

Donegal Presbytery



# PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY: SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

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The Presbytery of Donegal

**4/26/2016**

**Adoption History:**

- February, 23 2016 Presbytery Gathering - Draft for First Read
- April 26, 2016 Presbytery Gathering - Adoption



















3. The presbytery is committed to providing a safe space for those who have been subjected to sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, and sexual harassment. Confidentiality and safeguards against retaliation will be implemented in all circumstances.
4. When a verbal report of a situation involving possible sexual misconduct, sexual abuse or sexual harassment by a person subject to this policy reaches an official of the presbytery, this shall be reported to a member of the Initial Response Group. Depending upon the situation, the reporter or alleged victim shall be invited to explain the circumstances. They shall be provided by the Stated Clerk with information on how to file a written statement of alleged offense, and shall be provided by members of the IRT with information on any other requests or desired outcomes.
5. When a written statement of alleged offense of sexual misconduct or abuse toward any person has been received by the stated clerk against a teaching elder or a commissioned ruling elder, the procedures in the Rules of Discipline shall be followed, including D-10.0106, regarding whether to impose administrative leave.
6. Written statements of alleged offense involving rape or sexual assault, or sexual abuse of children under the age of eighteen or one who allegedly lacks the mental capacity to consent shall be additionally reported to civil authorities.
7. The Response Coordinating Team (RCT) shall work with the clerk of session, the pastors (if not involved in the allegation) and other appropriate parties to provide a comprehensive pastoral response to the situation.
8. The Presbytery of Donegal will respect the rights of all parties involved: accusers, victims, accused, and an involved congregation. These rights include:
  - a. To be heard and taken seriously. From the time that sexual misconduct is reported, all persons shall receive immediate attention and serious consideration from those representing the presbytery. A reasonable attempt to identify and to locate the victim(s) will be made in the case of self-accusal.
  - b. To be informed about progress of procedures with regard to the accusation.
  - c. To obtain legal advice.
  - d. To be offered an advocate trained by the COM. While the presbytery proceeds to deal with the accusation, this includes the responsibility to provide each party involved moral support from an individual who is available to him or her or them.
  - e. To be assured that justice will be pursued through the procedures set forth in the Book of Order and this Policy.
  - f. To become engaged in work toward healing and reconciliation.
9. The presbytery shall design a plan for provision of counseling or reimbursement of counseling fees for the victim(s) for a reasonable period of time, up to a maximum of one year.