

**FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF STOW AND ACTON
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST**

PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL

I. INTRODUCTION

This Personnel Policy Manual of the First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist of Stow & Acton, hereinafter known as FPC, is established to provide direction and consistency in management of the work relationship among and with employees of this church.

The Personnel Committee of FPC serves as a resource for both the Minister and the employees of FPC. It provides advocacy to each employee, acting as a sounding board between the employees and the Board of Trustees. The Committee sets policy and maintains legal compliance for the employees. Its role is to offer support and guidance as needed to enable employees to work in the most supportive environment possible as they serve the FPC community.

The policies in this manual do not establish a contract between any employee and FPC. Both the employee and FPC remain free to terminate employment at will. These policies apply to both full-time and part-time regular staff members, but do not apply to the ordained Minister called by the congregation, or to temporary or per diem employees or volunteers. These policies seek to incorporate Unitarian Universalist values and the desire to have clear, fair, and consistent guidelines for employer and employee alike.

II. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

FPC is committed to equal employment opportunity for all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status in all aspects of employment. It is the policy of FPC to:

- Recruit, hire, train, and promote persons in all job titles, without regard to race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status;
- Base employment decisions to further the principle of equal employment opportunity;
- Ensure that promotion decisions are in accord with principles of equal employment opportunity by imposing only valid requirements for promotional opportunities;
- Ensure that all personnel actions such as compensation, benefits, and church-sponsored training, education, and social recreation programs are administered without regard to race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status.

III. DEFINITIONS

“Staff Member” means all paid employees of the church, except the Minister.

“Employee” means all paid employees of the church, including the Minister.

“Program Staff” is defined as staff members who are directors and run a program area of the church such as the Music Director with the Music and Arts Program and the Religious Education Director with the Religious Education Program.

“Administrative Staff” is defined as staff members whose primary job is administrative and have less connection to program areas, such as the Welcoming and Membership Coordinator, Office Administrator, Publicity Coordinator, and Sexton.

“Support Staff” is defined as staff members who support but do not direct a program area of the church, such as the Youth Coordinator, Pianist/Organist, Tech Assistant, and Nursery Care Providers.

“Church Year” is defined as the Tuesday after Labor Day through the third Sunday in June.

“Summer” is defined as the Monday after the second Sunday of June and the eight weeks following.

“Preparation Time” is the roughly two-week period of August and early September between “Summer” and the “Church Year,”

IV. HIRING POLICIES

A. Hiring Responsibility

The Board of Trustees, with the advice and recommendation of the Minister, hires all staff members.

All ministers will be called by vote of the church as provided in the bylaws of FPC.

An offer letter describing the salary, benefits, and work hours will be given to the selected candidate as part of the job offer. The candidate will be provided with a job description. Upon acceptance of the offer, the new staff member will sign a statement-indicating acceptance of the terms described in the letter.

B. Form I-9 – Employee Eligibility Verification Form

Form I-9, officially the Employment Eligibility Verification, is a United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) form. Mandated by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), it is used to verify the identity and legal authorization to work of all paid employees in the United States. All U.S. employers must ensure proper completion of Form I-9 for each individual they hire for employment in the United States.

The IRCA requires employers to verify that all newly hired employees present "facially valid" documentation verifying the employee's identity and legal authorization to accept employment in the United States. Form I-9, or more properly the Employment Eligibility Verification Form, is provided by the Federal Government for that purpose.

Every employee must complete an I-9 form at the time of hire. Employees must complete Section 1 of the form upon commencing employment. The employer must complete Section 2 within 3 days of the employee's starting date at work. The employer is responsible for ensuring that the forms are completed properly and in a timely manner. The I-9 Form and instructions can be found at <https://uscis.gov/i-9>.

C. CORI Background Checks

Upon hiring, all FPC employees will have a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) background check performed. This will be done every 3 years throughout their tenure by the Personnel Committee or their designee.

