

13 – Church Safety

RSO policy, mandated reporter expectations, and volunteer screening for service with minors.

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Overview: Church Safety

Status

Implementation status: Approved by Servants Council

Date: 2026-05-30

This book gathers Mayflower Church's safeguarding policies: the Registered Sex Offender (RSO) Attendance & Membership Policy and its cheat sheet, the Volunteer Screening and Application for Service with Minors, and the Mandated Reporter Policy.

It exists to protect children, support victims, and shepherd those under accountability with clarity and compassion.

RSO Attendance and Membership Policy

MAYFLOWER CHURCH

Knowing Christ and Making Him known.

Title: Registered Sex Offender (RSO) Attendance and Membership Policy

Oversight Board: Mayflower Board of Elders, with the Mayflower Board of Deacons (Child Safety integration)

Effective Date: May 30, 2026

Version Number: 1 (Effective May 30, 2026)

Policy Statement: It is the policy of Mayflower Church that any individual under registered sex offender status, or under active investigation for an offense that would result in such status, may attend or seek membership at Mayflower Church only under the terms of an elder-approved Attendance Agreement that protects children, gives parents peace of mind, and provides a meaningful pastoral pathway for the individual to worship and grow under accountability.

Purpose: This policy defines the pastoral process, behavioral expectations, and documentation required when an individual under registered sex offender (RSO) status seeks to attend or hold membership at Mayflower Church. It complements the Child Safety Policy (Effective 9-11-2023) by governing the attendee side of child protection.

Limitations: This policy does not supersede any civil legal restriction (e.g., parole conditions, restraining orders, court orders) imposed on an individual; in any conflict, the stricter restriction applies. This policy does not modify the Bylaws' procedures for membership, discipline, or restoration; it operates alongside Article I, Sections A and B of the Bylaws.

Description

1. Pastoral Introduction

If you are reading this policy, it is likely because you, or someone close to you, has been convicted of, or is under investigation for, an offense that places (or would place) you under registered sex offender (RSO) status. Mayflower Church wants to be a place where everyone, including you, can

encounter Jesus Christ and the gospel.

Holding three priorities together is what this policy is about:

1. **Safety of children** — the church is a place where children must be safe in fact and in perception.
2. **Peace of mind for parents** — families need to know that their concerns are taken seriously and answered concretely.
3. **Worship and fellowship for everyone, including those under RSO status** — the gospel offers full forgiveness in Christ; that forgiveness is real even when the consequences of past sin are not erased.

The pages that follow describe what the elders will ask of you, why we ask it, and what we are committing to in return. We recognize this conversation is hard. We want to walk through it with you patiently.

While this conversation is being had — before this Attendance Agreement has been signed — we ask that you refrain from attending services or events at Mayflower Church. We are happy, during that intervening time, to facilitate a worship service in your home where you can engage the Sunday service via video with the support of fellow believers.

2. Summary of Approach — Three Asks

2.1 Release of Information

We ask that you sign a release of information with each person on your rehabilitative care or legal accountability team — your parole officer, certified sex offender treatment therapist, case manager, or any other professional in your formal accountability — so that the elders may speak with them about your progress. We value their insight, and we want them to have the freedom to contact us if any concerns emerge in your cooperation with their care.

How this works: In the Attendance Agreement (Section 7) you will give the elders permission to speak with these individuals. Each professional will need to provide their own release-of-information form for you to sign so that they may speak with the elders. We do not need a copy of those forms; we do need to be told when each one has been signed before we make contact. We ask that you also provide each of these professionals with a copy of this policy.

2.2 No Presence in Children's or Youth Ministries

We ask that you refrain from any presence or involvement in Mayflower's Discipletown children's ministry, Nursery, or any youth/teen ministry. This includes (if applicable) checking your own children in to children's ministry. This restriction will persist even if your RSO status is removed at some point in the future.

You may attend services where children are present, such as the Sunday worship service, provided that an approved shepherd (Section 2.3) is present with you.

Included in this expectation is that you will not attend a service or event at which someone you have harmed, or someone in their family, is present. Because Mayflower has a single campus, if a known victim or member of a victim's family is part of Mayflower, the elders may need to ask you to refrain from attending Mayflower altogether and to seek another church where this will not be the case. The elders will discuss this with you directly during the pastoral interview.

2.3 Shepherding Presence at All Times

We ask that you agree to have a shepherding presence with you whenever you are at a Mayflower facility or event.

