

# Employee Responsibilities

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# Guidelines for Appropriate Conduct

*Employee conduct affects the health and growth of the Church and reflects upon our image in the greater community. Employees have a responsibility to the Church, their colleagues, and themselves to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times, and in ways that support healthy community life.*

*Employees must take extreme care around personal or special relationships with members, friends, or partners of Foothills because of the potential ethical problems, perception of favoritism, or nature of the unequal power dynamics between Foothills' employees and its members, friends and partners.*

- *Employee's Role as Staff. Although our team members often share a sense of passion and commitment to the mission of the Church and our faith in the same way they would if they were members, they are in a distinct role from our members. While we hope they find spiritual fulfillment in their work, this is not their Church home, nor are the ministers able to be their ministers. Only in circumstances as specifically outlined in this Handbook, and when approved by the Senior Minister would we consider hiring someone who is a Church member as staff, as it is inevitably a complex dual role for anyone to navigate. In those situations, the staff member is required to put their role as a staff above their needs and role as a member.*
  - *The Church asks all employees to wear their name badges whenever they are on duty, especially on Sunday mornings, so as to clarify their role as staff and to help people identify them as a resource.*
- *Relationship with Other Staff Members. Furthermore, staff members are expected to abide by the staff covenant, and to work as a team in service of our congregation's mission and vision. Foothills staff members are prohibited from dating any other staff members.*
- *Relationships with Congregants. The priority of staff members is to ensure that congregants can engage fully and safely with the Church and its ministries. As a result, staff members are to refrain from dating or engaging in any sexual relationships with members, friends, or regular attenders of the Church. Friendships with Church members are not prohibited, but are complicated by the staff role, and staff members must consistently prioritize their role as staff rather than as friend whenever these two needs come into conflict. It is always problematic for congregants to perceive that a given staff member has a "special relationship" with some congregants but not others, and so staff members should be cautious about forming friendships. It is never appropriate for staff members to share problems or challenges about the work environment with congregants, or turn to them for support (outside of the Grievance Procedure as outlined in this*

Handbook). Congregants come to Church with their vulnerabilities and need not be drawn into the work dynamics of the staff team. Ultimately, staff need to remember that congregants do not come to Church to meet staff's personal needs, but rather to become a part of a meaningful, faithful community dedicated to a larger purpose; they need and must expect the staff to serve their spiritual journeys and growth, rather than the other way around.

This social complication also plays out in social media, where staff members must be thoughtful about when or if to "friend" or "follow" congregants (or accept their requests), and in all cases to remember that what they share in social media reflects on the Church and their job.

In summary, staff need to remember that interactions with Church members, whether online or in person, reflect on each employee's role as a staff member, and a result, reflect on and relate to each employee's professional role.

- *Relationships with Other Unitarian Universalists and UU Congregations.* As our congregation affirms a shared sense of mission and purpose with all other Unitarian Universalist congregations, all employees are expected to engage with other area UU congregants with the same degree of service and care as they do with Foothills congregants.
- *Inappropriate behaviors:*
  - *Using the Church or the employee's role for personal gain.*
  - *Neglecting the safety or security of the Church community, including by reporting to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and the illegal manufacture, possession, use, sale, distribution or transportation of drugs; or by fighting or using obscene, abusive, or threatening language or gestures or other violations of safety; or failing to maintain the confidentiality of Church or member information*
  - *Failing to maintain personal integrity or professionalism by falsifying records or lying in other ways, complaining or venting to or in front of congregants about your work responsibilities (including on social media) or insubordination.*
  - *Expectations for our employees not only involves sincere respect for the rights and feelings of others, but also demands that employees refrain from any behavior that might be harmful to themselves, co-workers, or the Church that might be viewed unfavorably by current or potential members or by the public at large. Employee conduct reflects on the Church. Employees are, consequently, expected to observe the highest standards of professionalism and ethical behavior at all times.*
  - *Categories of behavior that the Church would consider inappropriate and could potentially lead to immediate termination include, but are not limited to the following:*

1. Using the Church or the employee's role for personal gain.
2. Neglecting the safety or security of the Church community, including by reporting to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and the illegal manufacture, possession, use, sale, distribution or transportation of drugs; or by fighting or using obscene, abusive, or threatening language or gestures or other violations of safety; or failing to maintain the confidentiality of Church or member information

3. Failing to maintain personal integrity or professionalism by falsifying records or lying in other ways, complaining or venting to or in front of congregants about your work responsibilities (including on social media) or insubordination.

