

# **PERSONNEL HANDBOOK**

**MT. COMFORT CHURCH, INC.**



**This handbook supersedes all prior policy statements.**

**Effective date May 1, 2024**

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# MT. COMFORT CHURCH, INC.

## PERSONNEL HANDBOOK

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. WELCOME TO MT. COMFORT CHURCH!

Starting a new job is exciting but at times can be overwhelming. We understand this, so we have developed this handbook to answer many of your initial questions and explain personnel policies and benefits.

#### B. Mission Statement

We are committed to transforming our lives, our community, and our world through the power and love of Jesus Christ. This is the mission and purpose of our church, and we staff the church to achieve these goals.

#### C. Purpose of the Handbook

This Handbook establishes Personnel Policies as well as standards of conduct and performance for employees of Mt. Comfort Church. We define an employee as one who receives a paycheck directly from Mt. Comfort Church. This handbook applies to both lay and clergy.

Changes to this Handbook will be made when necessary, and revisions will be available to all employees. Mt. Comfort Church expects every employee to comply with the rules and policies discussed in this Handbook as well as any others adopted by the church. If you have questions, please ask your immediate supervisor, the Lead Pastor, or designated Leadership Team member. A violation of any of these rules or policies may result in discipline, up to and including termination. For your convenience, a full list of the Leadership Team members is available upon request.

#### D. Notice: At-Will Employment

This Handbook is not an expressed or implied contract of employment and does not guarantee employment for any term. There is no contract of employment between Mt. Comfort Church and any of its employees. Any employee may resign employment at any time. Similarly, Mt. Comfort Church may terminate the employment relationship, with or without cause. This Handbook does not confer any enforceable rights on the part of any employee.

## **II. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

### **A. Equal Opportunity**

Mt. Comfort Church does not discriminate in hiring or in any terms and conditions of employment based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age, marital status, covered veteran status or status with regard to public assistance. As a Christian ministry, we reserve the right to hire employees with the same religious affiliation as presented in our church tenets, "The Faith Once Delivered: A Wesleyan Witness." This policy applies to employees and applicants and to all phases of employment including hiring, promotion, demotion and treatment during employment, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and termination of employment.

Mt. Comfort Church will take appropriate steps to provide reasonable accommodations upon request to qualified individuals with disabilities, so long as doing so does not cause an undue hardship for the church.

### **B. Anti-Harassment**

Mt. Comfort Church is committed to providing a workplace free of harassment of any employee because of the employee's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age, citizenship status or any other category protected under federal, state or local law. We are committed to protect employees from such harassment, whether from other employees or non-employees. Conduct inappropriate under this policy may include, among other things:

- (1) Epithets, slurs, stereotyping or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts that relate to race, gender, religion, age, national origin or disability;
- (2) Written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of race, gender, age, religion, national origin or disability.

Specifically included in this policy is a commitment to provide a workplace free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- (1) Unsolicited and unwelcome comments or conduct of a sexual nature or that are demeaning to women or men as a group (for example, offensive or vulgar jokes, name-calling, comments about one's body or sex life, stereotyping based on a person's gender, touching, leering, ogling, patting, pinching, indecent exposure, physical gestures, or displaying sexually explicit photographs or objects that might interfere with a reasonable person's work);
- (2) Unsolicited and unwelcome demands or requests for sexual favors or social or sexual encounters;
- (3) An explicit or implicit promise of preferential treatment with regard to a person's employment in exchange for sexual favors or sexual activity;
- (4) The use of an employee's or applicant's submission to or rejection of sexual conduct as the basis for making, influencing or affecting an employment decision that has an impact upon the terms and conditions of the individual's employment (for example, hiring, firing, promotion, demotion, compensation, benefits or working conditions);
- (5) Creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment by such conduct.

Given the nature of this type of conduct and the serious effects such conduct can have on the target of the conduct and the one accused of the conduct, Mt. Comfort Church treats alleged

violations of this policy seriously, and to the extent possible, confidentially. We expect all those dealing with the issue to treat alleged violations in the same responsible manner. If you believe you, or any other employee, are being subjected to behavior that violates this policy, you have a responsibility to immediately report these matters to your supervisor, the Lead Pastor, or designated Leadership Team member.