Who serves as your shepherd: An elder will be assigned to oversee your pastoral care and ensure that this policy is followed ("the Shepherding Elder"). The Shepherding Elder will work with you to identify a small team of approved lay shepherds who can be present with you at services and events. Approved lay shepherds must be Mayflower members in good standing, must have an active CORI clearance through Mayflower, must have read this policy, and must be approved in writing by the Shepherding Elder. They cannot be a family member (spouse, sibling, parent, adult child). They should be people you know and trust — a Bible Fellowship Group (BFG) member, a friend, or a serving-team peer.

What the shepherd does: The shepherd greets you on arrival at a discrete location, checks you in, and remains within sight lines and casual conversation distance throughout your time at the church. The shepherd checks you out when you leave. Socially, nothing about the shepherd's presence should be visible to other attendees beyond ordinary friendship.

Why this is loving: The shepherding presence protects you and the families of the church. For you, it ensures that if any accusation is later made, a witness can give testimony to where you

were and what you were doing. For other Mayflower families, it gives parents the peace of mind they need to keep bringing their children. We are asking real sacrifices of both sides; we believe this arrangement is the most loving way to fulfill our responsibility to the whole congregation.

3. Pastoral Interview

Before the Attendance Agreement is signed, the Shepherding Elder, with one other elder present, will conduct a pastoral interview. The questions and observations in Appendix B guide that conversation. The elders will read your public RSO listing and any related news coverage before the interview.

The interview is not a hurdle to clear; it is the beginning of pastoral care. Its purpose is to understand your story, identify the supports already in place, and discern together whether attendance under this agreement is workable for you, the elders, and the congregation.

4. Who Knows About the Arrangement

Knowledge of the Attendance Agreement and the shepherding arrangement will be limited to those whose roles require it: the Senior Pastor, all members of the Board of Elders, the Discipletown Leader, the Nursery Team Leader, the First Impressions Ministry Leader (who manages Sunday-morning sign-in), and the Office Manager (who maintains the file). Approved lay shepherds will know in order to serve. The information will not be broadcast to the wider congregation.

If you become a member of Mayflower (Section 6), the congregation will be informed in general terms of the agreement at the time of the membership vote, consistent with Article I, Section A of the Bylaws.

5. If You Choose Not to Agree

Some people, in the name of grace, do not believe churches should impose restrictions like these. We would gently ask you, in light of Philippians 2:1-5, to consider the concerns of others as more

significant than your own, and in light of Matthew 22:37-40, to express love for neighbor by accepting the agreement. Until you can agree to adhere to these expectations, we will ask you to refrain from attending Mayflower Church.

This is not a permanent answer. The door remains open. The elders are committed to walking with you whether or not you sign today.

6. Attendance vs. Membership

This policy distinguishes between attendance and membership.

6.1 Attendance

An individual under RSO status may attend Mayflower services and most events under a signed Attendance Agreement (Appendix A) and the shepherding arrangement described above.

6.2 Membership

Membership at Mayflower requires the steps in Article I, Section A of the Bylaws: completion of the Membership Course, a membership interview with the elders, an elder recommendation, and a vote of the congregation.

For an individual under RSO status, the elders will ordinarily not bring a recommendation of membership to the congregation until at least twelve (12) consecutive months of consistent attendance under this agreement have shown observable evidence of repentance, reformation, and faithful adherence. Even after that, a recommendation is at the elders' pastoral discretion. Membership does not lift any provision of the Attendance Agreement; the agreement continues for as long as the individual is under RSO status, and elements of it (such as the prohibition on involvement in children/youth ministry) continue indefinitely.

7. Service in Ministry

Mayflower's general principle is that anyone may serve in a ministry team and that membership is required only to lead a team. This policy narrows that principle for individuals under RSO status as follows:

- No service in any role at Mayflower without the prior written approval of the Shepherding Elder.
- No service, ever, in Discipletown, Nursery, any youth ministry, or any role with regular access to children, regardless of RSO status, age, or future change in legal status.
- Approved roles will typically be back-of-house, adult-only roles where the shepherd can be present (e.g., adult-event setup, bulletin folding, certain hospitality roles for adult-only events).

8. Documentation, Records, and Review

- The Office Manager maintains a confidential file containing the signed Attendance Agreement (Appendix A), the File Information sheet (Appendix C), parole-officer authorization, signed releases, sign-in/out records, and any incident notes.
- Sign-in/out records may be released in cooperation with any legal inquiry.
- The Shepherding Elder will review the agreement annually with the individual and bring any concerns to the full Board of Elders.
- If any condition of the Attendance Agreement is broken, the individual will no longer be permitted at any Mayflower location or activity. Restoration to attendance is at the discretion of the Board of Elders following Article I, Section A.4 of the Bylaws (Biblical Conflict Resolution and Restoration).

