ETHICAL CONDUCT POLICY GUIDELINES 2024

We seek to witness to God's love by the way we intentionally care and plan for safety of all people in our midst. This information is provided to help Minister members and Sessions understand the new requirements and discern the difference and overlap between different training offerings. It is all our responsibility to meet these requirements together.

Definitions

Boundary training is about preventing illegal misconduct such as sexual misconduct and forms of harassment as well as the improper use of authority, power and relationships. Our approach to this training will focus on the aspects of prevention through self awareness, self care and intentional choices, anticipating that most people seek to cultivate personal wholeness and healthy relationships.

Child Protection training has some overlaps with boundary training, but is a separate requirement focused primarily on the boundaries and policies to prevent abuse of minors. These training materials develop awareness and reinforce the responsibility for adults to report boundary violations or concerns. Our Presbytery has well established requirements for Child Protection training.

PC(USA) and Presbytery of San Jose Requirements

2023 amendments to the Constitution (Book of Order) now requires that "All Councils shall adopt and implement a sexual misconduct policy and a child and youth protection policy. *Each Council's policy shall include requirements for boundary training which includes the topic of sexual misconduct and child sexual abuse prevention training for its members at least every thirty-six months"(G-3.0106)*

The Presbytery's ethical conduct policies can be found at https://sanjosepby.org/policies The Presbytery determines the clergy boundary training to meet the requirement for minister members. The Presbytery is providing this mandatory training with two dates in early 2024. We will evaluate other times and alternative training options for 2024 after these classes. We wish to assist our minister members in accessing this mandatory training. All minister members must participate in boundary training regardless of employment or retirement status. Compliance with this requirement is ultimately part of a minister member's ecclesiastical status of "membership in good standing"

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New requirement for Ruling Elders

As a way of resourcing the Sessions of our churches, we are offering a one hour zoom Boundary training for Ruling Elders. We interpret that the new constitutional requirement that "each council's policy should include boundary training" means that each Session (a council of the church) must provide this training in some fashion. Sessions can provide their own training, but we seek to help Sessions with an accessible way to provide this training.

State of California Requirements

We seek to meet or exceed State requirements regarding reporting and ethical conduct training in our churches.

Mandated Reporter training recognizes the legal requirement to report suspected child abuse. Churches should ensure that employees, officers, leaders and those working with minors take the California state training for Mandated reporters. https://mandatedreporterca.com/

Sexual Harassment Prevention training is required for both employees and their supervisors in California. To meet this requirement specifically for employed church staff, churches can use the free California state training https://calcivilrights.ca.gov/shpt/ Alternatively, many of your insurance companies provide free training to meet California requirements.

Resources and Questions

We will need to all work together as we seek to make our churches and ministries safe for all people. The Stated Clerk and the Coordinating Council's Polity and Government Sub Committee will provide clarity about requirements and provide resources to our Sessions and Minister members. We rely on the important work of Clerks of Sessions who track and report on behalf of Sessions. The Committee on Ministry oversees clergy compliance with Presbytery policies. Contact Stated Clerk, Rev. Erica Rader erica@sanjosepby.org or the chair of Polity and Government Rev. Bryan Franzen Bryan@westpres-sj.org with any questions.