Supervisors who become aware of any potential violation of this policy must report the violation to the Lead Pastor or designated Leadership Team member. Failure to report potential violations may result in appropriate discipline up to and including discharge.

No action will be taken against any employee merely because s/he reports behavior believed to violate this policy. We assure you we will act to investigate and resolve complaints and that Mt. Comfort Church is firm in our commitment to maintaining an environment free of discrimination and harassment.

Violations of this policy will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **C. Drug-Free/Alcohol-Free/Smoke-Free Workplace**

We expect all employees to report to work free of the use and effects of alcohol and illegal drugs and not to sell, distribute, dispense, possess or use or conspire to sell, distribute, dispense, possess or use an illegal drug or alcohol on Mt. Comfort Church's property and in church-owned vehicles, or during working time. Likewise, we expect all employees not to misuse or abuse any prescription or nonprescription medications.

We look to our employees to support this policy and expect them to cooperate in our efforts to enforce this policy and in any investigation of its violation.

Mt. Comfort Church has a "smoke free" policy. Smoking is not permitted in any of the church's buildings, on church property, or in a church-owned vehicle at any time.

Note: Mt. Comfort Church residences have separate policies.

### **D. Changes in Employment Information**

In order to keep personnel records correct and up-to-date, you must promptly inform, in writing, your supervisor of a change in any of the following items: name, home address, home telephone number, status affecting legal right to work in the United States, person to contact in the case of an emergency, number of dependents, personal physician, voluntary payroll deductions, military status or beneficiary designee.

You have the right to inspect your personnel file during regular office hours. You may make an appointment to inspect the file with your direct supervisor or a Leadership Team member, who will accompany you while you inspect the file. You may obtain copies of any document in your personnel file to the extent required by law. Personnel records are the property of Mt. Comfort Church and may not be removed from the Church.

No reference information will be given out to a third party without your prior written authorization.

### III. COMPENSATION

#### A. Employment Classifications

Employment classifications fall into one of the following categories:

1. **Regular.** A regular employee is a person who has been hired to fill a specific position for an indefinite period of time.
2. **Temporary.** A temporary employee is a person who has been hired for work of a temporary nature.
3. **Regular Full-Time.** A full-time employee is regularly scheduled to work 35 hours or more per week.
4. **Regular Part-Time.** A part-time employee is regularly scheduled to work fewer than 35 hours per week. Part-time employees occasionally may be asked to work full-time hours because of church needs; however, this will not change the employee's part-time status.
5. **Exempt.** An exempt employee is one whose position contains duties and responsibilities of an executive, administrative or professional nature as described under the Fair Labor Standards Act, and is therefore exempt from the provisions of the Act. Exempt employees may be required to perform a certain amount of work in excess of the standard 40-hour work week without additional compensation. All clergy are considered Exempt employees.
6. **Non-Exempt.** A non-exempt employee is one whose position is covered by the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act due to her/his duties and responsibilities. The Fair Labor Standards Act includes the provision for payment of all overtime hours worked in excess of 40 hours per work week for these non-exempt positions.
7. **Joyful Days Hourly.** These employees are governed by the Joyful Days policies and employee handbook.

**Note:** Mt. Comfort Church is a “missional church” (in that we understand that we are here to fulfill the stated mission) and in so doing realize the changing needs that arise to fulfill the stated mission. Mt. Comfort Church reserves the right to adjust employment status, job description and classification for missional needs, and thus does not guarantee the same or continued status.

#### B. Orientation Period (does not apply to clergy)

All employees hired for regular part-time or full-time employment must complete a minimum 90-day orientation period. If Mt. Comfort Church determines that an employee has not met our performance expectations at the end of the initial 90 days, his/her employment will be terminated at that time unless a designated extension of the orientation period is deemed appropriate and for which a specific action plan for additional training is undertaken.