9. Reporting and Civil Cooperation

Mayflower Church will fully cooperate with any lawful inquiry from law enforcement, parole officers, the Department of Children and Families, or other civil authorities. Any new disclosure of suspected abuse or threat of harm will be reported to civil authorities consistent with Massachusetts law and the Mayflower Child Safety Policy.

10. Bylaws Reference and Adoption

This policy is approved first by the Board of Elders pursuant to the Mayflower Constitution and Bylaws. The Servants Council, which the Bylaws charge with setting church policy, then adopts it as part of the church's operations plan. Because the Bylaws reference the operations plan as canonical for church policy, a congregational majority vote is not required for adoption.

Appendix A — Attendance Agreement

I agree to the following conditions:

1. I will be assigned a Mayflower Shepherding Elder who will oversee my pastoral care and ensure that this agreement is being followed.
2. I will fully cooperate with all expectations from my legal case — meeting with my parole officer, case manager, certified sex offender treatment therapist, or other expectations stipulated in my case.
3. I have fully communicated these legal expectations to my Shepherding Elder, provided the names and contact information of the professionals overseeing my care, and signed a release of information for them to speak with my Shepherding Elder.
4. I will obtain approval from my parole officer (or functional equivalent) to attend Mayflower Church. A copy of the signed authorization has been provided to my Shepherding Elder.
5. I agree to have a link to my RSO profile emailed to the Senior Pastor, the Board of Elders, the Discipletown Leader, the Nursery Team Leader, the First Impressions Ministry Leader, and the Office Manager.
6. I will not attend any Mayflower service or activity without my Shepherding Elder or a lay shepherd approved in writing by my Shepherding Elder. If neither is available, I will not attend that service or activity.
7. Upon arrival at Mayflower, I will check in at the location agreed upon with my Shepherding Elder. I will check out before I leave.
8. I will not serve in any role in any Mayflower ministry without prior written approval from my Shepherding Elder.
9. I acknowledge and agree that all children's and youth areas at Mayflower (including Discipletown rooms, the Nursery, and any youth area) are off limits at all times — even if my own children are attending and participating. I will not supervise any children's activities, will not enter any designated children's area, and will not serve in Discipletown, Nursery, or any youth ministry.
10. I will not attend a Mayflower Bible Fellowship Group (BFG) at which children are present, nor visit the home of a Mayflower family where children are present, without the parent first knowing my history and giving permission for my entry.

11. I will promptly leave any area on Mayflower property where children are present, with the exception of a populated foyer, the sanctuary, or an area where five or more adults are also present.
12. I will have no physical contact with any child at Mayflower other than my own — including, without limitation, sitting next to a child, holding a child on my lap, or being hugged or kissed by a child. If a child other than my own approaches me to talk, I will politely acknowledge the child and promptly leave the area.
13. I will stay within casual-conversation distance of my Shepherding Elder or approved lay shepherd whenever I am at Mayflower, including when going to the restroom (the shepherd will wait in the foyer outside the restroom).
14. I understand that my Shepherding Elder will (a) fully cooperate with any legal inquiry and (b) provide the sign-in/sign-out records should they be requested.

I understand the above conditions. I submit to these conditions and wish to attend Mayflower Church. I submit to my Shepherding Elder. I accept that if I break any of the above conditions, I will no longer be permitted at any Mayflower location or activity.

Printed name of individual: _____

Phone / email: _____

Signature of individual: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed name of Shepherding Elder: _____

Signature of Shepherding Elder: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix B — Pastoral Interview Guide

For use by the Shepherding Elder and one other elder during the initial interview. Read the public RSO listing and any related news coverage before the interview. Two elders should always be present.

Questions to Ask

1. Are you willing to discuss what resulted in your RSO status? (If yes, express appreciation; if no, affirm their boundary but explain that an interview is required before attendance can begin.)
2. What was the nature of the offense(s) that led to your RSO status? When did the offenses begin? How long before you were caught? How did things come to light? What was the legal conclusion? Listen for anger toward the victim or those who supported the victim.
3. What are your current legal consequences? Charges (convicted and dismissed), probation status (when does it end), other restrictions (restraining orders, geographic limits).

4. Are you currently engaged in counseling? What kind of peer support or accountability do you have? Who are you seeing and what is their training? Listen for proactive engagement in recovery.
5. What impact has this had on your close relationships — marriage, children, parents, friends, work?
6. Do you know of any of your victims, or family or friends of your victims, who attend Mayflower Church?
7. Have you been attending another church since your offense came to light? If yes, why are you transitioning, and may we contact them? If not, what draws you to Mayflower now?
8. Are you willing to agree to the parameters of the Attendance Agreement? Hear their initial impression and reasoning; do not push for an immediate yes or no.