*Furthermore, all staff are required to be active members of their applicable professional association (i.e. UU Ministers Association, Liberal Religious Educators, UU Administrators, etc.), learning with and from others in their field, attending applicable professional education opportunities, furthering the health of their professional organization, and complying fully with their professional guidelines and codes of conduct.*

- *This list is not exhaustive of the Church's concerns. As at-will employees, the Church can terminate employment for any reason. Should an employee's performance, work habits, overall attitude, conduct or demeanor become unsatisfactory based on violations either of the above or of any other Church policies, rules, or regulations, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination.*

# Discipline

*Occasionally performance or other behavior falls short of our standards and/or expectations. When this occurs, management takes action, which in its opinion, seems appropriate.*

*Disciplinary actions can range from a formal discussion with the employee about the matter to immediate discharge. Action taken by management in an individual case does not establish a precedent in other circumstances.*

## *Professional Misconduct*

*Professional misconduct is defined as the serious and egregious violation of standards for an employee's profession. For example, this may include financial malfeasance, boundary violations with congregants, abuse of power, or other serious ethical violations on the part of any religious professional. Religious professionals include religious educators (at the director, coordinator or administrative level for children, youth, or adults), music staff (anyone who is a part of the worship team or who oversees music), administrators, membership staff, and ministerial staff (including interns).*

*Professional misconduct has serious and long-lasting consequences for religious communities, as it constitutes a breach of our covenant and a break in trust between staff and congregants. Individuals and congregations can be damaged by one person's misconduct, with long-term negative consequences.*

*As a result, allegations of misconduct are taken seriously in all cases, and will trigger a three-phase response: Reporting; Investigation; and Response. These are outlined in a separate procedural document that affirms our principles, actions and possible outcomes; however, in all cases the Church retains the right to terminate employment at-will.*

*Any employee who has been accused of misconduct is encouraged to reach out to their Good Officer as soon as they are notified. Good Officers serve as advocates and allies to UU professional staff. Employees should know who their Good Officers are and why/when to bring them in. This information is available through the employee's professional association.*

*When has been confirmed, this information will be shared as quickly as possible with the congregation, as such transparency is required by our covenantal religious practice and our need to repair the break in our covenant and move towards healing.*

*This disclosure will be shared with all members and friends of the congregation, and will include the general nature of the misconduct and the resulting action taken. While staff members will likely be given a chance to see this disclosure before it is released, they will not have a chance to provide input.*

# Conflict of Interest

*Employees shall not engage in any collateral employment, business, or volunteer activity that is incompatible or in conflict with their duties, functions or responsibilities as a Church employee. The DFO should be consulted if there is any question whether an activity is acceptable.*

*Employees are expected to avoid conflicts of interest, and the appearance of a conflict of interest, defined as any situation where an employee may attain personal gain or which may serve as a detriment to the Church, either monetarily or to its public image, because of the use of information or personal contact which is not generally available except through employment with the Church.*

*Potential conflicts of interest should be discussed with the DFO. If the DFO determines that the proposed activity does not constitute a conflict, written documentation will be provided to the employee and placed in the employee's personnel file.*

# Attendance and Punctuality

*Regular and punctual attendance is an essential function of every employee's job. The supervisor should be notified as far in advance as possible if the employee is going to be absent or delayed in reporting to work. If the employee is absent or late without prior notification, the supervisor should be notified as soon as possible as to the cause. The supervisor may assign make-up time or recommend reduced compensation when appropriate.*

