

PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
P.O. BOX 86

PLYMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03264

PERSONNEL POLICY



AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CHURCH
HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE

Revisions by Human Resources Committee and approved by Church Council August 2022

PERSONNEL POLICY

PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

PURPOSE

This policy is established for the purpose of defining and coordinating the policies and procedures for the staff and Pastor(s) of this church whose terms of employment are determined by contract. If the policy departs from the pastoral covenant or contract, the covenant or contract supersedes all other policies. In addition to the policies defined below, certain portions of the UCC Employment Handbook are incorporated, as defined in the appendix. In the event of contradictory policies, this policy shall prevail. A copy of this policy shall be available in the Church office for reference.

ADMINISTRATION

The Plymouth Congregational UCC calls a Pastor to whom it delegates the responsibility for daily supervision of the staff.

REVIEW

The Human Resources Committee (hereafter known as HRC) shall review this policy every three years, with changes to be approved by the Church Council (hereafter referred to as "Council.")

COVERAGE

All conditions of employment shall be in accordance with applicable state and federal employment laws. All staff are covered by this policy. Equal Employment Opportunity: see Appendix

A. Employment Categories: each employee is designated as either NON-EXEMPT or EXEMPT.

- **NON-EXEMPT** employees are defined as those who are covered by the overtime provisions in the Fair Labor Standards Act or applicable state law. A non-exempt employee's pay for hours worked in excess of 40 hours will be calculated at the rate of one and one half times the regular hourly rate. All hours worked to 40 hours a week will be paid at the regular hourly rate. Employees should seek prior approval of the supervisor before working overtime hours.
- **EXEMPT** employees are those who are classified by the Conference as exempt from the overtime provisions of the FLSA and any applicable state law. Exempt employees do not receive overtime pay for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week as their salary represents compensation for all work performed in a pay period.

1. Full-time Staff: The Staff in this category are those staff persons who are regularly scheduled to work 40 or more hours a week as stated in their contract. These staff persons are eligible for benefits.
2. Part-time Staff: Staff in this category are those who are regularly scheduled to work during the church schedule, up to a maximum of 40 hours per week.
3. Called: An ordained individual who enters into a covenantal relationship with the church is "called" to service by the specific terms of the covenant. Pastor(s) are considered to be self-employed for legal employment and tax purposes.

B. Introductory Period

1. All full-time and part-time paid staff are subject to a probationary period of 90 days. The purpose of this period is to give the supervisor and HRC the opportunity to evaluate the ability with which the staff person performs the job, and to provide the staff person an opportunity to decide if the job is satisfactory.
2. On the completion of 90 days employment, a written evaluation shall be prepared by the staff person's supervisor and HRC and shall be reviewed with the staff person. At this point a decision will be made as to whether employment continues. A written record of this evaluation shall be placed in the staff person's personnel file.
3. Full-time staff are eligible for medical benefits after 30 days employment.

C. Payroll Benefits

1. Full-time staff are paid a salary and benefits package that is determined and presented to the staff person in writing at the time of hire, as recommended by the HRC and approved by the Council.

2. Part-time staff' salaries, wages and/or benefits are determined as recommended by HRC and approved by the Council at the time of hire. Hourly wage staff persons are paid only for hours worked. Hourly staff persons do not receive compensation for holidays. Staff have the option of purchasing, at their own expense, health insurance through the UCC program, providing they meet the requirements of the insurance company. If this option is chosen, the premiums shall be deducted from their wages.

D. Hours of Work

The immediate supervisor (Pastor) is responsible for the preparation and supervision of the working schedule for all staff. To maintain a safe and productive work environment, PCUCC expects staff to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other staff and the church. In the rare instances when staff cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as scheduled, they should notify their supervisor or committee chair as soon as possible.

1. Coverage for full and part-time staff for any absences shall be the responsibility of the staff person and the staff person's immediate supervisor.
2. Time keeping- Employees for whom time keeping is required (hourly workers) should accurately record the time they begin and end their work. They should also record the beginning and ending time of any split shift or departure from work for personal reasons. All changes to time records should be initialed by the employee. Time sheets should be turned in to finance biweekly.
3. The staff person should request time off from the supervisor well in advance of the date(s), a minimum of two weeks notice.
4. The HRC should be kept informed of major (instances longer than a week) absences.