Things to Observe

- Do they become emotionally overwhelmed as they tell their story? (Will they be able to handle being in worship — and eventually in a Bible Fellowship Group — where members will know their RSO status?)
- Can they tell their story without minimizing, blame-shifting, or making excuses? If their victim or a victim’s family heard this account, would they feel ownership was taken?
- Tone and disposition: stoic, angry, ashamed, defensive, or remorseful?
- Does the person display the level of repentance and emotional maturity to participate meaningfully in Sunday worship and, in time, in a Bible Fellowship Group?

Appendix C — File Information

Maintained confidentially by the Office Manager.

Name of registered offender: _____

Address: _____ **City / State / Zip:** _____

Home phone: _____ **Work phone:** _____

Cell phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Shepherding Elder: _____

Approved lay shepherds:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Documents on file:

- Signed Attendance Agreement (Appendix A)
- Parole officer (or functional equivalent) contact information and authorization to attend Mayflower
- Signed releases of information for therapist, case manager, and any other accountability professionals
- Link to public RSO profile distributed to required leaders
- Annual review record

Mayflower Constitution and Bylaws — RSO Policy

RSO Policy — Cheat Sheet

Registered Sex Offender (RSO) Policy — Cheat Sheet

Source: The Summit Church RSO Attendance & Membership Policy

Three Priorities Held in Tension

1. **Safety of children**
2. **Peace of mind for parents**
3. **Worship and fellowship for those under RSO status**

Forgiveness in Christ is full; consequences of past sin still shape pastoral care.

Three Asks of the Individual under RSO Status

1. **Sign a release of information** with everyone in their rehabilitative care or legal accountability team (parole officer, therapist, case manager) so the elders can speak with them.
2. **No presence in children's or student ministries** — ever, even after RSO status is removed. May not check children in. May not attend an event where the person they harmed (or their family) is present.
3. **Shepherding presence required** at every service or event — a non-family approved individual within sight and casual conversation distance, with check-in/check-out at a discrete location.

Pastoral Intake Interview — What Elders Listen For

- Willingness to discuss the offense; ability to tell the story without minimizing, blame-shifting, or excusing
- Active engagement in counseling/recovery and a clear understanding of legal restrictions and probation
- Whether any victim or victim's family attends Mayflower (protect against re-traumatization)
- Tone and disposition: stoic, angry, defensive, ashamed, or remorseful
- Read the public RSO listing and related news before the interview to gauge completeness of disclosure

Signed Attendance Agreement — 14 Conditions in Brief

- Assigned shepherding elder oversees pastoral care and policy adherence
- Full cooperation with parole, therapist, case manager; written approval from parole officer to attend
- RSO profile link emailed to all pastors, elders, security, and children/youth ministry leads
- Never attend without an approved shepherd; sign in/sign out at a designated location
- No service in any ministry without prior approval; never in children/youth ministry; never serve, supervise, or enter their areas
- No physical contact with children other than their own; no sitting next to, holding, or being approached without a polite, prompt withdrawal
- Leave any area where children are present unless five or more adults are also present
- No small group / Bible Fellowship Group or home visit where children are present without parental knowledge and permission
- Shepherd accompanies to restroom area; sign-in/out records may be released for legal inquiry
- Breach of any condition ends attendance privileges

Who Knows About the Arrangement

Pastors, elders, building security volunteers, and the leads of children's and youth ministries. Not broadcast to the wider congregation.

Volunteer Screening and Application — Service with Minors

Mayflower Church

Volunteer Screening & Application

For Service with Children and Youth

Draft — May 2026

Part One — Screening Policy

1. Purpose

Mayflower Church is committed to the safety of every child and youth entrusted to our care. This screening process applies to all persons who serve with minors at Mayflower in any capacity. It is one element of the Mayflower Child & Youth Protection Policy and works alongside the Mandated Reporter Policy and the Registered Sex Offender Policy.

Screening is not an expression of distrust toward our people. It is an expression of love for our children and a witness to the world that the church takes the protection of the vulnerable seriously.

2. Who Must Complete This Process

This screening process is required for any person serving with minors at Mayflower, including:

- Discipletown teachers, helpers, and substitute teachers.
- Nursery team members.
- EQUIP youth ministry leaders and helpers.
- Vacation Bible School and summer camp staff and volunteers.
- Drivers transporting minors to or from a Mayflower-sponsored event.
- Any adult staying overnight at a Mayflower youth event.
- Any adult having one-on-one or small-group contact with minors as part of a Mayflower ministry.