At the successful completion of the orientation period, we will notify the employee of the change to regular employment status. Because all employees in the State of Indiana are employees at-will, employment still may be terminated either by the employee or Mt. Comfort Church for any reason, or no reason at all, at any time before or after completion of the orientation period.

**C. Wage Increases**

Mt. Comfort Church attempts to review compensation annually. Wage increases and other compensations are based on our church's annual budget; employee job performance, attendance and punctuality; ability to get along with other employees; external economic factors; and the appropriate wage range for the job. If you have questions concerning your compensation, please speak to your direct supervisor.

**D. Pay Periods**

Mt. Comfort Church's pay cycle is bi-monthly. This means Mt. Comfort Church employees are paid every second (2nd) and fourth (4th) Wednesday of the month.

**E. Recording Time**

Hourly employees are required to maintain an accurate record of all time worked on a computer terminal, time cards or other approved forms. All employees may be asked to track their time as needed. Falsification of time recording may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

**F. Payroll Deductions**

Mt. Comfort Church is required by law to withhold from each employee's pay certain federal, state and local taxes, the employee's portion of Social Security and Medicare taxes and any court-ordered garnishments. Other payroll deductions can include voluntary deductions for various benefits in which the employee is enrolled.

**G. Hours**

We have scheduled office hours. However, the Lead Pastor or the respective supervisor will determine normal work schedules and any temporary variations as needed.

**H. Lunch and Breaks**

Each hourly employee receives an unpaid lunch period. Lunch schedules of the support staff are to be staggered so that the office always remains open during office hours.

**I Overtime**

An hourly, non-exempt employee may not work more than 8 hours in a workday or 40 hours in a workweek without the prior approval of his/her supervisor. An hourly employee may not work through the lunch period without prior approval of a supervisor. An hourly employee will be paid overtime compensation at one and one-half times the regular hourly rate of pay for hours worked over 40 per week. (Paid time off will not be counted as hours worked.)

**J. Absenteeism and Tardiness**

We expect each employee to report to work on a regular and timely basis.

**1. Excused Absence**

For any absence to be considered "excused," you must notify your supervisor in advance of the scheduled time to report to work, if possible. If your supervisor is not available, contact the Lead Pastor or designated Leadership Team member.

Excused absences generally include:

- a. Illness or personal absence.



- b. Approved bereavement leave.
- c. Approved jury service.
- d. Military service.
- e. Medical leave.

## **2. Unexcused Absence**

An unexcused absence occurs when an employee does not notify the supervisor that s/he will be absent.

The disciplinary action for unexcused absences may include oral and/or written warning(s), escalating to employee suspension or termination at the discretion of the associate's direct supervisor, Lead Pastor, or Leadership Team, if warranted. If an employee is absent five consecutive working days without notifying a supervisor, his/her employment will be terminated due to job abandonment.

## **K. Statutory Benefits**

In accordance with applicable law, the following benefits are provided to all employees:

### **1. Health Insurance**

Mt. Comfort Church does not provide health insurance, but can direct employees to governmental websites to obtain health insurance.

### **2. Worker's Compensation Insurance**

Worker's compensation insurance provides financial protection in case you are injured or become ill as a result of your employment. This coverage complies with the worker's compensation laws of Indiana, and Mt. Comfort Church pays the entire cost of this protection. You must provide a return-to-work form indicating when you are capable of returning to full duty or return to work with restrictions. You must complete a return-to-work form for each doctor's visit, showing any time off work, restrictions or follow-up visits. Employee must follow the Mt. Comfort Workmen's Compensation procedure if filing a claim.

### **3. Social Security**

Social Security coverage entitles you and your family to certain health and retirement benefits based on income and the number of years worked. Mt. Comfort Church contributes to this coverage by paying one-half of the Social Security tax. Clergy may be self-employed and be responsible for their own tax requirements.

### **4. Retirement Plan**

Mt. Comfort Church does not offer a retirement plan outside of negotiated benefits with clergy.

### **5. Continuing Education**

Executive and Professional staff are encouraged to participate in at least one event each year for improvement of professional skills and may request reimbursement.