E. Vacations

1. The vacation period is the year beginning with the date of employment. Vacations must be taken within that period. Vacation time cannot be accumulated from year to year.
2. Requests for vacation should be made as far in advance as possible to ensure that coverage can be provided during the staff person's absence.
3. Changes in vacation time can be negotiated between the staff person and the supervisor. Certain days will be restricted from vacation; i.e. Holy Week, Christmas Week, or the timing of special projects such as the Annual Meeting.
4. Full-time staff: No vacation days until employed 6 months.
5. Part time employees who work at least 20 hours per week are eligible for vacation time the equivalent of one scheduled work week after working for 6 continuous months and a second week after 8 months.

F. Holidays

These holidays are observed by PCUCC. In the event that a holiday falls on a day that the staff person is required to work, an alternate “holiday equivalent” will be granted on the next regular work day.

New Year’s Day
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Memorial Day
Juneteenth
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Day

G. Personal

All full-time staff are eligible for a maximum of 4 unpaid days off for personal use per fiscal year not to precede or follow vacation days. The Pastor will follow the terms that are specified in the Call Agreement.

All full-time and part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week are eligible for paid sick time to take care of their own medical needs or those of certain family members. Full time employees are granted 8 days of sick time per calendar year. Part time employees will be prorated commensurate with the number of hours the employee is scheduled to work. Sick time does not accumulate or roll forward. All sick time will be forfeited at the end of each calendar year and is not payable upon termination of employment.

See the UCC conference guidelines for Family Leave (FMLA)

H. Bereavement

All staff members will be given Compassionate leave up to 3 days without pay for family. If more unpaid time is necessary for travel or personal reasons, the supervisor and a member of the HR committee must be consulted.

I. Performance Appraisal

The Periodic Performance Review modeled after the NHUCC Conference pastoral assessment will be used to review the performance of each staff person including the pastor(s) every year, reviewed with staff person, signed by staff person and HR representative, and placed on file. A copy of the evaluation will be given to the pastor (supervisor) and the appropriate committee chair. In the case of the Pastoral evaluation, a copy is given to the Council chair. The purpose of the appraisal is to evaluate the staff person’s performance and assist in the staff person’s growth and development. The review of the Pastor shall be done in cooperation with the Council.

J. Annual Budgeting

In addition to the amounts requested for its own committee budget, The HR committee shall recommend budget amounts for the compensation of staff to the appropriate Committee chair to be approved by the Finance Committee, treasurer, and Council in advance of the Annual Meeting or Special Meeting of the congregation duly called.

K. Grievances

PCUCC strives to ensure fair, honest treatment of all employees and is committed to providing the best possible working conditions. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion or question receives a timely response. Employees are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism, and all employees are expected to treat each other with mutual respect.

According to PCUCC bylaws (Article VIII D 6e, 2g and h), the Human Resources Committee is charged with acting as a support structure for all employees and mediates the staff grievance process.

1. If a staff member has a grievance with another staff member: The staff person shall promptly discuss with their supervisor and/or committee chair any grievance they may have. If the supervisor and committee chair cannot resolve the issue, then it must be brought to the HR committee. The HR committee and supervisor shall meet with the staff person and render a decision within 10 (ten) working days after the meeting. The decision of the HR committee shall be final.
2. If a staff member has a grievance with the supervisor, the person should go directly to the HR committee to discuss the grievance. If the issue cannot be resolved through discussion and mediation, then the UCC Conference will be consulted for additional help.
3. If the supervisor has a grievance with a staff member that is not covered in the annual performance review/appraisal process or is beyond the scope of that process or is ongoing and causing stress, the issue shall be brought to the HR committee. After reviewing all the information bearing on the issue, the HR committee in consultation with the supervisor shall recommend a course of action to the Council, and the Council shall make the final decision. If needed, the UCC Conference is an additional resource. (See also Section L2, Disciplinary action)

L. Termination of Employment

1. Voluntary: All staff are expected to give a minimum of two weeks' notice of resignation. All unused vacation time up to a maximum of 10 days shall be paid.

2. Disciplinary Action: The best disciplinary action is one that does not have to be enforced, and comes from good leadership and fair supervision of staff. However, when disciplinary action is called for, it should be administered in a fair manner. To this end, a five-step process is established.
 - a. Verbal Warning – a note documenting the verbal warning will be placed in the staff person's file
 - b. Written Warning – outlines reasons for the warning including specific dates of infractions. It should be signed by both the supervisor and the staff person and placed in the staff person's file
 - c. Probation period of 4 weeks to monitor staff performance. If the issue is resolved at this point the process stops. If there is no resolution, then the next step begins. A note documenting this will be signed by the supervisor and the staff person and placed in the file
 - d. Suspension with or without pay for a maximum of 3 work days
 - e. Termination of employment

3. Breach of confidentiality- Any employee who improperly uses or discloses confidential information will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

M. Purchasing items for the church

All staff members must get approval for any purchase from the appropriate committee chair. The committee chair will take the request to the Finance Committee. This ensures that the committee chair knows exactly how much money is being spent and how much of their budget remains. This also ensures that the Finance Committee can control the amount of money being spent at any one time and that there are no overdrafts on the account. The Office Administrator will have the ability to directly purchase some basic supplies necessary to the operation of the church (i.e. basic office and bathroom supplies).