3. Six-Month Attendance Prerequisite

To serve with minors, an applicant must have been a regular participant in the worshipping life of Mayflower Church for at least six (6) months prior to applying. The Senior Pastor, in consultation with the Board of Elders, may waive this requirement only in rare cases where the applicant is well-known to multiple Mayflower leaders from a prior ministry context.

Membership is not required to serve, but membership is required to lead a team.

4. Steps in the Screening Process

1. Application. The applicant completes Part Two of this document in full and returns it to the Senior Pastor or designated Children & Youth ministry leader.
2. References. The applicant provides three (3) references — at least one personal and at least one ministry-related — none of whom may be relatives. Mayflower will contact each reference in writing or by phone.
3. CORI Check. Mayflower will run a Massachusetts Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check using the iCORI system. The applicant must complete the CORI

Acknowledgement Form before the check is initiated.

4. SORI Check. Mayflower will run a Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) check through the Massachusetts Sex Offender Registry Board.
5. Interview. The Senior Pastor or designated Children & Youth ministry leader will conduct an in-person interview to discuss the applicant's background, ministry history, theological alignment, and understanding of the Mayflower Code of Conduct.
6. Code of Conduct Review and Signing. The applicant signs the Volunteer Code of Conduct (Part Three of this document).
7. Training. The applicant completes the Mayflower Child & Youth Protection training, including mandated reporter training, before beginning service.
8. Approval. The Senior Pastor, in consultation with the relevant board (Elders for teaching roles, Deacons for care roles), gives written approval before the volunteer begins service.

5. CORI / SORI Practices

Mayflower complies with the Massachusetts CORI Reform Law (M.G.L. c. 6, §§ 167A-178A and 803 CMR 2.00 et seq.) in conducting and using background checks. Specifically:

- Applicants will receive the Mayflower CORI Policy and a written notice before any check is run.
- CORI information will be used only for the purpose of evaluating fitness to serve with minors.
- CORI information will be stored separately from any other personnel or volunteer file, in a locked or access-restricted location, and will not be shared with anyone outside the screening process.
- If a CORI report contains adverse information, the applicant will be given a copy of the report and an opportunity to respond before a final decision is made.
- CORI records will be destroyed in accordance with the Mayflower Document Retention Policy and Massachusetts regulations.

6. Disqualifying Factors

The following are presumptively disqualifying for service with minors at Mayflower:

- Any conviction or admission of sexual abuse, sexual assault, or sexual exploitation of a minor.
- Registration on a state or federal sex offender registry.
- Any conviction involving violence against a child or vulnerable adult.
- Pending criminal charges in any of the above categories.
- A documented pattern of behavior, even absent conviction, that places minors at risk.

Other criminal history, financial issues, or past discipline will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Senior Pastor and the Board of Elders, with attention to the nature, recency, and circumstances of the matter and the applicant's evidence of repentance and ongoing trustworthy conduct.

7. Annual Renewal

Volunteers serving with minors must renew their commitment annually by:

- Re-signing the Volunteer Code of Conduct.
- Confirming there has been no change in their criminal or registry status.
- Completing annual Child & Youth Protection refresher training.

CORI and SORI checks will be re-run every three (3) years, or sooner if there is reason to do so.

8. Records

The Senior Pastor (or a designee) maintains a confidential roster of approved volunteers, signed Code of Conduct forms, training completion records, and reference summaries. These records are stored securely and are not part of any public ministry file.

9. Appeals

An applicant whose application is declined may appeal in writing to the Board of Elders within thirty (30) days. The Board's decision is final, except that decisions involving disqualifying factors under Section 6 are not subject to appeal.

10. Approval and Review

This screening process was approved by the Board of Elders and recommended to the Servants Council on [date]. It shall be reviewed annually.

Part Two — Application Form

Please complete every field. If a section does not apply, write "N/A." Return the completed application to the Senior Pastor or to the Children & Youth ministry leader.

Personal Information

Full legal name:

Preferred name:

Date of birth:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Marital status, and (if applicable) spouse's name:

Children (names and ages, if applicable):

Mayflower Connection

How long have you been attending Mayflower Church?

Are you a member of Mayflower? If yes, since when?

Bible Fellowship Group / small group you participate in:

Other Mayflower ministries you currently serve in:

Ministry Interest

Which ministry are you applying to serve in (Discipletown, Nursery, EQUIP youth, VBS, etc.)?