D. Probationary Period

All staff will have a 3-month Probationary Period during which time the supervisor will evaluate the staff member's potential and performance, and the staff member will evaluate their satisfaction with the job. During the Probationary Period, the new staff member is eligible for all benefits unless otherwise noted. At the end of the 3-month period, the staff member will receive a letter indicating the probationary period has been successfully completed.

IV. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

A staff member acts on behalf of the entire congregation, and has responsibility to the congregation as a whole. The staff member must act with a high degree of objectivity and consider the congregational mission before advocating for a specific program area.

A. Member and Staff Roles

When a congregation member becomes a staff member, or a staff member joins the congregation, the congregation member is a staff member first and a congregation member second. The staff member must act in a professional manner at all times and put the interests of the congregation above all personal interests and gains and be aware of the extra responsibilities and conflicts of interest as staff member and congregation member.

B. Boundaries

Staff members are directed to speak with Personnel Committee or Board or Supervisor about personnel matters, and must not communicate with congregation members and on social media about any personnel issue related to their jobs. Staff members must maintain confidentiality around all sensitive congregation information, particularly pastoral care information and personnel information.

C. Conflicts of Interest

Staff members, including those who are congregation members, of FPC shall not serve on the Board or hold office, or serve on the Personnel Committee, Nominating Committee, Committee on Ministry, and Lay Ministers. Staff members may attend meetings at which their performance, salary, benefits, etc. are being discussed only when invited by the committee chairperson. Similarly, staff members may attend meetings of the congregation, at which their performance, salary, benefits, etc. are being discussed only when invited by the Minister as Chief-of-Staff.

D. Other Volunteer Roles

Staff members may volunteer on committees and task forces, and in religious education, outside of their staff role, with the exceptions of those named in Section IV.C., with approval of the Minister. The staff member must be careful to consider conflicts of interest, to define their role and make it clear they are not acting in their staff capacity. Staff members have special relationships to specific committees and serve in an ex-officio, non-voting role with these committees, even when members of the congregation. Staff members participating in committees or task forces not as part of their role must be aware that even when not acting in their staff role, they are still perceived as employees of the congregation, and act accordingly.

E. Upon Departure

After leaving a staff position, a former staff member shall not serve in any elected role for two years, and should be in covenant with the minister about future elected roles. After leaving a staff position, a former staff member shall not serve on the committee or team related to their former staff position for two years..

V. ACCOMODATION FOR AN EMPLOYEE OR CANDIDATE WITH A DISABILITY

FPC is committed to making reasonable accommodation to known physical or mental limitations of an employee or a qualified candidate for employment. An accommodation refers to making a change in the work environment or in the way things are customarily done that will enable a qualified person with a disability to perform the essential functions of the job and benefit from the same employment opportunities as employees with no evident disability. The church is not responsible for addressing the making of reasonable accommodations unless the employee or the candidate makes the disability known to the supervisor or the Personnel Committee.

VI. HOURS AND PAYROLL

Employees will be paid at regular intervals, to be determined by the treasurer. Employees may also be required to document their work hours, at the discretion of their supervisor.

Hourly employees will be paid for the hours worked. If an hourly employee needs to work hours in excess of their agreed upon hours, they must first seek the approval of their

supervisor. When an hourly employee works less than their agreed upon hours, this will be reflected in the time sheets submitted for reimbursement.

Employees who work hours in excess of their agreed upon hours may take compensatory time provided they have received prior approval from their supervisor. Compensatory time must be used within 30 days of its accrual or it will be forfeited.

Employees are subject to social security, state, and federal taxes. Deductions in compliance with the law will be made from employees' paychecks.

VII. SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION

A. Supervision

Minister: The minister is Chief-of-Staff and is responsible for the direction, supervision, and evaluation of all members of the FPC staff. The minister collaborates with the Board of Trustees to establish overall goals and objectives for staff and reports regularly to the board on staff accomplishments and issues.

