

Pastoral Search Committee

Confidentiality Policy

PURPOSE.

This policy establishes guidelines ensuring the confidentiality of information related to the Pastoral Search Committee, its processes, and potential candidates.

The Search Committee may receive sensitive information regarding candidates, their ministry, and their current appointments, but also regarding North Shore Fellowship (“NSF”) pastors, staff, and members, current and former. In addition, candidates currently serving in ministry roles may have legitimate interests in keeping their candidacy or the Committee’s mere interest private.

Disclosure of such information may harm candidates, pastors, staff, or members, and it may harm their families, their ministries, or churches. Disclosure may also expose NSF to risk of legal, reputational, or other harms.

This policy serves to protect NSF by ensuring such information remains strictly within the bounds of the Pastoral Search Committee, preserving the integrity of the process, and safeguarding the trust of all parties involved.

SCOPE.

This policy applies to all individuals involved in the Committee’s processes, including Committee members, volunteers, any external consultants, and anyone else receiving confidential information related to the Committee’s work. References in this Confidentiality Policy to the “Committee” or “Committee members” include all such people.

The Committee may update this Policy from time to time as necessary to achieve the Committee’s purposes and the purpose of this Policy.

1. General Principles

1.1. Confidential Information. “Confidential Information” shall mean information that is not publicly available and that is disclosed to, accessed by, or created by the Committee in connection with the pastoral search process. Confidential Information includes (i) applicant- or candidate-specific information, such as identities, application materials, resumes, references, interview content, and evaluations; (ii) Committee deliberations and internal communications, including discussions, emails, messages, and materials exchanged among Committee members; (iii) Committee documents, including meeting agendas, notes, and

minutes; and (iv) any information the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to harm candidates, related to the pastoral search, candidate identities, candidate evaluations, and any other information the disclosure of which may harm applicants or candidates, NSF, or related parties.

1.2. Committee Responsibilities Regarding Confidential Information. The Committee affirms the following commitments regarding the handling of Confidential Information:

- We will use Confidential Information solely for the purpose of conducting the pastoral search. We will not use candidate-related or Committee-generated information for any purpose outside the search process.
- We will not disclose candidate identities, candidate materials, or the substance of Committee deliberations to the congregation, to friends, to other NSF members, or to any other individuals not authorized under this Policy.
- We will protect Confidential Information from inadvertent or unauthorized disclosure. This includes secure storage of documents, use of Committee-approved communication channels, and conducting conversations in settings where they cannot be overheard.
- We will continue to treat all Confidential Information as confidential after the Committee's work is complete, and we will permanently destroy or delete all candidate materials at the conclusion of the process.

1.3. Congregational Reporting. Notwithstanding Section. 1.1, the Committee may disclose limited, non-identifying information to the congregation for the purpose of providing periodic updates on the progress of the pastoral search. Such disclosures shall be restricted to general status reports (such as stages completed, anticipated timelines, and other process-related information) and shall not include any information that could reasonably be expected to identify a candidate or reveal Committee deliberations, evaluations, or internal communications. All updates shall be prepared in a manner that preserves the confidentiality of candidates, protects the integrity of the search process, and avoids any disclosure that could harm candidates, NSF, or related parties.

1.4. Limited Disclosure to Spouses. Committee members may, in their discretion, share limited Confidential Information with their spouses solely for the purpose of seeking personal support, prayer, or counsel. Any spouse receiving such information must first read this Confidentiality Policy and agree to honor its terms in full. Committee members remain responsible for ensuring that their spouses

maintain strict confidentiality and that no Confidential Information is further disclosed, whether directly or indirectly. Nothing in this section permits disclosure of candidate identities, candidate materials, or Committee deliberations beyond what is reasonably necessary for the purposes described above.

1.5. Candidate Privacy. The Committee will provide candidates with a copy of this policy early in its communication with any candidate, assuring candidates that the Committee will handle their information with appropriate care.

1.6. Completion of Work. The Committee will continue to treat Confidential Information as such after completing its work.

1.7. Interaction with NSF Members. Nothing in this Policy precludes Committee members from engaging in normal, healthy conversation with fellow congregants and members of NSF about the pastoral search. Committee members may speak generally about their experience serving on the Committee and about the overall progress of the search, provided they do not disclose candidate identities, candidate materials, or Committee deliberations. In all such conversations, Committee members will seek to “outdo one another in showing honor” (Romans 12:10) and to speak “only such as is good for building up” (Ephesians 4:29), so as to (i) guard the dignity of candidates; (ii) respect the work of the Committee and its members; and (iii) maintain “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3) within the body at NSF.

2. Handling Confidential Information.

2.1. Access. Candidate information is restricted to the Committee and those individuals directly involved in the hiring process to whom the Committee must disclose such information in order to complete its purpose.

2.2. Retention and Storage. The Committee will store securely all documents and information, using locked storage for physical materials and storing digital files in a secure, access-restricted platform available only to the Committee. Upon conclusion of the process, the Committee will permanently destroy or delete all candidate materials, analog and digital.

2.3. Use. Committee members shall use no candidate information for any purpose outside the Committee.

3. Communication. Committee members will communicate regarding Committee matters, including candidate information, only through secure, committee-approved channels.

3.1. Generally. Committee members will conduct communication in a way to avoid inadvertent disclosure to non-members, including family, friends, and co-workers.

3.2. Email. Once NSF establishes “@nsfellowship.com” email addresses, Committee members will use only that email address to communicate about Committee matters, avoiding BCCs and unnecessary CCs.

3.3. Phone & Video Calls. Committee members will conduct phone and video calls in such a manner as to minimize the risk that non-members will over hear either side of a conversation.

3.4. Electronic Messages. Committee members will manage text messages, instant messages, Slack channels, Teams, or any other method of instant messaging approved by the Committee so as to avoid inadvertent disclosure of Confidential Information to non-members.

3.5. Social Media. Committee members will make no social media posts regarding the Committee’s work, processes, or candidates without the specific authorization of the Committee.

4. Breach of Confidentiality

4.1. Reporting. Committee members immediately will report to the Committee Chairman any known or suspected breach of confidentiality.

4.2. Consequences. The Committee may take such action as it deems necessary to address violations of this Policy including removal from the Committee or exclusion from the hiring process. Any such action shall be subject to the review and approval of the Session.

5. Acknowledgment and Agreement. All Committee members and others with access to Confidential Information must agree to adhere to this Policy and establish evidence of such agreement by written signature in the form attached to this Policy as Exhibit “A” – Agreement to this Policy, or similar form prior to receiving any Confidential Information.

The undersigned acknowledge having read and understood this Confidentiality Policy and agree to abide by its terms.

Approved by the Pastoral Search Committee:

Whitney Smith, Chairman

Date

Sarah Beth Matthews

Date

Peter Newman Date

Kate Royal Date

Natalie Northcutt Date

Ryan Sandidge Date

Lindy Oakes Date

Aaron Sehon Date

Benjamin Pitts Date

Exhibit “A” - Agreement

I have read and understood the Confidentiality Policy of the Pastoral Search Committee, as adopted by that Committee on _____ (the “Policy”), and as a condition of disclosure to me of information that is or may be Confidential Information under the Policy, I agree to adhere to the terms of the Policy.

Signature

Print Name

Date