Briefly, why do you want to serve in this ministry?

What gifts, training, or experience do you bring to this role?

Faith and Doctrine

Briefly describe your testimony of faith in Christ:

Have you been baptized as a believer? If yes, where and when?

Are you in agreement with the Mayflower Statement of Faith and Confession?

Background

Have you ever been convicted of any crime other than a minor traffic offense? If yes, please describe (date, jurisdiction, offense, outcome):

Are you currently under investigation, indictment, or pending criminal charges? If yes, please describe:

Have you ever been the subject of a Department of Children and Families (DCF) investigation, civil child-protection action, or similar matter in another state? If yes, please describe:

Are you, or have you ever been, registered on any sex offender registry in any state? If yes, please describe:

Has any church, school, employer, or organization ever asked you to step away from work with minors? If yes, please describe:

References

Please provide three (3) references — at least one personal and at least one ministry-related. References may not be relatives.

Reference 1 — Name, relationship, phone, email:

Reference 2 — Name, relationship, phone, email:

Reference 3 — Name, relationship, phone, email:

Authorization

By signing below, I authorize Mayflower Church to:

- Contact the references listed above.
- Conduct a Massachusetts CORI background check on me.
- Conduct a Massachusetts SORI sex offender registry check on me.
- Verify, as needed, the information I have provided in this application.

I certify that the information I have provided is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any false statement, omission, or misrepresentation may result in withdrawal of my application or removal from service.

Applicant signature:

Printed name:

Date:

Part Three — Volunteer Code of Conduct

As a person serving with children and youth at Mayflower Church, I commit before God and before this congregation to the following standards of conduct. These standards exist to protect children, to protect volunteers, and to honor the trust placed in us.

Two-Adult Rule

- I will not be alone with a child or youth who is not my own family member in any room, vehicle, or isolated space at a Mayflower ministry event.
- Whenever possible, two unrelated approved adults will be present in any space where minors gather.
- If I find myself unintentionally alone with a child, I will move to a visible space and locate another approved adult immediately.

Visibility and Open Doors

- Doors to classrooms and meeting spaces will remain open or have an interior window unobstructed. If a door must be closed for noise or distraction, two approved adults must be present.
- Restroom assistance for young children will be provided in pairs, at the open door of the restroom, never inside a stall.

Physical Contact

- Appropriate physical contact (a side-hug, a high-five, a hand on the shoulder for prayer) is permitted in plain view of others.
- I will not initiate prolonged hugs, kisses on the mouth or face, sitting children on my lap (other than my own family), tickling, wrestling, or any other physical contact that could be misinterpreted.
- If a child initiates physical contact that crosses these lines, I will gently redirect.

Communication

- Direct one-on-one electronic communication with a minor (text, DM, social media, email) is not permitted. Group communication that includes a parent or another approved adult is the standard.
- I will not contact minors privately on social media or messaging apps about Mayflower ministry matters.
- Photos of minors at Mayflower events may only be taken on a Mayflower-approved device, and may only be shared in accordance with the Mayflower Photo/Media Release on file.

Transportation

- I will not transport a minor (other than my own family member) alone in a vehicle. Transportation will involve at least two approved adults, or two minors, or shall otherwise be approved in advance by the Senior Pastor.
- All drivers transporting minors must hold a valid driver's license and current vehicle insurance, and must complete the Volunteer Driver Authorization.

Discipline

- Correction of children will be verbal, calm, and consistent with Mayflower ministry practice.
- Corporal punishment of any kind, shaming, isolation, or any form of coercion is prohibited.
- Any incident requiring more than ordinary correction will be reported to the ministry leader the same day.

Disclosures of Abuse

If a child discloses abuse, neglect, or harm — or if I observe signs of abuse — I will:

1. Listen without interrogating, documenting words used, but not investigating.
2. Assure the child of my care without making promises of confidentiality I cannot keep.
3. Make the report required under the Mayflower Mandated Reporter Policy.
4. Notify the Senior Pastor (or, if appropriate, the Chair of the Elders) as soon as reasonably possible.

Substance Use

- I will not be under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or any non-prescribed controlled substance while serving with minors.
- Possession of these substances on Mayflower property during ministry time is prohibited.

Confidentiality

- Information shared with me by a minor or a minor's family in the course of ministry is to be held in appropriate confidence, except as required by the Mandated Reporter Policy or to protect a child.
- I will not discuss children, their families, or ministry incidents on social media or in other public settings.

Honoring Other Volunteers

- If I observe another volunteer's behavior raising concern under this Code, I will report it promptly to the ministry leader or the Senior Pastor.
- Honest reports made in good faith are protected by the Mayflower Anti-Retaliation provision in the Mandated Reporter Policy.

