

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.*

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