N. Health and Safety

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ will follow all CDC guidelines re: vaccination(s), quarantines, masking, closures and any other recommendations in case of any pandemic. This means if vaccinations are recommended and approved, employees will be required to comply in order to continue or start employment.

O. Inclement weather/closing the church

The decision to close the church on weekdays due to inclement weather is made by the Pastor in consultation with the Council chair and usually follows the SAU #48 decision. If the inclement weather is on a Sunday morning the Pastor and Council chair decide and notify the congregation. For long term closures, the church will follow guidance from the appropriate authorities and the most up- to- date local information. The Pastor and Council will make all decisions about closings and reopening.

P. Acknowledgement

All staff shall receive a copy of this policy upon hire and be provided with revised copies when approved. Employees will have an opportunity to discuss its contents with the supervisor. The staff person shall then sign and date a receipt, which acknowledges understanding of the policy's contents. The original policy and receipt shall be placed in the staff person's file.

The following section will be updated as soon as the Conference has completed their revisions in 2022. The Conference did update in 2017, but our appendix does not reflect that

APPENDIX

The following paragraphs from the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ Employee Handbook are hereby incorporated as part of the Personnel Policy of the Plymouth Congregational UCC. The complete Handbook is on file in the Church Office. Any place below where the term "New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ" or "Conference" is used the term PCUCC shall apply. Where the term "one of the Conference Ministers" is used, HRC shall apply.

Employee Relations

The Conference believes that the work conditions, wages and benefits it offers to its staff are competitive with those offered by other non-profit employers in this region. If staff has concerns about work conditions or compensation, they are strongly encouraged to voice these concerns openly and directly to their immediate supervisors.

Our experience has shown that when staff deal openly and directly with supervisors, the work environment can be excellent communications can be clear, and attitudes can be positive. We believe that the Conference amply demonstrates its commitment to staff by responding effectively to staff person concerns.

Equal Employment Opportunity

In order to provide equal opportunity employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at the Conference will be based on merit, qualifications and abilities. The Conference does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by law.

The Conference will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in undue hardship. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination and access to benefits and training.

In keeping with a long tradition of working on issues of justice within the United Church of Christ, the Conference has also established an affirmative action program to promote opportunities for individuals in certain protected classes throughout the organization. This program is consistent with the historical/theological position of the UCC in working for justice for all of God's people.

Any staff with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor or one of the Conference Ministers. Staff can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

SAFER SPACES POLICY

The New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ is committed to creating and maintaining a worship and work community in which members, friends, staff, and volunteers can worship and work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Specifically, all persons associated with this Conference and/or utilizing Conference facilities should be aware that the Conference is opposed to sexual, spiritual, emotional and physical exploitation and harassment and that such behavior is prohibited by Conference policy. It is the intention and responsibility of the Conference to take whatever action may be needed to prevent and correct behavior which is contrary to this policy and, if necessary, to discipline those persons who violate this policy.

Immigration Law Compliance

The Conference is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin.

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new staff person, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Certification Form 1-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former staff that are rehired must also complete the form if they have not completed a 1-9 with the Conference within the past three years, or if their previous 1-9 is no longer valid.

Staff may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

Non-Disclosure

The protection of confidential information is vital to the work of the Conference. Contact with local churches, clergy and members of the churches are often of a very sensitive nature.

Staff who improperly use or disclose confidential information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Disability Accommodation

The Conference is committed to complying in so far as possible with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities. All employment practices and activities are conducted on a non-discriminatory basis.

Hiring procedures have been reviewed and provide persons with disabilities meaningful employment opportunities. Pre-employment inquiries are made only regarding an applicant's ability to perform the duties of his position.

Reasonable accommodation is available to all disabled staff, where their disability affects the performance of job functions. All employment decisions are based on the merits of the situation in accordance with defined criteria, not the disability of the individual.

Qualified individuals with disabilities are entitled to equal pay and other forms of compensation (or changes in compensation) as well as in job assignments, classifications, organizational structures, position descriptions, lines of progression and seniority lists. Leave of all types will be available to all staff on an equal basis.

The Conference will not discriminate against any qualified staff or applicants because they are related to or associated with a person with a disability. The Conference will follow any state or local law that provides individuals with disabilities greater protection than the ADA.

