

**FIRST READING 09-23-25**  
**SECOND READING 11-18-25**

*Congregational and Pastoral Health - MVC Manual*

**Policy**

**3. A. Ethical Conduct Policy and Life Together in the Community of Faith**

**ETHICAL CONDUCT BOUNDARIES POLICIES**

Beaver-Butler Presbytery

Adopted XXXX

The ethical and responsible conduct of all who minister in the name of Jesus Christ is of vital importance to the church because, through these representatives, an understanding of God and the gospel's good news is conveyed. "Membership in the Church of Jesus Christ is...a commitment to participate in Christ's mission. A faithful member bears witness to God's love and grace and promises to be involved responsibly in the ministry of Christ's Church." (G-1.0304)

Tend the flock of God that is in your charge...not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it – not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. 1 Peter 5:2-3

In recognition of this gospel calling, Beaver-Butler Presbytery expects all people governed by this policy to act ethically and to be a living demonstration of the gospel. Affirming our denominational connection, Beaver-Butler Presbytery adopts the Standards of Ethical Conduct approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998) as laid out in "Life Together in the Community of Faith."

Conversely, misconduct is a violation of the principles of ethical leadership set forth in scripture, a violation of the trust of the Presbytery, and is never permissible. The Beaver-Butler Presbytery takes such violations seriously, working diligently to prevent misconduct and seeking to respond justly and effectively to all those affected by it.

**PERSONS GOVERNED BY THIS POLICY**

This policy governs:

- all staff who Beaver-Butler Presbytery employs;
- all people elected, commissioned, or appointed to Presbytery service;

- all ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are members of Beaver-Butler Presbytery;
- all ministers of the Word and Sacrament laboring within our bounds who are members of other presbyteries;
- inquirers and candidates;
- youth leaders engaged in youth ministries under the direction and supervision of the Presbytery;
- commissioned ruling elders, commissioned pastors, serving under the jurisdiction of Beaver-Butler Presbytery;
- certified Christian educators;
- certified associate Christian educators;
- members of any PJC or former members of a PJC who may be called to serve.
- All ministers from other denominations approved for service within the Presbytery.

This policy is commended to but does not apply to the activities and functions carried on by congregations or other ministries in the Presbytery, except to the extent that such activities or functions are engaged in by a person who is acting on behalf of the Presbytery as provided above. The Book of Order requires sessions to adopt and implement sexual misconduct policies that apply to persons and activities within their congregations (Book of Order, G-3.0106).

## **STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT**

There are three variations of Life Together in the Community of Faith. The appropriate version should be signed by the individual, and a record kept by the individual moderating, chairing, or overseeing the individual's work. In addition, a copy should be shared with the Assistant Stated Clerk and kept in the appropriate staff, ministerial, or other designated file.

The Standards of Ethical Conduct for Members pertain to all inquirers, candidates, elders preparing for commissioning (both as commissioned pastors and to officiate for communion), and people commissioned, elected, or appointed to a Presbytery commission, committee, work group, task force, or other designated ministry team.

The Standards of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers pertain to all employees and adult volunteers of the presbytery. Some examples include members of Beaver-Butler Presbytery congregations who volunteer to assist on a Presbytery-led youth or mission trip or activity, or individuals outside of the Beaver-Butler Presbytery who are recruited to lead a Presbytery activity or event.

Standards of Conduct for Ordained Officers, which pertain to all ministers of the Word and Sacrament, commissioned pastors, Presbytery officers designated in our Manual of Operation and bylaws, and ministers of other denominations serving in pastoral ministry within the Beaver-Butler Presbytery.

DRAFT

**LIFE TOGETHER IN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH:  
STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR  
MEMBERS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

As a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in obedience to Jesus Christ, I accept Christ's call to be involved responsibly in the ministry of the church, confirm that Jesus Christ is the pattern for my life and ministry and, relying on God's grace, commit myself to the following standards of ethical conduct. Approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998), Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

1. I will conduct my life in a manner that is faithful to the gospel and consistent with my membership in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Therefore I will:
  - Practice the disciplines of study, prayer, reflection, worship, stewardship, and service;
  - Be honest and truthful in my relationships with others;
  - Be faithful, keeping the covenants I make and honoring marriage vows;
  - Treat all persons with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God;
  - Maintain a healthy balance among the responsibilities of my life's work and church membership, my commitments to family and other primary relationships, and my need for spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual renewal;
  - Refrain from abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior and seek help to overcome such behavior if it occurs;
  - Refrain from gossip and abusive speech; and
  - Maintain an attitude of repentance, humility, and forgiveness, responsive to God's reconciling will.
  