B. Evaluation

The minister, as Chief-of-Staff, will schedule and conduct an annual performance review for each staff member or designate such to a staff member who supervises another staff member. The purpose of this review is to provide the staff member with a formal communication that evaluates their performance and gives them specific feedback as to the extent to which the expectation of their role have been fulfilled. A staff member may request that a member of the Personnel Committee be present during their review. FPC will comply with the Massachusetts statute for personnel records (General Law - Part I, Title XXI, Chapter 19, Section 52C).

VIII. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND TERMINATION GUIDELINES

A. The Role of Supervision

Occasionally, a staff member's performance will not meet the requirements of the position. Performance, in this case, is broadly defined and may be related to a lack of skill or knowledge, a shortfall in applying the skills or in unacceptable behavior on the job. Usually these discrepancies will be managed through the supervisory process in which the staff member and supervisor will work toward a resolution. The supervisor will maintain documentation of this process. A significant or long standing discrepancy will be addressed in the performance evaluation.

B. Written Documentation

In the event that supervisory discussions do not result in the required improvement, the supervisor may provide written documentation to the staff member. This documentation will include a description of the problem and a description of the expected behavior. Improvement will be expected immediately and consistently or further disciplinary action may occur, up to and including termination.

If a staff member receives written documentation, a designated member or members of the Board of Trustees and the Personnel Committee will be informed. A designated member of the Personnel Committee will meet with the staff member to provide support, clarification of policies, and to affirm FPC's commitment to a positive resolution.

C. Suspension

In the event of gross misconduct, including harassment on the job, the Minister may immediately suspend a staff member, with or without pay and benefits. The President of the Board of Trustees (or a designated member of the board) and the Personnel Committee Chair must be notified as soon as possible, and these parties shall determine how an appropriate inquiry will be conducted. This inquiry should take place as soon as possible. The inquiry may result in the recommendation for reinstatement, for reinstatement with some disciplinary action, or immediate termination.

D. Termination

Involuntary termination may take place if a staff member's performance is: a) not satisfactory; b) if there has not been immediate or consistent improvement in a documented performance or behavior problem; c) if there is an instance of gross misconduct not satisfactorily explained by an inquiry; or, d) in other instances recommended by the minister.

If termination is recommended, the Board of Trustees, advised by the Minister and the Personnel Committee Chair, shall ensure that the action is consistent with FPC policy and the prevailing laws. The staff member may be given the opportunity to resign or may be given a letter of termination which includes the succinct reason for termination and the terms of the separation including the staff member's right to COBRA if covered by health insurance. Accrued vacation will be paid at termination. Sick leave time is not reimbursed at termination.

IX. PLANNED RESIGNATION

Support and administrative staff members are expected to provide at least 1 month's notice before resignation. Program staff members are expected to provide at least 2 months of notice unless specified otherwise in letters of agreement or staff member contracts. The Minister is expected to provide 2 months of notice unless otherwise specified in their Letter of Agreement. If covered by health benefits, resigning staff members are eligible for COBRA. Accrued vacation time is paid at the end of employment. Accrued sick leave is not paid at termination.

X. EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Through regular supervision, ongoing communication and the support of the Personnel Committee, FPC endeavors to resolve immediately and informally any complaint that an employee might have that they are being treated unfairly including harassment (refer to Harassment Policy). An employee who believes that they have a legitimate, unresolved complaint that established benefits, policies, and procedures are not being properly or fairly applied in his or her situation may use the following procedures.

- 1) The employee will meet with his or her supervisor to explain the complaint. With the employee, the supervisor will, if possible, develop steps toward resolution at that time.
 - 2) If the issue cannot be resolved through the process identified above, the employee must write the complaint, including the basis for the complaint and the date the event occurred, and submit it to the supervisor, the President of the Board of Trustees, and the Personnel Committee Chair. They will meet to develop appropriate steps toward resolution of the complaint and will communicate with the employee in a timely fashion.
 - 3) In the event that the complaint is with the employee's supervisor, the employee should meet with the President of the Board of Trustees and the Personnel Committee Chair to explain the complaint.
- If no resolution is attained through this process, the matter and all pertinent documents and information will be referred to the Board of Trustees for binding resolution unless the President of the Board of Trustees is a party to or subject of the complaint. In that case, the Board of Trustees may act alone or seek additional input as appropriate.

