

# Anti-Harassment Policy

## Statement of Policy

The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Toronto Centre (RASC Toronto Centre) is committed to providing an atmosphere that encourages the free expression and exchange of ideas in a harassment-free, friendly and respectful environment.

In accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Human Rights Act, the RASC Toronto Centre will not tolerate, condone or ignore harassment and/or discrimination of any members or participants, regardless of (but not limited to) gender identity or expression, sexual orientation or identity, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, disability and conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered.

If a claim of harassment or discrimination is proven, disciplinary measures will be applied.

*This policy is written in accordance with Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC) National Anti-Harassment Policy and outlines the expectations, complaints process and disciplinary actions arising from Harassment at any RASC Toronto Centre and/or National RASC-related activity.*

## Definition of Harassment

Harassment is any unwelcome conduct by an individual directed towards another individual that causes offence or harm, or ought reasonably to be known to cause offence or harm.

Harassment comprises objectionable act(s), comment(s) or display(s) that demean, belittle, or cause personal humiliation or embarrassment, and any act of intimidation or threat or physical violence, including bullying.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal or written comments in any form (in person or electronically) that exclude or target members based on the categories mentioned above
- Causing someone to fear for their safety
- Content of a sexual nature that is unwelcome
- Non-consensual physical contact

Examples of harassment provided by the Canadian Human Rights Commission:

- Someone makes unwelcome remarks or jokes about an individual's race, religion, sex, age, or disability;
- Someone threatens or intimidates an individual because of their race, religion, sex, age, disability or any other of the grounds of discrimination;
- Someone makes unwelcome physical contact with another individual, such as touching, patting, or pinching.

Harassment can occur over a period of time or as a single event. Improper conduct does not have to be made with the intent to harass or discriminate to be in violation of this policy.

There is no tolerable level of harassment. All reports of harassment will be investigated. Where the harassment is serious enough to approach Criminal Code levels (assault, hate speech, etc.), the police may be called in.

### **Scope of Policy**

RASC Toronto Centre's Anti-Harassment Policy applies to all RASC Toronto Centre members, regardless of their role or position in the RASC Toronto Centre. The policy applies, but is not limited to, all RASC Toronto Centre events and facilities, including electronic communication forums provided by RASC Toronto Centre. It also applies to interactions between RASC Toronto Centre members and members of the general public who are attending RASC Toronto Centre events. It may also apply to outside interactions that directly arise from RASC Toronto Centre events and involve RASC Toronto Centre members.

## **Reporting, Investigation, and Resolution of Harassment**

Anyone covered by the scope of this policy who believes that they have been subjected to harassment, or who witnesses harassment, should follow this process.

### **Self-Resolution**

Individuals who feel confident **and** comfortable in doing so, should communicate disapproval in clear terms to the person(s) whose conduct or comments are offensive. Keep a written record of the date, time, details of the conduct and witnesses, if any.

### **RASC Toronto Centre Support and Intervention**

Those who are not confident or comfortable with self-resolution and who believe they are targets of discrimination or harassment, or become aware of situations where such conduct may be occurring, are encouraged to report these matters to a member of RASC Toronto Centre Council.

#### ***In all cases:***

- 1. If the harassment is at a criminal level (e.g. assault), **call the police.***
- 2. If the harassment is ongoing and cannot be reported or stopped at the time, the individual is encouraged to **remove themselves from the situation** and make a report later.*

### **Reporting Harassment**

RASC Toronto Centre aims to be accessible and responsive to any reported incidents by members. If harassment is in process, and it is possible to report it immediately to a member of RASC Toronto Centre Council or representative, do so verbally.

For all incidents, including those serious and less serious in nature, it is best to make a report as soon as possible after the incident. Timely reporting and investigation helps prevent further harassment of the same person, or other persons, in the future.

Several reporting options are available:

- **Fillable PDF** – An *Incident Report Form* is available on the Members' Pages of the RASC Toronto Website (<https://rascto.ca/toronto-centre-documents>). This form can be filled-in and

emailed to [incident@rascto.ca](mailto:incident@rascto.ca), or printed and mailed to the address below.

