy, SCK must ensure that both Complainants and Respondents know the process, findings and the evidence upon which these findings are based. The FIPPA may require SCK to remove Personal Information that is irrelevant to the process findings, or that identifies third parties. If there are multiple Complainants or multiple Respondents, each will receive personally relevant information.

3. Consultations and Informal Resolution

- 3.1. School Community Members who have concerns about matters of discrimination that relate to a member of the SCK community or to a SCK-sanctioned program, event or activity should consult the Rector.
- 3.2. Individuals may consult with the Rector anonymously.
- 3.3. The Rector may facilitate informal resolution. In doing so, the Rector should take into consideration all relevant factors, such as risks to health or safety, guided by subsidiarity and the common good.

4. Making Formal Complaints

- 4.1. Those with concerns relating to matters of discrimination may consult with the Rector before making a formal complaint under these Procedures. If the person with the concern believes that it was not satisfactorily addressed through consultation, that person may submit a formal complaint to the Delegate.
- 4.2. Discrimination complaints may be made by any School Community Member who is directly affected by the conduct that forms the basis of the complaint.
- 4.3. Complainants may withdraw from the complaint proceedings at any time. However, SCK's responsibility to provide an environment free from discrimination may obligate SCK to proceed regardless of the Complainant's withdrawal.
- 4.4. The Delegate has jurisdiction to investigate complaints in the following circumstances:
 - 4.4.1. the complaint must have been made by an individual described in section 4.2;
 - 4.4.2. the complaint must be either a complaint of systemic discrimination by SCK or a complaint about discrimination by a Respondent who was a School Community Member at the time the alleged discrimination occurred and at the time the complaint was submitted;
 - 4.4.3. the alleged conduct must fall within the definition of discrimination; and

4.4.4. the complaint must have a real and substantial connection to SCK.

4.5. If the Delegate determines that there is jurisdiction to investigate a complaint, the Delegate may do any one or more of the following:

4.5.1. address the complaint under section 5 below; or

4.5.2. decline to proceed with the complaint on the grounds that

- a) the substance of the complaint has been appropriately dealt with in another proceeding;
- b) due to the amount of time that has elapsed since the alleged misconduct occurred, proceeding with the complaint now would result in substantial prejudice to any person; or
- c) it is unfair or otherwise inappropriate to proceed with the complaint.

4.6. If the Delegate determines that there is no jurisdiction to investigate a complaint, the Delegate will not accept the complaint and will take no further action under these Procedures, except as provided in section 4.7.

4.7. Where the Delegate makes a decision under sections 4.5.2 or 4.6, the Delegate will provide justification in writing to the Complainant with a copy to the Rector.

5. Managing Formal Complaints

5.1. If the Delegate decides to address the complaint, the Complainant and Rector will be notified and a copy or summary of the complaint will be provided to the Respondent, who will be invited to respond to the allegations contained in the complaint.

5.2. The Delegate may manage the complaint using any means deemed appropriate in the circumstances, subject to the principles of procedural fairness in the seminary context. Such means may include, but are not limited to, the following:

5.2.1. suspending or discontinuing the proceedings;

5.2.2. consolidating multiple complaints so as to be addressed together;

5.2.3. recommending interim measures to preserve safety while a complaint is being investigated or resolved;

5.2.4. interviewing or requesting written submissions from the Complainant and/or the Respondent and/or any other individuals with information that may be useful;

5.2.5. consulting with other SCK offices or employees;

5.2.6. gathering documents relevant to the complaint;

- 5.2.7. referring the matter for mediation or other forms of alternative dispute resolution in accordance with sections 5.3 and 5.4; and/or
- 5.2.8. referring the matter for internal or external investigation.
- 5.3. If the Delegate believes that an alternative dispute resolution process may be appropriate in the circumstances, he will discuss this option with the Complainant. If the Complainant agrees that an alternative resolution process may be appropriate, the Delegate will discuss this option with the Respondent. If the Respondent agrees to participate in an alternative resolution process and the Delegate is satisfied that an alternative resolution process is appropriate, then the Delegate will explore the options available and, with the agreement of both parties, will refer the matter to that process for resolution.
- 5.4. Participation in an alternative dispute resolution process is entirely voluntary. If either the Complainant or the Respondent decides they no longer wish to participate in the alternative resolution process at any time, then the Delegate will refer the complaint for investigation under this Policy.
- 5.5. Where an investigation of the complaint has been conducted, at the completion of the investigation the investigator will prepare a written report (Investigative Report) that will normally include the following information:
 - 5.5.1. a summary of the evidence considered;
 - 5.5.2. any assessment of credibility that is required to render a determination; and
 - 5.5.3. the findings of facts, and a determination as to whether, on a balance of probabilities, discrimination has occurred.
- 5.6. Both the Complainant and the Respondent are expected to participate in the complaint management process outlined above in a timely manner. In cases where the Complainant and/or the Respondent fails to participate within a reasonable time without appropriate justification, the process may proceed without their participation and an adverse inference may be drawn as a result of their failure to participate.
- 5.7. The complaint management process outlined above will normally be completed within 90 calendar days of the provision of the complaint to the Respondent. In the event that this timeline cannot be met, the Delegate will contact the Complainant and Respondent as soon as possible to inform them of the revised timeline.