### **6. Mental Health (a preventative benefit)**

All pastoral and supervisory leaders are encouraged to participate in Christian counseling. We desire a safe and constructive place for our senior leadership to discuss, seek advice and receive mental health support in a safe manner.

## **IV. PAID LEAVE**

### **A. Paid Time Off and Vacation**

Mt. Comfort Church offers unlimited paid time off for salaried staff/employees, but requires supervisory approval. Time off requests must be made in writing to your supervisor or the Lead Pastor no less than (10) days in advance. Requests will be responded to within 48 hours.

### **B. Holidays**

Mt. Comfort Church office is closed the following non-Sunday holidays:

- New Year's - January 1
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- Christmas – December 25 thru January 1

### **C. Bereavement Leave**

Up to three (3) days' leave may be granted by one's supervisor when there is a death of an immediate member of the family (parent, grandparent, sibling, child, grandchild, spouse, step children/parents or in-laws). Up to one (1) day's leave may be granted for attendance at funerals for other family members or close friends.

### **D. Short-Notice Days Off**

We recognize that life happens and emergencies come up. As such, five (5) Short-Notice Days Off per year are provided to salaried staff/employees. These days off may be used for sick days, family emergencies, unforeseen circumstances, mental health, etc. Short-Notice Days Off are defined as days off when communicated fewer than 10 days prior to absence and when staff would otherwise be at work (on-site or remote). The reason for taking/requesting Short-Notice Days Off should be communicated to the staff/employee's direct supervisor as soon as possible. If Short-Notice Days Off result in three (3) or more consecutive sick days, a doctor's release may be required to return to work.

1. One to five absences in a year are considered normal and not subject to disciplinary action. When staff/employee has five absences, verbal communication will be given that allotted days have been reached.
2. On the sixth and seventh absence in a year, written warning will be given and documented in staff/employee's personnel file.
3. The eighth absence in the same time period may result in a sit-down meeting with the lead pastor and direct supervisor to discuss absences and a corrective plan.
4. Ten or more absences may result in loss of wages or termination.

In cases of termination, unused accumulated sick days will not be compensated.

### **E. Sabbatical Leave / Study Break**

All Pastors qualify to request in writing a Sabbatical Leave and/or Study Break. The request shall be submitted directly to the Leadership Team with as much advance notice as possible. The Sabbatical Leave and/or Study Break request may not exceed three months. A Sabbatical Leave is available after six years of service with no less than 5 years between sabbatical/study leaves.

### **F. Maternity / Paternity Leave**

Female employees who have worked at least one year for the church will be granted up to six (6) weeks of paid maternity leave to care for their newborn or adopted children.

A male employee whose wife has a baby will be granted up to two (2) weeks for paid paternity leave.

### **G. Medical Leave of Absence**

If an employee is or becomes unable to work because of a medical condition due to illness or injury of more than five (5) consecutive days, an employee may apply for a medical leave of absence. Leaves of absence are granted to protect the employee's length of service.

For employees who have been employed for less than one (1) year, medical leave will be for a period up to one (1) month. The leave may be renewed for successive periods up to a maximum of two (2) additional months during 12 calendar months for employees who have been employed from ninety (90) days to one (1) year and up to a maximum of six (6) months during 12 calendar months for employees who have been employed more than one (1) year. Employees who have been employed fewer than ninety (90) days will not be granted medical leave unless they are a qualified individual with a disability and granting a period of unpaid leave would constitute a reasonable accommodation that would not cause an undue hardship. Absences related to illness or injury of five (5) consecutive days or less will be addressed under Mt. Comfort Church's absenteeism and tardiness policy contained in this handbook.

Employees who meet the time-of-service requirements may be granted a total of twelve (12) weeks in a calendar for the following reasons:

1. The birth of the employee's child;
2. The placement of a child with employee for adoption or foster care;
3. To care for a spouse, child or parent who has a serious health condition; or
4. A serious health condition that renders the employee incapable of performing one or more of the essential functions of his or her job.