This policy is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. The Conference is committed to taking all other actions necessary to ensure equal employment opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the ADA and all other applicable federal, state and local laws.

Worship in the Workplace

The Conference is a church affiliated organization. As such, it offers worship services on an occasional basis within the workplace. Participation in these worship services is completely voluntary. Staff person performance evaluations will not in any way be affected by participation or non-participation in such events.

Access to Personnel Files

The Conference maintains a personnel file on each staff person. The personnel file includes such information as the staff person's job application, résumé, records of training, documentation of performance appraisals and salary increases, and other employment records.

Personnel files are the property of the Conference, and access to the information they contain is restricted. Generally, the Conference Ministers and the Conference personnel Officer are allowed to do so.

Staff who wishes to review their own file should contact one of the Conference Ministers or Conference Personnel Officer. With reasonable advance notice, staff may review their own personnel files in the Conference's offices and in the presence of an individual appointed by the Conference to maintain the files.

Employment Reference Checks

Reference Checks for Potential Staff

To insure that individuals who join the conference are well qualified and have a strong potential to be productive and successful, it is the policy of the conference to check the employment references of all applicants. Additional checks regarding credit, police records and other pertinent issues will be made at the discretion of the Conference.

All ordained persons being considered for employment by the Conference are required to have a UCC Profile with references, and properly signed background check and release forms.

Reference Checks Inquiries

One of the conference Ministers, of the Conference {Personnel Officer will respond to all reference check inquiries from other employers. Responses to such inquiries will be limited to factual information that can be substantiated by the Conference's record.

Personnel Data Changes

It is the responsibility of each staff person to notify the Conference promptly of any changes in personnel data. Personal mailing address, telephone numbers, number and names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency, educational accomplishment, and other such status reports should be accurate and current at all times. If any personal data has changed, notify your immediate supervisor or one of the Conference Ministers.

Administrative Pay Corrections

The conference takes all reasonable steps to ensure that staff receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck and that staff are paid promptly on the scheduled payday.

In the unlikely event that there is an error in the amount of pay, the staff person should promptly bring the discrepancy to the attention of the Conference Officer so that corrections can be made as quickly as possible.

Overtime

When operating requirements or other needs cannot be met during regular working hours, staff will be given the opportunity to volunteer for overtime work assignments. All overtime work must receive the supervisor's prior authorization. Overtime assignments will be distributed as equitably as practical to all staff qualified to perform the required work.

It is the policy of the New Hampshire Conference not to pay for overtime work. Such overtime work will be remunerated by compensatory time in accordance with state and federal laws.

Failure to work scheduled overtime or overtime worked without prior authorization from the supervisor may result in disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination of employment.

Staff person conduct and Work Rules

To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, the conference expects staff to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all staff and the organization.

It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. The following are examples of infractions of rules of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment:

- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment
- Excessive absenteeism or any absence without notice
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct
- Falsification of records

Drug and Alcohol Use

It is the Conference's desire to provide a drug-free, healthful, and safe workplace. To promote this goal, staff are required to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner.

While on the Conference premises and while conducting business-related activities off the Conference premises, no staff person may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair and staff person's ability to perform essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace. Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment, and/or require participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation or treatment program. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

Staff with questions on this policy or issues related to drug use or alcohol use in the workplace should raise their concerns with their supervisor or one of the Conference Ministers without fear of reprisal. The only exception to this policy is the use of wine in the observance of Holy Communion.

Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment

The conference is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, joke or comments based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment (both overt and subtle) is a form of staff person misconduct that is demeaning to another person, undermines the integrity of the employment relationship, and is strictly prohibited.

Any staff person who wants to report an incident of sexual or other unlawful harassment should promptly report the matter to his or her supervisor. If the supervisor is unavailable or the staff person believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person, the staff person should immediately contact one of the Conference Ministers. Staff can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

Any person who becomes aware of possible sexual or other unlawful harassment should promptly advise one of the conference Ministers who will handle the matter in a timely and confidential manner.

Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Attendance and Punctuality

To maintain a safe and productive work environment, the Conference expects staff to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other staff and on the Conference. In the rare instances when staff cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as scheduled, they should notify their supervisor as soon as possible in advance of the anticipated tardiness or absence.

Poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive. Either may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Personal Appearance

Dress, grooming and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all staff and affect the image the Conference presents to the community. During business hours, staff are expected to present a clean and neat appearance and to dress according to the requirements of their positions.

I have reviewed and understand the terms and conditions of the 2022 Personnel Policy:

Signature _____ Date: _____

Print name _____