Acknowledgment

I have read this Volunteer Code of Conduct in full. I understand that following these standards is a condition of serving with minors at Mayflower Church and that violation of this Code may result in

removal from ministry.

I understand that I am a mandated reporter under Massachusetts law and under the Mayflower Mandated Reporter Policy, and that I am required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families and to the Designated Church Liaison.

Volunteer signature:

Printed name:

Date:

Internal Use Only – Approval

Application received (date):

References completed (date):

CORI completed (date):

SORI completed (date):

Interview completed (date / by):

Training completed (date):

Decision (approved / declined):

Senior Pastor signature:

Date:

Mandated Reporter Policy — Draft May 2026

Mayflower Church

Mandated Reporter Policy

Draft — May 2026

1. Purpose

Mayflower Church is committed to protecting children and other vulnerable persons entrusted to our care. This policy establishes the obligation of every staff member, elder, deacon, trustee, ministry leader, and volunteer to report suspected abuse or neglect of a child to civil authorities and to designated church leadership. It is a companion to, and operates within, the Mayflower Church Child & Youth Protection Policy.

This policy is drafted to comply with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, Section 51A, which designates clergy and certain other persons as mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Mayflower Church employees, including pastoral and non-pastoral staff.
- All elders, deacons, and trustees.
- All ministry leaders, team leaders, and volunteers serving in any role with minors, including — but not limited to — Discipletown, Nursery, EQUIP youth contexts, Vacation Bible School, summer camps, and any event involving children or youth.
- Any contractor or guest speaker working with minors on Mayflower property or at Mayflower-sponsored events.

All persons in scope are designated mandated reporters under this policy, regardless of whether the law independently designates them as such.

3. Statutory Authority

Mayflower Church operates under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The following statutes are referenced throughout this policy:

- M.G.L. c. 119, § 51A — Mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect.
- M.G.L. c. 119, § 51B — Department of Children and Families investigation procedures.
- M.G.L. c. 233, § 20A — Clergy-penitent privilege (limited application; see Section 8).
- M.G.L. c. 265, §§ 13B, 22A, 23 — Definitions of indecent assault, rape, and statutory rape of a child.

4. Definitions

Child. Any person under the age of eighteen (18).

Abuse. Non-accidental physical injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or emotional injury inflicted upon a child by a caregiver or other person.

Neglect. Failure by a caregiver, either deliberately or through negligence, to provide minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth, or other essential care.

Reasonable cause to believe. A standard lower than “probable cause” or “certainty.” It is met when facts known to the reporter would lead a reasonable person, in similar circumstances, to suspect abuse or neglect. Certainty is not required to trigger the duty to report.

Mandated Reporter. A person designated by statute or by this policy to report suspected abuse or neglect of a child.

Designated Church Liaison. The Senior Pastor, or in the Senior Pastor’s absence or conflict of interest, the Chair of the Elders, who serves as the internal point of contact for reports made under this policy.

5. Reporting Standard

A mandated reporter is required to make a report when, in their professional or ministry capacity, they have reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering from abuse or neglect.

The reporter is not required to investigate, gather evidence, confirm allegations, or determine credibility before reporting. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is responsible for investigation; the reporter is responsible for raising the concern in good faith.

If you are unsure whether a situation meets the reporting threshold, the answer is to report. Massachusetts law and this policy err on the side of reporting.

6. Reporting Procedure

6.1 Immediate Safety

If a child is in immediate danger, call 911 first. Then proceed with the steps below.

6.2 External Report to DCF

1. Make an oral report to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families within 24 hours of forming reasonable cause to believe abuse or neglect has occurred.
2. DCF Child-at-Risk Hotline: 1-800-792-5200 (available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week).
3. Submit a written report (DCF Form 51A) within 48 hours of the oral report. The form is available at mass.gov/dcf and may be filed by fax, mail, or in-person delivery to the local DCF Area Office.
4. Retain a copy of any written report in a sealed envelope provided to the Designated Church Liaison for confidential storage. Do not place reports in personnel files, ministry files, or shared drives.

6.3 Internal Notification

As soon as reasonably possible after making the external report — and never as a substitute for it — the reporter shall notify the Senior Pastor (Designated Church Liaison). If the report concerns the Senior Pastor or someone under the Senior Pastor's direct authority, notification shall instead be made to the Chair of the Elders.

The Designated Church Liaison shall promptly inform the Board of Elders of the existence of a report (without identifying the child or other protected information beyond what is necessary) so that the church can take appropriate pastoral, protective, and personnel actions consistent with the Child & Youth Protection Policy.