- **In Person** – Speak with a member of the RASC Toronto Centre Council at a meeting or event to make a verbal report. You may be asked to write or verify a written report at a later time.
- **Email** – [incident@rascto.ca](mailto:incident@rascto.ca)
- **Telephone** – Provide your telephone number to a member of the RASC Toronto Centre Council member, event coordinator, or via the *Incident Report Form*. A member of RASC Toronto Centre Council will contact you by telephone.
- **Mail** – Write to the RASC Toronto Centre at:  
RASC Toronto Centre  
% Ontario Science Centre  
770 Don Mills Rd  
Toronto, ON M3C 1T3

### What is Investigated

- That the reported behaviour is within the scope of this Anti-Harassment Policy
- That the reported behaviour illustrates that improper and offensive conduct occurred, including objectionable acts, comments or displays, or acts of intimidation or threats, or acts, comments or displays in relation to a prohibited ground of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act;
- That the reported behaviour resulted in a person or group being offended or harmed, including the feeling of being demeaned, belittled, personally humiliated or embarrassed, intimidated or threatened;
- That the person who engaged in the reported behaviour knew or reasonably ought to have known that such behaviour would cause offence or harm;
- Where the complaint or initial investigation indicates the strong possibility of continuing serious harassment, the investigating team will take immediate steps to stop or prevent it.

Once the incident report has been received by a member of RASC Toronto Centre Council, the incident(s) will be referred to a committee who will investigate. If the RASC Toronto Centre Council member deems that immediate action should be taken, this action will be communicated to the committee.

During the investigation process, all parties can expect the following:

- Expeditious **investigation of harassment** so as to prevent further **harassment or harm**.
- Confidentiality to be maintained. All **details of the harassment will be kept confidential** to the involved parties and witnesses named.

### Resolution

After investigation, the committee will make a recommendation on whether the complaint was substantiated and, if so, what action(s) should be taken to ensure a harassment-free, friendly and respectful environment within RASC Toronto Centre. This recommendation will be given to the RASC Toronto Centre Council or the Executive, depending on the scope of the recommended action.

All recommended actions will be in compliance with the bylaws of RASC Toronto Centre. If the

recommended actions include serious consequences to the person(s) found to have violated this *Statement of Policy*, such as limiting participation by a member of RASC Toronto Centre or a member of the public in any RASC Toronto Centre event or activity, it will be reported to the RASC National Council.

A response or update will be given to the person who submitted the Incident Report within 2 weeks of receipt by the committee.

### **Actions**

Consequences to persons found to have violated this *Statement of Policy* will take into consideration the nature and impact of the violations and the requirement to ensure a harassment-free, friendly and respectful environment. Actions may include a verbal or written reprimand, suspension of membership rights and privileges, or expulsion from RASC Toronto Centre. All actions will be in compliance with RASC National Society and RASC Toronto Centre by-laws. Certain situations may also require notification of police.

Similarly, deliberate false accusations are of an equally serious nature and will also result in action as described above.

### **Follow Up and Harassment Incident Tracking**

A member of the committee or original council member to whom the harassment complaint was made will take steps to ensure that the complaint has been addressed to the best ability of the RASC Toronto Centre, and in particular that no further harassment is occurring.

If this process does not lead to a satisfactory resolution, the RASC Toronto Centre Council shall communicate the complaint in writing to the RASC National Society. At which time, the RASC National Society Policy will take over. Please refer to Policy G24, *Anti-Harassment Policy* in the RASC National Policy Manual.

All complaints and resolutions will be reported to the RASC Toronto Centre Council who may decide to report anonymously on the frequency and outcomes of complaints to the membership.

### **Member Involvement in Policy Updates**

RASC Toronto Centre policies are developed with the best of intentions and in the best interests of its members. Policies are living documents that can and should be reviewed and updated to reflect member needs or input, relevant legislation, and many other factors. Members are encouraged to provide feedback and offer meaningful recommendations to this and all RASC Toronto Centre policies.

Approved by RASC Toronto Centre Council on:

Date: January 22, 2019