If the Medical Leave of Absence is approved, Mt. Comfort Church requires that accrued vacation time be utilized and paid to the employee prior to unpaid leave. During this absence all benefits, including but not limited to vacation time, will freeze and no accruals of benefits will occur. During an approved leave the employee will be responsible for his or her portion of benefit costs. If an employee is on unpaid leave, s/he will need to pay his/her share of the benefit premiums.

To be granted a medical leave, an employee must provide his/her supervisor with a physician's certificate stating that he/she is medically unable to work and the estimated length of the absence. Mt. Comfort Church reserves the right to (a) inquire of you as to the status of any medical condition, (b) require that you provide medical evidence from your physician or from a physician of Mt. Comfort Church's choice concerning any medical condition, (c) deny a request for medical leave or any renewal thereof if it determines, from the medical evidence, that you are able to perform your work, and (d) place or continue you on medical leave if Mt. Comfort Church determines, from the medical evidence, that you are not able to perform the essential functions of your job with or without reasonable accommodation.

It is an employee's obligation to notify Mt. Comfort Church at least five (5) working days prior to the expiration of a medical leave whether you will return to work or whether you need a renewed medical leave. In either case, you must provide a physician's statement confirming your ability to return to work or the basis for the need for a renewed medical leave of absence.

At the conclusion of a medical leave you will be considered for return to work on the basis of your qualifications, prior performance, Mt. Comfort Church's then current ministerial and

personnel needs, and the availability of any reasonable accommodation that would not cause undue hardship on Mt. Comfort Church. If you return to work after a medical leave, you will resume employment on the same terms and conditions applicable to Mt. Comfort Church's employees generally without having to satisfy any benefit plan waiting periods applicable to new employees. Upon your release to return to work, if there is no available position for which you are qualified, your employment relationship with Mt. Comfort Church will be administratively terminated at that time

At the exhaustion of your leave time, if you are unable to return to work, your employment will be administratively terminated. Employees may request additional time off from the Lead Pastor. All requests will be reviewed by Mt. Comfort Church on a case-by-case basis.

## **V. UNPAID LEAVE**

### **A. Military Leave**

Mt. Comfort Church will comply with all applicable laws regarding military leaves of absence. To request a leave of absence for military duty, you must furnish the church with written proof of the service requirements two (2) weeks in advance of service dates or as soon as possible. Military leave is unpaid.

### **B. Jury or Witness Duty**

Mt. Comfort Church recognizes that jury or witness duty is the obligation of all citizens and encourages its employees to fulfill this obligation. If you are called for jury duty or subpoenaed as a witness in a court or administrative agency action, excused time away from work will be granted. However, you are to return to duties any time you are not needed in the courtroom. If you are called for jury duty or subpoenaed as a witness, tell your supervisor and give that person a copy of the summons or subpoena as soon as possible.

## **VI. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND PERFORMANCE**

### **A. Accidents and Safety**

Report all work-related accidents immediately to your supervisor or the Lead Pastor. You must report the accident whether or not personal injury or physical damage is involved. The supervisor should immediately complete an incident report to be filed. The Incident Report can be obtained from the Office Manager.

You must report immediately any injury, no matter how slight, that happens on the job, on Mt. Comfort Church property, or while conducting church business, to your supervisor so you may receive medical attention, if necessary. The supervisor must promptly report the accident to the Lead Pastor or designated Leadership Team member. If your supervisor determines that medical attention is needed, you must comply with the supervisor's decision. Refusal to have medical attention may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination

If a work-related injury requires you to be absent from work or to have medical costs, you must contact your supervisor in order for the appropriate forms to be completed for worker's compensation.

Inform your supervisor if you observe safety and health violations, potentially unsafe conditions, and any accidents resulting in injuries. We encourage you to submit suggestions to the Leadership Team concerning safety and health matters.

No weapons are allowed on Mt. Comfort Church property without Leadership Team approval, unless properly permitted, secured and locked in a private vehicle out of plain sight.

### **B. Automobile Usage**

Employees who use personal vehicles for approved Mt. Comfort Church business will receive a mileage allowance equal to the Internal Revenue Service optional mileage allowance for such usage. This allowance is to compensate for the cost of gasoline, oil, depreciation and insurance. In addition, employees driving on Mt. Comfort Church business may claim reimbursement for parking fees and tolls incurred. Employee must have a valid driver's license and proof of current insurance per state minimums.