6. Resolving Formal Complaints

- 6.1. After addressing the complaint under section 5 above, the Delegate may resolve the complaint and/or make recommendations as deemed appropriate in the circumstances. Such resolutions or recommendations may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 6.1.1. resolving the complaint by consent of the Complainant and the Respondent, through mediation or any other means;
 - 6.1.2. recommending such measures as may be appropriate to remove systemic barriers and/or prevent discrimination;
 - 6.1.3. recommending to the Rector the imposition of discipline on the Respondent or, in cases where the investigator determines that the complaint was made in bad faith or was frivolous, vexatious or malicious, on the Complainant; and/or
 - 6.1.4. dismissing the complaint.
- 6.2. No resolution of a complaint that may adversely affect the academic, employment, professional, or other interests of a party shall proceed without giving that party the opportunity to fully respond to the complaint.
- 6.3. The Delegate will communicate the resolution and any recommendations, as well as a copy of any Investigative Report that has been prepared, to the Rector. In addition, and subject to section 2 of this policy, the Delegate may communicate any resolution and/or recommendations to the Complainant, Respondent and others whom the Delegate determines ought to know under the circumstances.
- 6.4. The Rector, after receiving the Investigative Report, has the authority to determine the appropriate disciplinary and/or remedial measures needed to resolve or address the complaint, if any. The Rector will provide a written report of the decision made and any measures taken to the Chancellor and the Respondent. Disciplinary actions will not be disclosed to Complainants except in the limited circumstances set out in section 2.3 of this Policy.
- 6.5. The Delegate will conclude the investigatory process by ensuring all necessary communications are made to those responsible for implementing decisions, providing or adjusting support services and accommodations, providing education, or conducting administrative transactions.

7. Appeals

- 7.1. Seminarians may appeal any discipline that is imposed under this policy through SCK's Conflict Resolution Policy.
- 7.2. Staff, faculty or volunteers may appeal any discipline that is imposed under this policy through the provisions of their terms and conditions of employment and/or Code of Conduct.
- 7.3. Members of Westminster Abbey may appeal any discipline that is imposed under this policy through the Abbot.
- 7.4. The Complainant and/or the Respondent may also have recourse to processes outside of SCK, such as filing a complaint with the BC Human Rights Tribunal.

SCK POLICY ON UNJUST DISCRIMINATION

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Appendix: Definitions

Complainant is an individual who has made a formal complaint of discrimination under this Policy.

Delegate is the person appointed by the Abbot to coordinate the faithful application of these policies. The Delegate represents the Abbot to the Reporters, victims, the Respondent, and all those involved in the reporting and investigation of discrimination. The Delegate has the duty to keep the Abbot and the Abbot's Spokesperson informed of progress, and to oversee the management and preservation of case files.

Discrimination refers to bad treatment based on a characteristic like race.

A person discriminates under the BC Human Rights Code if:

- They treat someone badly or cause them harm in an area such as employment.
- A personal characteristic like race is a factor in the harm.
- There is no defence for the conduct.

A person can discriminate even if that is not the intention.

Employee is a lay person employed by the Seminary of Christ the King. This includes all support staff, administrative staff, counselors and faculty employed with a formal employment appointment. Independent contractors or others are not employees.

Major Seminarian is an adult registered as a Student at the College of the Seminary of Christ the King. This may include individuals who live off campus.

Respondent is the person against whom an allegation of discrimination has been made.

School Community Member is any Member of Westminster Abbey, employee working at the Seminary of Christ the King, adult Major Seminararians and volunteers. This includes all support staff, administrative staff, counselors and faculty employed with a formal employment appointment and includes teachers, principals, administrators, kitchen staff, counselors, librarians, chaperones, and other support staff who are employed in the seminary or who perform services in the school on a contractual basis. This also includes all individuals employed through a provisional agreement or with a teaching stipend.

Volunteer: refers to all persons who provide regular or occasional service to the Seminary of Christ the King's programs on a non-contractual basis. This includes non-employee tutors arranged by the school, classroom or activity assistants, and chaperones.