

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton

Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Policy

Policy # _____

Revision # _____

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Policy of the First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist of Stow and Acton, hereinafter known as First Parish Church, is established to create a safe environment which protects all from the harm caused by actual or suspected sexual abuse, misconduct, or harassment.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all those associated with First Parish Church with particular attention paid to careful hiring procedures for staff, recruitment of volunteers, and youth/ adult interactions. Screening, education, training and supervision are considered key components of this policy. Procedures for reporting complaints and concerns about sexual misconduct and abuse, as well as a process of response that respects the dignity and safety of all involved are attached to this policy.

III. RESPONSIBILITY

This policy, adopted by a vote of the membership at Annual Meeting 1994, is a living document and the congregation may in future years wish to amend it to reflect changing needs. Requests should be made to the Board of Trustees and may be adopted as the policy by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees, as amended at Annual Meeting 2002.

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IV. DEFINITIONS

Abuse: The non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker upon a child under the age of 18, or by one adult upon a non consenting adult, which causes, or creates a substantial risk of serious physical or serious emotional injury, or constitutes a sexual offense under the laws of the Commonwealth. This definition is not dependent upon location.

Sexual Misconduct means any of the following:

- a. Sexual abuse or sexual molestation of any person, including but not limited to, any sexual involvement or sexual contact with a [person who is a minor or who is legally incompetent.

- b. Sexual Harassment in a situation where there is an employment mentor or colleague relationship between the persons involved, including but not limited to, undesired or inappropriate sexually oriented humor or language; inappropriate questions or comments about sexual behavior or preference unrelated to employment qualifications; undesired physical contact; inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance; conduct or communication which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

- c. Sexual Exploitation, including but not limited to, the development of or the attempt to develop a sexual relationship between ministers, counselors, youth leaders, church school teachers, etc. and a person with whom they have a caretaking role, whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual.

Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Response Team: This is a committee, often referred to as “SMART,” composed of the Minister and 5 or 6 members of the church appointed by the Board of Trustees annually. The purpose of the Smart Team is to ensure that suspicions and disclosures of sexual misconduct and abuse are met with an appropriate and supportive reaction on the part of the receiver and the community.

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The Protocols: An attached document, adopted by the Board of Trustees November 12, 2002, which establishes specific steps to be followed by the Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Response Team when responding to allegations of sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or any behavior of a sexual nature that creates discomfort or concern with in and among members of our church community.

V. REFERENCES

Procedures for Preventing Sexual Misconduct and Abuse, including recommendations for supervision.

Responding to Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Document

Protocols for The First Parish Church of Stow and Acton Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Team.

The Special Relationship Between Minister and Congregants document.

The Code of Ethics to be signed by Sunday School Teachers and those working with Youth.

The Employment Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Those Working with Adolescent Youth

Interim Agreement Regarding Restrictions with Children

Members of the Congregation Needing Restrictions with Children Agreement

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VI. APPROVAL SIGNATURES

Originator / Date

FPC President / Date