XI. ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

A. Harassment Defined

This policy refers to but is not limited to harassment in the following areas: age, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, and veteran status. Harassment includes display or circulation of written materials or pictures offensive to either gender or to racial, ethnic, or religious groups; and verbal abuse or insults directed at or in the presence of members of a racial, ethnic, or minority group.

Harassment refers to behavior that is personally offensive, impairs morale, and interferes with the work effectiveness of employees. Any harassment of employees by other employees will not be permitted, regardless of their working relationship.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other offensive verbal or physical conduct that is sexual in nature. Sexual harassment undermines the employment relationship by creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment and will not be tolerated.

B. Complaint Procedure

An employee who believes that they have been harassed by a co-worker, supervisor, or any other person should communicate with that person to make it clear that the behavior is offensive and must stop immediately. An employee who communicates with another party or makes a formal complaint about harassing behavior should be able to do so without fear of reprisal. If handling the matter informally does not resolve the issue, then the employee may use the Employee Complaint Procedure above.

XII. BENEFITS

Based upon current economic conditions and survey information on benefit programs provided in the marketplace and in other churches of similar size and budget, the Minister

and Personnel Committee will make recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding adjustments to the benefits offered to the staff. Funding for benefits is a budget item and is included in the annual budget of FPC and, as such, is subject to change.

In cases where a staff contract or the Minister's Letter of agreement differs from the Personnel Policy Manual, the staff contract or Minister's letter of agreement shall supersede the Personnel Policy Manual.

A. Holidays and Vacations

1. Holidays

Employees working under 20 hours per week are expected to adjust their hours to accommodate holidays. All employees receive a paid 8-day holiday week from December 25th/Christmas and January 1st/New Year's Day.

The following are yearly paid holidays for employees whose scheduled work days include the holidays: Martin Luther King Day, Patriot's Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Indigenous People's Day, Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

2. Vacations

Program Staff with an 12-month contract, are eligible for 4 weeks' vacation. Administrative and Support Staff, and all Staff with a 10-month contract are eligible for 2 weeks' vacation. Vacation requests must be approved by the staff member's supervisor.

Vacation periods are generally in the Summer. Alternative vacation schedules must be approved by the minister.

3. Sundays off

Staff whose weekly schedule includes Sundays may be designated a certain number of Sundays off in Church Year. Sundays off must be approved by the Minister. Taking vacation or study leave period during Church Year may result in a corresponding decrease in off Sundays during the Church Year or an increase on Sundays during the Summer.

B. Sick Leave

All full-time employees shall accrue sick pay at the rate of one day (8 hours) per month. Part-time employees shall accrue sick pay on a prorated basis. Accrued days not used are banked for future use up to a total of 90 days for full-time staff, prorated for part-time staff. An employee starting work before the 16th of the month is entitled to a full month's credit toward sick pay. An employee starting work on or after the 16th of the month does not earn sick pay credit for that particular month.

Sick pay may be paid in a lower percentage of compensation for absence covered by Worker's Compensation payments, short-term disability insurance, or long-term

disability insurance, in keeping with Massachusetts law. A supervisor may request a doctor's note if there is a question about the legitimacy of sick time taken or question the fitness of an employee's return to work.

An employee may use up to 3 of their accumulated sick days as personal days. The supervisor shall be notified in advance. Accrued sick leave is not paid to employees upon termination of employment.

C. Jury Duty

Employees called for jury duty will give immediate notice to their supervisor. They will be excused from work for the duration of their jury obligation. FPC will pay the employee's regular salary during the first 3 days of jury duty and the difference between their regular pay and their jury duty earnings thereafter.

D. Bereavement

Full-time employees may request up to 5 days of bereavement leave per year. Bereavement leave is prorated for part-time employees.

