

Forest Hills Presbyterian Church  
Martinsville, Virginia

**Sexual Misconduct Policy**

Approved by Session [6/10/13]

Reviewed by Session [6/22/15]

**General Policy Statement:**

This policy outlines procedures for handling allegations of sexual exploitation or harassment against Ministers, Elders, Employees and Volunteer Leaders. All allegations of sexual abuse, sexual harassment and sexual misconduct will be taken seriously. Every allegation will be received, investigated, and acted upon in accordance with the terms of this policy.

**Policy Details:**

All allegations of sexual abuse, sexual harassment and sexual misconduct will be taken seriously. Every allegation will be received, investigated, and acted upon in accordance with the terms of this policy.

The protection of children and youth is a priority. Persons having reasonable cause to suspect sexual abuse of a child or young person will report it to the appropriate secular agency for immediate investigation. The accused person is always presumed innocent until proven guilty. In the context of this policy, no adverse finding will be made public or revealed against an accused person except on a need to know basis until a full investigation is completed and it has been determined that the complaint has been properly substantiated.

A. Anyone suspecting or having knowledge of a violation of Sexual Exploitation or Harassment may report such violation to any Minister, to the clerk of session or to one of the elders. Any child or youth who suspects or has knowledge of a violation of sexual exploitation or harassment is invited to share the knowledge with any Minister, elder, adult or volunteer. Anyone who has knowledge or suspicion of child abuse should be aware that state law requires the immediate reporting of such abuse to the civil authorities. Any person suspecting or having knowledge of a violation of Sexual Exploitation or Harassment with a minor must report such violation to any Minister, clerk of session or one of the elders and to civil authorities.

B. A response team with no fewer than two members, one male and one female, will

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be established by the session of Forest Hills Presbyterian Church each year at its first meeting, in preparation for the possibility of receiving an allegation of complaint under its adopted statement of policy. The response team will familiarize itself with the terms of this policy as well as the established procedures of Forest Hills Presbyterian Church for dealing with complaint(s) of alleged sexual exploitation or harassment against any Minister, elder, employee or volunteer in leadership position(s) at Forest Hills Presbyterian Church.

**Notes:** Revised by Admin/Personnel Ministry 6/10/13