# Staying Informed and Communication Practices

*Each employee has a responsibility to stay informed about what is going on in the Church generally and most especially related to those things in their assigned area of responsibility. As a result, staff members are expected to subscribe to the Foothills' the weekly emails, regularly review materials on Base Camp, attend regular staff meetings, and regularly meet with their supervisor.*

*It is also important for employees to keep the Church informed of their intended schedule, accurate personal information, and preferred method of contact in the following ways:*

- Intended Schedule: Employees should inform their supervisor and the other staff of their generally expected schedule and keep up to date the Base Camp staff calendar with any changes.*
- Each employee will use their work email address for all Foothills related work. All work related documents should be stored on the appropriate Foothills Drive.*

*Generally, our internal communication and work integrates the use of technology and emerging tools for productivity, project management and collaboration, and employees are expected to regularly learn and integrate these tools as they are identified. Support for this learning process is available through employee's supervisor or the DFO.*

# Confidential Information

*As an employee at Foothills, one may be privy to confidential information about the organization, including but not limited to, information about members, friends, volunteers or other staff members. This information must remain confidential and is not to be released, removed from the Church's premises, copied, transmitted or in any other way used or disclosed for any purpose by employees outside the scope of their employment. Additionally, employees are cautioned to be extremely careful when discussing any Church matters in a social setting and potentially risk disclosing information inappropriately. All requests for information concerning past or present employees received from organizations or individuals should be directed to the DFO.*

# Electronic Communication

*During work hours, it is the Church's expectation that employees will be engaging in work-related duties. This means that internet use, phone calls, and other tasks completed during work time must be primarily for legitimate work-related assigned duties and all personal internet/phone use during work hours should be kept to a minimum.*

*All materials, information and software created, transmitted, downloaded or stored on the Church's computer system or in the Foothills Drive are the property of the Church and may be accessed only by authorized personnel.*

*For any Church-related software or devices, employees must provide the DFO with any personal passwords and access codes relating to the use of electronic communication during working hours or on Church equipment. Employees should not consider their Foothills' Internet usage, e-mail communications, or voice mail communications to be private. If you post any comments that promote or endorse the Church in any way, the law requires that you disclose that you are employed by the Church.*

*Only authorized staff members may communicate on the Internet, through email or otherwise, on behalf of the Church. Employees may not express opinions or share any information about Church members on any social media without prior authorization.*

*Any software or other material downloaded into Church's computers may be used only in ways consistent with the licenses and copyrights of the vendors, authors or owners of the material.*

*All employee computers have virus protection software installed on them. Employees are responsible for ensuring this software is running and updated whenever necessary. All employee files must be regularly backed up on the Drive.*

# Job Injury/Worker's Compensation

*Foothills is committed to a safe work environment for employees. Employees should report any unsafe practices or conditions to their supervisor.*

*If employees are injured on the job, no matter how minor, they must report this fact in writing as soon as practicable to the DFO.*

*If medical treatment for an on-the-job injury is needed, it must be obtained from one of the Foothills' designated physicians. If not, the employee may be responsible for the cost of medical treatment.*

## *Personal Property*

*Because churches, like other organizations, are sometimes the victims of theft, the Church can make no assurances that personal property left in the building will always be secure. Additionally, given the number of people who may be coming in and out of the Church at any time, it is possible that there may be errors or mistakes that would cause items to go missing. As a result, employees are advised to take appropriate cautionary steps to secure their belongings, including refraining from bringing valuable items onto Church grounds.*

# Inspection Rights

*The Church reserves the right to open and inspect any property on Church premises without prior notice or consent. The storage of any unauthorized alcohol, firearms, illegal drugs or drug-related paraphernalia is prohibited on Church premises. Employees may not use personal locks on Church owned desks, cabinets, closets or storage areas.*

# Working Off-Site

*It is often possible that much work can be accomplished off-site. Determining the schedule and location of an employee's work must be coordinated with their supervisor on an ongoing basis. Depending on position, some staff may be required to work on-site, as designated by their job description.*