You must have prior supervisory approval to use your personal vehicle for Mt. Comfort Church business and you must carry, at your own expense, the minimum insurance coverage for property damage and public liability. You will be responsible for any traffic citation given or damage occurred when driving on church business or at any time when using a church-owned vehicle. If driving a church-owned vehicle, you must adhere to that policy.

### **C. Personal Appearance**

We expect our employees to maintain high standards of personal cleanliness and attire. Personal cleanliness includes regular bathing, dental hygiene and clean clothing. Mt. Comfort Church reserves the right to determine that particular attire is inappropriate and to inform the employee and to instruct that the attire be changed if it is not appropriate.

Any employee who does not meet the standards of this policy will be required to take corrective action, which may include leaving the premises. Repeated violations of this policy will be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **D. Solicitation**

Mt. Comfort Church employees may not actively solicit other church employees, visitors or guests for product sales, monetary contributions, signatures or petitions, etc., or distribute literature that is not a part of our mission and programs. Passive solicitation, such as order forms for nonpolitical charitable purposes (Girl Scout cookies, Boy Scout popcorn, e.g.) or opportunity to contribute funds for an employee gift, may be permissible with prior authorization from your supervisor. Non-employees are prohibited from soliciting Mt. Comfort Church employees for product sales, fund raising, signature or membership drives, etc., or distributing literature on church property at any time. Group presentations for non-political, charitable purposes, such as United Way, require prior approval of the Lead Pastor or Leadership Team.

### **E. Confidential Information**

Some employees may have access to business information that Mt. Comfort Church considers confidential. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, salary and benefits, Social Security numbers, individual gift information, and personnel information. We expect employees who have access to this information to treat it as confidential and not discuss or disclose it except as may be necessary in connection with the performance of their work or as required by law. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information could subject an employee to immediate termination and possible criminal and civil penalties.

Confidential information obtained during or through Mt. Comfort Church employment may not be used for the purpose of furthering current or future outside employment or activities, or for obtaining personal gain or profit.

#### **F. Electronic Information Systems Policy**

E-mail, computer and voice mail systems are the property of Mt. Comfort Church and are intended for business use. We have the right to access any information or file maintained in or on our property or transmitted or stored through our electronic information systems or other technical resources.

Mt. Comfort Church prohibits the use of its electronic information systems in ways that are unlawful, disruptive, offensive to others or harmful to morale. For example, the display or transmission of images, messages and cartoons that may offend others because of their gender, race, age, national origin, disability, religion or any other category protected by law is prohibited. Such misuse includes, but is not limited to, ethnic or racial slurs, racial or sexual comments or jokes, or any other communication that shows disrespect for others on the basis of gender, race, national origin, disability, religion, or age.

Even though a message may be deleted from the system, a record of it may remain either on the daily backups of all data or in other ways. It is possible to re-create a "deleted" message. Under certain circumstances, Mt. Comfort Church may access information stored in its electronic information systems. Therefore, ultimate privacy of messages cannot be assured.

While it is impossible to list all of the circumstances under which access may occur, some examples follow:

1. During regular maintenance of the system.
2. When Mt. Comfort Church has a business need to access the employee's mailbox or computer files; for example, if the employee is absent from the office and the supervisor has reason to believe that information relevant to the day's business is located in the employee's files.
3. When the church receives a legal request to disclose electronic information.
4. When the church has reason to believe that employees are using its electronic information systems or other technical resources in violation of its policies.

Because Mt. Comfort Church is sensitive to employees' privacy concerns, we will make every effort to access electronic information systems in a respectful and responsible manner. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees learning of any misuse of Mt. Comfort Church's electronic information systems or a violation of this policy must notify the church of such misuse or violation immediately. Failure to notify us of such misuse also may result in such disciplinary action.