2. I will conduct myself within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) so that nothing need be hidden from sisters and brothers in Christ. Therefore I will:
  - Bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ with courage, speaking the truth in love;
  - Honor the sacred trust of relationships within the covenant community and observe appropriate boundaries;
  - Be judicious in the exercise of the power and privileges of positions of responsibility I hold;
  - Avoid conflicts of interest that might compromise my witness and relationships within the community of faith;

- Refrain from exploiting relationships within the community of faith for personal gain or gratification, including sexual harassment and misconduct as defined by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy;
- Respect the privacy of individuals and not divulge information obtained in confidence without express permission unless an individual is a danger to self or others;
- Recognize the limits of my own gifts and training, and refer persons and tasks to others as appropriate;
- Claim only those qualifications actually attained, give appropriate credit to others where due and observe copyrights;
- Be a faithful steward of and fully account for funds and property entrusted to me; and
- Accept the discipline of the church.

3. I will participate as a partner with others in the ministry and mission of the Church universal. Therefore I will:

- Participate in the mission and governance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and work for the unity of the holy catholic church;
- Show respect and provide encouragement for sisters and brothers in Christ;
- Recruit church members responsibly, respect existing congregational relationships and refrain from exploiting persons in vulnerable situations; and
- Cooperate with those working for justice, compassion, and peace in the world, including partners in ministry from other faith traditions.

---

Signature of Presbytery Member

---

Date

**Policy**

**3. B. Misconduct Definition and Reporting**

**MISCONDUCT**

Beaver-Butler Presbytery defines “misconduct” as an act, act of omission, or failure to act, which transgresses standards of Scripture, as well as Confessions and Order of the PC(USA), including but not limited to, the Standards of Ethical Conduct, or which is found to be disgraceful, dishonorable, illegal, improper, immoral, unethical, or unbecoming.

Examples and definitions of misconduct include:

1. Abuse of any kind
  - Harm or threatened harm to a person’s health or welfare which occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, whether to a child or an adult.
2. Abuse of power and position
  - Power and position are abused in order to exert and maintain control over others to accomplish one’s goals or for personal gratification. Leadership and Pastoral abuse of power comes in many forms, including misusing one’s position of power and trust to:
    - Cultivate relationships that are immoral or destructive.
    - Attack an individual or individuals deliberately and personally from the pulpit.
    - Seek personal financial gain, such as personal loans and other benefits, without proper disclosures and transparency.
    - Disseminate false information and rumors to discredit those who are opposed to one’s vision and plans for the future of the church.
    - Threaten eternal consequences to maintain one’s control over the life decisions and the support of their congregants.
    - Set oneself up as the sole channel through whom God speaks to the congregation and charging those who dissent with disobedience to God calling for their removal from the membership.
    - Influence Pastoral Search Committees improperly.
3. Criminal activity as defined by law
4. Racist comments or conduct

## 5. Theft, fraud and or embezzlement

- This includes taking financial advantage of a child or vulnerable adult who is incapable of making informed decisions about financial matters.

### Sexual Misconduct

Sexual Misconduct Policy and Its Procedures. Adopted by the 205th General Assembly (1993) (Minutes, 1993, Part I, p. 572), Section II.B.2, Standards of Conduct: "Sexual misconduct is a misuse of authority and power that breaches Christian ethical principles by misusing a trust relation to gain advantage over another for personal pleasure in an abusive, exploitative, and unjust manner. If the parishioner, student, client, or employee initiates or invites sexual content in the relationship, it is the pastor's, counselor's, officer's, or supervisor's responsibility to maintain the appropriate role and prohibit a sexual relationship."

In Beaver-Butler Presbytery, "Sexual Misconduct" encompasses a broad range of behavior, from harassing statements to criminal sexual assault. The following acts are prohibited, regardless of the sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression of the individuals involved. Except where expressly noted, claimed "consent" does not diminish the finding of Sexual Misconduct because consent is often ineffective due to the legal or practical incapacity of the person allegedly giving consent. This incapacity can exist, for example, because of age below adulthood, mental impairment, chemical-induced impairment, trauma, fear, and unequal power dynamics.

#### A. Non-Consensual Sexual Acts and Exploitation

Sexual Misconduct includes non-consensual sexual penetration no matter how slight; non-consensual sexual contact by the touching of intimate body parts or the clothing covering them; and sexual exploitation by taking sexual advantage of another through, for example, voyeurism, electronic transmission of sexual activities or photographs, exposing oneself, or knowingly transmitting sexual diseases without disclosure.

