



Sexual Misconduct Response



REPORTING OPTIONS WITH THE PRESBYTERY OF SAN FERNANDO (PSF)

If you believe that you have experienced sexual misconduct, remember that you are not to blame. Pay attention to and trust your feelings during and after the situation. Share your feelings with someone you trust. Before choosing an option, consider your comfort, relationship, and the circumstances. Some may wish to engage in a formal process while others may handle matters informally. You are encouraged to contact the Stated Clerk of PSF for further details (805) 551-7520.

1

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION (PJC)

This committee conducts a formal investigation & committee trial to adjudicate any founded claims.

2

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY (COM)

This committee conducts a formal investigation & makes disciplinary decisions as a committee.

3

CHURCH SESSION

Each church has their own policies which should be provided to you. The Session serves as investigators or may delegate this authority.

Reporting an Ordained Pastor or Commissioned Ruling Elder

Please see options 1-3 on the left. Please contact Stated Clerk of PSF, Dave Wilkinson, for more information (805) 551-7520.

Reporting an employee of the Presbytery

You may file a complaint with the Stated Clerk of PSF, Dave Wilkinson at dwilkinsonsp@gmail.com (805) 551-7520.

Reporting an Employee or Volunteer at your Church

Each church is responsible for their employees & volunteers. Complaints may be filed with your church's session by contacting the Clerk of Session. Please call the church or PSF office if you need contact information.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT MAY INCLUDE:

Some, but not all, may apply

- 1) You have been touched in a confusing, uncomfortable, or unsettling way.
- 2) You receive inappropriate personal gifts or emails/texts with sexual overtones.
- 3) You feel uncomfortable or confused by an incident, behavior, or comment.
- 4) Your counseling session or pastoral relationship focuses on the pastor's or counselor's needs, or includes details of their intimate relationships.
- 5) You have received invitations for intimate, social occasions.



REPORTING THE ABUSE

If you do not wish to file a complaint, then there may be circumstances wherein a direct conversation with the perpetrator may resolve the issue. You may try to be direct and tell the person to stop and leave the situation. It is not required that you take action to confront the perpetrator prior to filing a complaint, nor will it be held against you if you do not take this step.

When filing a complaint, the complaint must be in writing. This complaint should describe the alleged misconduct in detail with any supporting documentation or witnesses. It is important to document incidents and save all electronic and written communication. All attempts will be made to keep confidentiality. If you report "anonymously," then your identity will remain confidential. However, it may affect the ability to investigate and take appropriate action. Please discuss this option at the time of your complaint. You have a right to fully understand the process at the time of making your complaint. If you'd like an advocate appointed to assist you, then please request one at that time.

We encourage all those experiencing sexual abuse to seek support from local resources and/or report to the police.

IF YOU WITNESS OR SUSPECT A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED

If a child or youth discloses abuse, or you witness or suspect abuse, then immediately make a report to the Department of Children and Family Services and/or the police. Once that is done, then notify church leadership. Do NOT perform an investigation yourself. Believe the child. Remember that you do not need evidence or proof. Child abuse is not an issue to deal with through church leadership. Child abuse requires a formal investigation and should not be handled informally.

Please bear in mind, many individuals who serve the church in a variety of roles (Pastor, Elder, Children's Ministry Worker) are Mandatory Reporters and can be subject to criminal prosecution for failing to contact The Department of Children and Family Services at 800 540 4000 (DCFS).

National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-Child or 1-800 422-4453

Los Angeles County Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-540-4000

PC(USA) Hotline: (866) 607-7233; <https://rebrand.ly/safechurch>