#### **G. Outside Work/ Conflict of Interest**

Professional and community activities in which you are involved on your own time outside of employment at Mt. Comfort Church are not our concern unless they compromise the church's interests or adversely affect job performance. Outside employment is not an excuse for poor job performance, absence, tardiness, leaving early, refusing to travel or work overtime, or requesting a changed schedule.

You are not allowed to engage in employment or any personal business, including as an independent contractor, which would create a potential conflict of interest with church

employment. If you are uncertain as to whether this is the situation, discuss it with your supervisor, or Lead Pastor, or designated Leadership Team member.

We desire for Mt. Comfort Church to be a “teaching church,” so we want to help other ministries. If you, in the course of church responsibilities preach, lecture or advise outside individuals or organizations, you may keep offered honoraria or payment, but will need to inform and discuss the circumstances with the Lead Pastor and your direct supervisor if different. If the invitation is not related to staff responsibility, you may keep honoraria, but should not request reimbursement from Mt. Comfort Church for travel-related expenses.

#### **H. Nepotism**

A family member of an employee may be hired as long as s/he does not report to, nor is supervised by, another family member.

#### **I. Conflict Resolution Policy / Communication Procedure**

Using Matthew 18:15-17 as our model, Mt. Comfort Church will address and handle conflict involving staff in the following manner:

STEP 1: Start by going directly to the staff member with whom there is the concern  
First question: Have you talked with the staff member? If they are fearful to do that, have a Leadership Team member accompany them for support (the Leadership Team member should not plead the case). No anonymous or secret complaints!

STEP 2: If the issue is not yet resolved, bring it to a Leadership Team member who can then talk with the staff member about the concern.

STEP 3: If it is still not resolved, it comes to the Leadership Team for discussion and potential resolution (with agreed-upon steps and action).

Is effective ministry happening?

What will need to change (pastor/staff and church)?

What steps and actions will need to be taken in order to move toward effective ministry?

What follow-up support and accountability will be put in place?

It is imperative that this process is followed.

## **J. Workplace Conduct**

Violence by an employee or anyone else against an employee, supervisor, member or visitor of Mt. Comfort Church will not be tolerated. If you receive or overhear any threats, you must report it to a supervisor and the Lead Pastor at once. Do not engage in either physical or verbal confrontation with a potentially violent individual. If you feel threatened with immediate harm, dial 911 immediately. You are responsible for notifying your supervisor and the Lead Pastor of any possible violations of this policy or other threats to workplace security that you have experienced, witnessed or otherwise become aware of. All reports of work-related threats will be kept confidential to the extent possible, investigated and documented. You must report and participate in an investigation of any suspected or actual cases of workplace violence.

Violations of this policy, including failure to report or fully cooperate in Mt. Comfort Church's investigation (unless applicable law provides that such reporting is not required), may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

The following are examples of other serious conduct offenses that may result in discipline up to and including termination:

1. Theft of private or Mt. Comfort Church property.
2. Falsification of information on application or records to gain employment or benefits.
3. Falsification of records or reports.
4. Fighting on Mt. Comfort Church property.
5. Insubordination or refusal to obey reasonable directives of a supervisor.
6. Deliberate destruction or abuse of Mt. Comfort Church property.
7. Bringing or using alcohol, intoxicants or non-prescribed drugs, or being under the influence of alcohol, intoxicants or non-prescribed drugs on the church's property at any time or during working time at any location.
8. Distribution of literature or circulation of petitions for any cause when occurring during work time and without prior approval from your supervisor.
9. Willful violation of safety rules or safety practices of the church.
10. Any felonious act committed on church property during working time or any proven felonious act at any time.
11. Disclosure of confidential information.
12. Harassment or disrespect toward others.
13. Fraud or dishonesty.
14. Behavior at work dangerous to others.
15. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness.
16. Interfering with the work of others.
17. Carelessness that can result in damage to church property or equipment.
18. The commission of a proven misdemeanor while on church business or church property.
19. Insubordination or failure to perform assigned duties or tasks or to follow instructions.

Note: The examples listed above are not a complete list of performance and conduct issues.