6.4 No Internal Pre-Clearance

The duty to report to DCF is personal to the reporter and is not conditioned on permission or pre-approval from any pastor, elder, deacon, supervisor, or church body. No church officer may delay, redirect, or interfere with a report. Doing so is a violation of this policy and of Massachusetts law.

7. Confidentiality

All information related to a report shall be handled with strict confidentiality, shared only with persons who have a clear need to know in order to comply with the law, protect the child, manage personnel matters, or provide pastoral care. Reporters and church officers shall not discuss reports with the congregation, on social media, or with any party not involved in lawful response.

Confidentiality is not a license for silence. Reports to DCF are required by law regardless of confidentiality concerns.

8. Pastoral Privilege — Narrow Application

Massachusetts law (M.G.L. c. 119, § 51A) generally requires clergy to report suspected child abuse and neglect, with a narrow exception for communications made solely in the context of confession or formal religious counsel where confidentiality is required by the discipline of the religious body.

Mayflower Church's position is that this exception is narrow and does not apply to:

- Pastoral conversations that are not strictly confessional in character.
- Information learned outside of formal pastoral counsel (e.g., observation, a child's disclosure, a third party's report).
- Situations involving ongoing risk to a child or another vulnerable person.

When in doubt, the duty to protect a child supersedes the desire to preserve confidentiality. Pastoral staff with privilege questions shall consult the Senior Pastor or, if needed, legal counsel before relying on the exception.

9. Anti-Retaliation

Mayflower Church will not tolerate retaliation against any person who, in good faith:

- Makes a report under this policy.
- Cooperates with a DCF or law enforcement investigation.
- Raises concerns to church leadership about the safety of a child.

Retaliation includes — but is not limited to — termination, demotion, removal from ministry, social exclusion, public criticism, or pressure to recant a report. Any retaliation will be treated as a serious violation of this policy and may result in removal from staff or ministry roles.

10. Good-Faith Immunity and False Reports

Massachusetts law provides civil and criminal immunity to mandated reporters who file reports in good faith, even if the report is later found to be unsupported.

Knowingly false reports, however, are a violation of both Massachusetts law and this policy and may result in removal from staff or ministry roles, in addition to any civil or criminal consequences imposed by the state.

11. Training

Every person within the scope of this policy shall complete mandated reporter training:

- At the time of hire, election, appointment, or volunteer onboarding.
- Annually thereafter, before the start of each ministry year.

Training shall cover the legal duty, recognition of abuse and neglect indicators, the reporting procedure under this policy, and the boundaries of pastoral privilege. The Senior Pastor, or a designee approved by the Board of Elders, is responsible for ensuring training is delivered, documented, and current.

12. Recordkeeping

The Designated Church Liaison shall maintain a confidential record of:

- The date and general nature of each report (without disclosing identifying information beyond what is necessary).
- Confirmation that an oral report was made to DCF and that the written 51A report was filed within the required window.
- Training completion dates for all persons in scope.

Records shall be stored securely (locked file or access-restricted digital location) and retained in accordance with Mayflower's Document Retention Policy. Records shall not be destroyed during any open investigation or pending litigation.

13. Failure to Report

Under Massachusetts law, a mandated reporter who knowingly fails to report suspected child abuse or neglect may be subject to fines and, in cases of serious bodily injury or death, criminal penalties.

In addition to any civil or criminal liability, failure to report under this policy is grounds for immediate removal from staff position, board office, or ministry role at Mayflower Church.

14. Relationship to Other Policies

This policy operates as a foundational element of Mayflower's Child & Youth Protection Policy, and is referenced by:

- The Mayflower Church Employee Handbook (mandated reporter section).
- The Volunteer Screening & Application for Service with Minors.
- The Registered Sex Offender Policy, which sits within the Child & Youth Protection Policy.
- The Pastoral Counseling Policy (when established).

Where this policy and any other Mayflower policy conflict on the duty to report, this policy and Massachusetts law govern.

15. Approval and Review

This policy was approved by the Board of Elders and recommended to the Servants Council on [date]. It shall be reviewed annually by the Board of Elders and revised as needed to reflect changes in Massachusetts law or in church practice.

Acknowledgment

I have received, read, and understand the Mayflower Church Mandated Reporter Policy. I understand that I am a mandated reporter under this policy and that I am required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families and to the Designated Church Liaison.

I understand that the duty to report is personal to me and that I will not be retaliated against for making a good-faith report.

Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____

Role / Ministry: _____

Date: _____