#### B. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of Sexual Misconduct that has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a person's work, religious, or educational opportunity; creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work, church, or educational environment; or otherwise negatively affects a person's work, religious, or educational opportunities. It includes, but is not limited to:

Unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of that individual's gender expression, sexual

orientation, or gender identity (or that of an individual's relatives, friends, or associates), including unwelcome threats, derogatory comments, jokes, innuendos, insults, slurs, epithets, negative stereotyping, and other similar conduct;

The placement, dissemination, or circulation of any unwelcome written or graphic material (in hard copy or electronic form) that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of gender expression, sexual orientation, or gender identity;

Unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome requests for sexual favors, and other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature where submission to or tolerance of such conduct is made an explicit or implicit term or condition or other basis of employment or church participation.

If an individual has welcomed sexual advances or other harassing conduct (whether sexual or otherwise) by actively participating in or encouraging such activity, that individual should specifically inform the alleged harasser if such conduct is no longer welcome in order for any subsequent conduct to be deemed unwelcome. However, failure to give such notice in no way prevents the Councils and Judicial Commissions of the PC(USA) from taking appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary action against the alleged harasser for the behavior.

### C. Relationship Abuse and Violence

"Relationship Abuse and Violence" encompasses a broad range of behavior, including, but not limited to, "domestic violence" and "dating violence." It includes acts of coercion, abuse, violence, or threats of violence between partners in a personal, intimate relationship. The coercive, abusive, violent, or threatening behaviors can be physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, and/or emotional. Relationship Abuse and Violence can occur between current or former intimate partners who have dated, cohabitated, or been married.

### D. Stalking

"Stalking" is defined as engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for the person's safety or the safety of others; or suffer substantial emotional distress. For purposes of this definition:

"Course of conduct" means two or more acts, including, but not limited to, acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about a person, or interferes with a person's property.

"Reasonable person" means a reasonable person under similar circumstances and with similar identities to the stalked individual.

"Substantial emotional distress" means significant mental suffering or anguish that may, but does not necessarily, require medical or other professional treatment or counseling.

The Presbytery will seek to prevent misconduct by providing education and other procedures aimed at preventing misconduct. People subject to this policy should nonetheless:

Monitor their own conduct toward others and bring their conduct into compliance;

Promptly inform any person or persons involved in misconduct that they should stop engaging in conduct offensive or objectionable to you or others.

## REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF MISCONDUCT


Reporting an incident of Misconduct or instances of criminal or sexual misconduct, a report must be made to the Presbytery Executive and/or Stated Clerk using the Incident of Misconduct Report Form (Appendix A). For misconduct committed by a Presbytery staff person, the report should be made orally or in writing to the Presbytery Executive or Chair of the Personnel Committee, and the response will be governed by the Personnel Policy. For other types of misconduct committed by anyone else governed by this policy, the misconduct shall be reported to the chairperson of the Ministry and Vocation Committee, Stated Clerk, or Presbytery Executive. The initial report may be made by any means; however, the person receiving the report may request that the Incident of Misconduct Report Form also be completed. This form may be submitted by the accuser, victim, or person with reasonable knowledge that an incident of misconduct has occurred.

A person receiving a report of misconduct may take action within their scope of authority and should report the incident to the Stated Clerk and Presbytery Executive.

When a person becomes aware of alleged violations of this policy, they will first determine if there are safety issues. If there is an immediate danger to someone, the person should take all necessary steps to ensure the other person's safety. These may include calling for medical assistance and/or reporting the incident to the police.

The person observing and reporting an incident of alleged inappropriate conduct should then secure the safety of others and stabilize the environment in which the incident occurred. Under no circumstances should a reporter who has responsibility for a group of

children, youth, or vulnerable adults leave them unsupervised in order to report an incident. Seek help from other caregivers who are close at hand.

In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), charges of sexual abuse may be brought regardless of the date on which an offense is alleged to have occurred (Book of Order, D-10.0401b). The first person to learn of alleged sexual misconduct must take the allegations seriously and confidentially. Allegations of misconduct may be made in a variety of ways. Reports of 

sexual misconduct should never be taken lightly, disregarded, or allowed to circulate without concern for the integrity and reputation of the accuser, the offended, the accused, and of the church. Reports should be dealt with as matters of highest confidentiality by all parties, both before and after they have been submitted.