**K. Progressive Discipline Procedure**

Mt. Comfort Church uses a formal disciplinary procedure: Discipline may be initiated for various reasons, including, but not limited to, violations of Mt. Comfort Church’s code of Workplace Conduct (p. 16), insubordination or poor job performance. The severity of the disciplinary action depends on the severity of the offense and your previous employment record, and may range from verbal counseling to immediate termination.

The normal procedure consists of a) verbal counseling (recorded in writing), b) first written warning, c) final written warning, which may include probation, or paid or unpaid suspension, and d) discharge.

**L. Cell Phone Usage**

Employees are responsible for observing local, state and federal safety regulations with respect to cellular devices and usage. However, employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of their mobile device while driving will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions.

**VII. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

**A. Involuntary Termination (Not applicable for Lead Pastor.)**

Mt. Comfort Church may terminate an employee’s employment relationship at any time. An employee’s employment may be terminated for reasons including, but not limited to, lack of work, and improper conduct.

The Lead Pastor or designated Leadership Team member will report the circumstances of each case to the Leadership Team before a termination decision is finalized.

Upon termination by Mt. Comfort Church, severance pay may be provided to employees terminated after completion of their probationary period, not to exceed three (3) months’ wages, payable over six (6) months from the date of termination. Mt. Comfort Church may decline to provide severance pay to employees terminated for improper conduct or for any other reason at its sole discretion.

**B. Resignation**

If an employee chooses to resign from employment, we request a minimum of two weeks’ notice.

Process of Resignation:

1. Letter of Resignation to direct supervisor, which will be communicated to the Lead Pastor.
2. Information shared with the Leadership Team.
3. Lead Pastor will direct time frame to communicate to staff and congregation as appropriate.
4. Exit interview with direct supervisor, or Lead Pastor, or designated Leadership Team member.

\* \* \* \*

**APPENDIX - 1**  
**Mt. Comfort Church Staff**  
**Social Networking Policy**

Mt. Comfort Church takes no position on your decision to start or maintain a blog or participate in other social networking activities. However, it is the right and duty of the Church to protect itself from unauthorized disclosure of information, defamation or cyber-attacks that compromise the integrity and safety of the Church.

Employees are expected to protect the privacy of Mt. Comfort Church, its members, attendees and employees and are prohibited from disclosing personal member, attendee and employee information (this can include photos) and any other proprietary and nonpublic information to which employees have access.

Bloggers and commenters are personally responsible for their commentary on blogs and social networking sites. Bloggers and commenters can be held personally liable for commentary that is considered defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libelous by any offended party, not just Mt. Comfort Church. Employees may not use blogs or social networking sites to harass, threaten, discriminate or disparage against employees or anyone worshiping at, associated with or doing business with Mt. Comfort Church.

Employees cannot use employer-owned equipment, including computers, company-licensed software or other electronic equipment, or facilities or company time to conduct personal blogging or social networking activities outside the scope of their pastoral responsibilities at Mt. Comfort Church.

If contacted by the media or press about their post that relates to Mt. Comfort Church, employees are required to speak with their supervisor before responding.

Violation of the social networking policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. Discipline or termination will be determined based on the nature and factors of any blog or social networking post. Mt. Comfort Church reserves the right to take legal action where necessary against employees who engage in prohibited or unlawful conduct.

***I have read and understand the above policy.***

***I agree to abide by the procedures and rules related to the Social Networking Policy.***

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Employee's Initials

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Date

*{This page is to be signed, removed from packet and filed in the Personnel File, and Employee should keep copy on file on premises of Mt. Comfort Church, Inc.}*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF ENTIRE PERSONNEL HANDBOOK**

I have received a copy of the Mt. Comfort Church Personnel Handbook dated May 1, 2024, and agree to read and keep the Handbook for future reference and to direct any questions about the Handbook or its contents to my supervisor, the Lead Pastor, or designated Leadership Team member. I understand that this Handbook is not a contract of employment and does not alter my at-will employment relationship with Mt. Comfort Church. I further understand that the church reserves the right to change the policies, procedures, benefits and other general information contained in this Handbook.

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Employee's Signature

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Printed Name

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Date