E. Authorized Unpaid Absence

An authorized unpaid absence may be taken for personal or family illness or other reason approved by the employee's supervisor. If the leave is for illness, all accrued sick and vacation time must be used before the leave is taken. If the leave is for matters other than personal illness, vacation time must be used before the leave is taken. Benefits will be continued for leaves of 5 days or fewer. The Board of Trustees and the Minister, in consultation with the Personnel Committee, will determine if benefits will continue for a leave longer than 5 days.

F. Parental Leave

An employee who has completed the Probationary Period may take up to 6 weeks paid leave for the birth of a baby in the employee's family or for the adoption of a child under age 18. During such leave, FPC will continue to pay the all benefits for which the employee is eligible.

G. Sabbatical Leave and Professional Development

Sabbatical leave is determined on a case-by-case basis for Program Staff and Minister. The minister must approve sabbatical leave for program staff, which shall be further approved by the Board of Trustees. The terms for the Minister's sabbatical shall be covered in the Letter of Agreement. In each case, the individual on sabbatical leave must arrange for coverage of their area of work for the period of absence.

Program staff, with an 12-month contract, are eligible for 4 weeks' professional development time annually. Professional development time off is generally taken

during Summer. Alternative professional development time schedules must be approved by the minister.

H. Insurance

1. Health and Dental

- a. FPC provides access to group health insurances for eligible employees. This benefit is offered to all employees who work at least 20 hours per week and at least 10 months per year, with the following exceptions:
 - i. An employee who has health care benefits through an alternative source, including any eligible employee who chooses to enroll in Medicaid or Medicare, will be reimbursed as follows:
 - Medigap policies will be included in the calculation if applicable.
 - Employees will be reimbursed for their contributions to their plan. This amount shall not exceed the dollar amount that would have been paid to the UUA for the employee's plan at the annual percentage approved by the Board of Trustees.
 - This amount shall not exceed the employee's personal costs toward their health care plan.
 - Documentation of such alternative coverage will be required (per Commonwealth of Massachusetts law).
 - This information will be made clear in the employee's annual offer.
 - ii. The percentage of individual and family coverage for eligible employees is set annually by the Board of Trustees.

More information and enrollment forms may be obtained at the UUA website, <https://secure.uua.org/leaders/insurance/enrollment>

- b. All employees are eligible to enroll in the UUA group Dental Insurance. The Premiums shall be the responsibility of the employee. More information and enrollment forms may be obtained at the UUA website, www.uua.org/groupinsurance.

2. Term Life, and Long-Term Disability Plans

All employees are eligible to enroll in the UUA group Life/Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance, and Long-Term Disability Insurance Plans. The premiums shall be the responsibility of the employee. More information and enrollment forms may be obtained at the UUA website – www.uua.org/groupinsurance.

I. Retirement Plan

All employees, including new and part-time employees working less than 1000 hours annually, are eligible to enroll, upon employment, in the UUA Retirement Plan and to begin

making tax-deferred employee contributions to the plan. For employees working 20 hours or more per week, after 1 year of employment, FPC will contribute a percentage of an employee's gross salary, the percentage to be determined by the Board of Trustees (with a minimum contribution of 5%). Enrollment information may be obtained at the UUA website – www.uua.org/groupinsurance and click on **Retirement Plans**.

J. Workers Compensation

Workers Compensation shall be provided to all eligible employees as required by law.

Issued by Personnel Committee

Jim Bonnar, Chair
5 November 1998

Ken Wagner, Vice President
15 December 1998

Approved by FPC BoT vote
Steve Evans, President, January 1999

Amended by vote of the FPC Board of Trustees
Nancy Banks, President

Amended by vote of the FPC Board of Trustees
Neil Saunders, President, October 12, 2010

Amended by vote of the FPC Board of Trustees
Hector Constantzos, President, November 12, 2013

Amended by vote of the FPC Board of Trustees
Lynda Layer, President, March 8, 2018

Amended by vote of the FPC Board of Trustees
Sharon Brownfield, President, April 11, 2023