## RESPONSE TO MISCONDUCT

Misconduct may result in Remedial and Disciplinary complaints filed with the Permanent Judicial Commission and such relief, including censure, as allowed under the PC(U.S.A.) Constitution's Rules of Discipline, as well as through civil or criminal legal process.

After receiving a report of an incident of misconduct, the Presbytery Executive and Stated Clerk shall determine whether the accused's service should be suspended or restricted pending further investigation of the incident. If reasonable cause exists to believe that an offense has occurred, the Presbytery Executive or another person with standing will take appropriate action which may include disciplinary proceedings against the accused under the Rules of Discipline by causing a written statement of alleged offense to be filed with the Stated Clerk.

If the accused is subject to the jurisdiction of a governing body other than Beaver-Butler Presbytery, the Stated Clerk will submit the written statement to the clerk of session or the Stated Clerk of the presbytery, or an appropriate judicatory authority having jurisdiction over the accused.

APPENDIX A

Misconduct Incident Report Form (Please print)

Date of Report:

REPORTER

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone (day):

Phone (cell):

E-mail:

Title (if applicable):

ALLEGED VICTIM (if different from REPORTER)

Name:

Age, if under 18:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone (day):

Phone (cell):

E-mail:

Title (if applicable):

ACCUSED

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone (day):

Phone (cell):


E-mail:

Title (if applicable):

## DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

Please describe the incident(s) of misconduct, abuse, or neglect, including date, time, and location of each incident.

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

If medical assistance or first aid was provided at the scene, please describe the assistance given and the medical  disposition (taken to hospital, etc.)

## OTHERS HAVING KNOWLEDGE OF THE INCIDENT

Please list the name, address, and phone number of each person who may have information related to or pertinent to

the incident. Please give e-mail and cell phone number if available.

## OTHER INFORMATION

Please give any additional information that may be helpful.

If you need more room to answer any questions, please attach additional sheets.

This completed report should be delivered to the Presbytery Executive OR Presbytery Stated Clerk.

Beaver-Butler Presbytery

P.O. Box 279

Zelienople, PA 16063

724.452.7515

*Congregational and Pastoral Health - MVC Manual*

## **Policy**

### **3. C. Background Clearances for Presbytery Members and Personnel working with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Policy**

#### **Background Clearances for Presbytery Members and Personnel working with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults.**

The Presbytery is committed to the safety, welfare, and protection of all children, ages birth to 18 years old, and all individuals with a cognitive and/or physical disability, regardless of their age (collectively, “Protected Persons”). We recognize the need for specialized care due to their vulnerability.

#### **Required Background Checks and Training**

Ministers (including those in validated ministry), Pastors, Commissioned Pastors, and Christian Educators are required to complete Boundary training every three years. Exceptions to this include those who are retired and not serving in any capacity within the Presbytery. Those engaged in validated ministry whose employer requires comparable training, references, and background checks may seek permission from MVC to verify these in place of the training usually provided by the Presbytery.

All people working with or supervising Protected Persons during any activities, events, and programs that the Presbytery funds, sponsors, or organizes (collectively “Activities”) must provide a current background check every five years, following Pennsylvania State law.

All members of the Presbytery are required to be compliant with this policy. The Ministry and Vocation Committee (MVC) and the Stated Clerk create and maintain a schedule for regular checks on current clearances, ensuring each member is up to date and compliant with Pennsylvania state law. Minister members, Commissioned Pastors, Christian Educators, Pulpit Supply persons, Inquirers, and Candidates under care are required to provide a copy of their clearances to the Presbytery office.

MVC and the Stated Clerk will notify all members of any delinquencies in compliance. The Stated Clerk will oversee issues of non-compliance. Non-compliance is a chargeable offense under the Rules of Discipline (BoO D-2.0302).

**FIRST READING 09-23-25**  
**SECOND READING 11-18-25**

When someone falls out of compliance providing copies of current clearances, the MVC will:

1. Notify the individual with a letter and follow up with a phone call.
2. Send a letter to the session.
3. Have a personal meeting with MVC representatives.
4. MVC may act to not renew the individual's status, contract or privilege to serve.

Ministers, pastors, Commissioned Pastors, Ruling Elders, Deacons, and Christian Educators are mandatory reporters. A mandatory reporter generally must report suspected child abuse or neglect immediately if he or she has reasonable cause to suspect that a child seen in the course of professional duties has been abused or neglected or has been threatened with abuse or neglect that will occur.

