RSO Attendance and Membership Policy

> **Related documents.** This policy is one of Mayflower's four safeguarding documents. It is read together with:

- Child Safety Policy
- Volunteer Screening and Application — Service with Minors
- Mandated Reporter Policy
- RSO Policy — Cheat Sheet

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: July 30, 2026

Version Number: 1 (Approved on July 11, 2026 by Servants Council; attorney-review wording incorporated 2026-08-17)

Policy Statement: It is the policy of Mayflower Church that any individual who is a registered sex offender under Massachusetts law — that is, a 'sex offender' as defined in Massachusetts General Laws chapter 6, section 178C who is required to register with the Massachusetts Sex Offender Registry Board pursuant to G.L. c. 6, §§ 178C–178Q, or a person subject to an equivalent registration requirement under the law of another state or of the United States — or who is 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 by governing the attendee side of child protection.

Limitations: This policy does not supersede any legal restrictions (e.g., probation or 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 who are registered sex offenders —** 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 require of you, why we require 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 require 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 Requirements

2.1 Release of Information

We require that you sign a release of information with each person on your rehabilitative care or legal accountability team — your probation or parole officer (if you are under supervision), 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

You shall 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 require 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/MinistrySafe 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. Where possible, the Shepherding Elder will include on the approved team at least one person with law enforcement, security, or similar professional experience who is equipped to respond should a situation require it.

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 require that you 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), supervising-officer authorization (if applicable, per Appendix A condition 4), 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. Mayflower reserves the right to issue a written 'No Trespass' order to enforce this exclusion; entering or remaining on Mayflower property after such an order may be treated as criminal trespass under Massachusetts law (G.L. c. 266, § 120). 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 Cooperation with Authorities

Mayflower Church will fully cooperate with any lawful inquiry from law enforcement, probation or parole officers, the Department of Children and Families, or other authorities. Any new disclosure of suspected abuse or threat of harm will be reported to the appropriate authorities consistent with Massachusetts law, including the mandated reporter requirements of G.L. c. 119, § 51A, and with the Mayflower Child Safety Policy.

10. Bylaws Reference and Adoption

This policy was 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 adopted 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, if any — meeting with my probation or 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. If I am currently under probation, parole, or any other form of supervision arising from my case, I will obtain approval from my supervising officer (probation officer, parole officer, or functional equivalent) to attend Mayflower Church, and a copy of the signed authorization has been provided to my Shepherding Elder. If I am not under any current supervision, I have confirmed that fact in writing 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 promptly leave any area if an Elder, Pastor, Deacon, or lay shepherd requests it.
13. 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.
14. 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).
15. 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.
16. I agree to follow any directions given by my Shepherding Elder or an approved lay shepherd.

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, and that Mayflower may issue a written 'No Trespass' order (Section 8).

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)
- ☐ Supervising officer (probation, parole, or functional equivalent) contact information and authorization to attend Mayflower, or the individual's written confirmation that no supervision is currently in place
- ☐ 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

Revision #9
Created 2026-05-07 19:47:07 UTC by Anton Brown
Updated 2026-10-19 17:09:20 UTC by Anton Brown