The child abuse reporting law places special reporting requirements on members of the clergy. Because laws may change occasionally, the people governed by this policy should review the law to stay current on obligations and requirements. Specifically, in addition to reporting suspected abuse or neglect of a child seen directly by a clergy member in the course of their professional duties, a clergy member generally must report suspected abuse or neglect if the clergy member has reasonable cause, based on observations made or information received, to suspect that a member of the clergy has sexually abused a child or threatened a child with sexual abuse.

*By implementing policy, Beaver-Butler Presbytery aims to mitigate risks related to abuse violations and ensure a safe, respectful environment for all its members. Compliance with these policies is mandatory and essential for the spiritual and communal well-being of the Presbytery.*

*Congregational and Pastoral Health - MVC Manual*

## **Policy**

### **3. D. Healthy Boundaries Training for Pastors Policy**

#### Introduction

Healthy Boundary training is mandatory in the Presbyterian Church (USA). The workshops or training equip all clergy to recognize healthy boundaries in ministry relationships. Healthy and vital ministries rely on trust and mutual support to create spaces of welcome and safety for all. Leaders must understand the role of power and vulnerability in creating and maintaining healthy boundaries, as well as in choosing healthy self-care strategies. In compliance with BoO G-3.0106, the Presbytery adopts this policy to address the requirement for boundary training for all its members. This policy outlines the mechanisms for training and accountability regarding boundary violations.

#### Scope

This policy applies to all Book of Order-defined members of the Beaver-Butler Presbytery, which includes:

- Ministers actively involved in any exercise of their office (G-2.0503)
- Retired ministers who are serving in a capacity within the Presbytery.(G-2.0503)
- Inquirers and Candidates for Ordination (G-2.0603)
- Commissioned Ruling Elders and Pastors (G-2.1002)
- Candidates for Commissioned Pastor (G-2.1002)
- Certified Christian Educators (G-2.1103)

#### Boundary Training Requirements

- A. Frequency: All members shall complete boundary training every 36 months (BoO G-3.0106).
- B. Initial Notice: Presbytery staff will notify members and give them a 60-day window to complete the required training.
- C. Curriculum: The training shall be comprehensive, incorporating elements of sexual misconduct and child sexual abuse prevention, and employing discussions, case studies, and role-playing exercises to ensure thorough understanding. The Ministry and Vocation Committee (MVC) has the final authority to approve acceptable online and in-person curricula.
  - a. All members of the Presbytery are required to attend and complete MVC-approved trainings.

**FIRST READING 09-23-25**  
**SECOND READING 11-18-25**

- b. Exceptions to this include those who are retired and not serving in any capacity within the Presbytery.
- c. MVC will offer in-person training regularly.
- D. Certification: Unless noted through registration, members shall forward a copy of their completion certificate to office@beaverbutler.org within 14 days of completing training.
- E. Record-Keeping: The Presbytery Office will maintain a centralized database tracking each member's training status, including the date of their last training and certification.

Responsibilities

- A. Member
  - a. It is the responsibility of the member to be compliant with this policy.
  - b. If a member fails to attend Tier I or Tier II training, or subsequent make-up opportunities, the member must receive the same or an MVC-approved substitute training at the member's own expense.
- B. Ministry and Vocation Committee
  - a. Training Schedule: MVC will create and maintain a schedule for regular boundary training opportunities, ensuring each member has access to the required training.
  - b. Communication: MVC will notify all members about upcoming training opportunities in advance through various channels, such as email, newsletters, and the Presbytery's website.
  - c. Facilitation: MVC will identify qualified trainers for the training sessions. These trainers may be internal experts or contracted professionals.
  - d. Online Options: Online training options can also be made available. To obtain certification, this option must be completed within a set timeframe.
  - e. Compliance: When someone falls out of compliance with either Boundary Training or providing copies of current clearances, the MVC will:
    - 1. Notify the individual with a letter and follow up with a phone call.
    - 2. Send a letter to the session.
    - 3. Have a personal meeting with MVC representatives.
    - 4. MVC may act to not renew the individual's status, contract or privilege to serve.
    - 5. Non-compliance is a chargeable offense under the Rules of Discipline (BoO D-2.0302).

**FIRST READING 09-23-25**  
**SECOND READING 11-18-25**

*By implementing this Boundaries Training Mandate, the Beaver-Butler Presbytery aims to mitigate risks related to boundary violations and ensure a safe, respectful environment for all its members. Compliance with these policies is mandatory and essential for the spiritual and communal well-being of the Presbytery.*

DRAFT