

## **Terms defined:**

**Confidentiality:** an ethical principle, that refers to the act of not making available or disclosing data or information to individuals not authorized, or to individuals to which the information does not pertain or affect them directly in the process.

**Confidence:** faith or belief that one will act in a right, proper, or effective way. A relation of trust and reliance on another's discretion

**Privacy:** a fundamental right, the right to have some control over how information is collected and used that enables boundaries

In the course of ministry, you may have access to verbal and written information that is considered sensitive or confidential. As well as information that could have a negative impact on individual lives, TVC or its board. As good stewards, we must guard the information under our care to preserve the trust involved in relationships. Because improper disclosure of this information may cause harm, it is extremely important that confidential information be kept in confidence.

Examples of sensitive and confidential matters include but are not limited to:

- Information relayed to you by your direct/executive team where you have been instructed it is not to be shared.
- Information shared at all staff meetings where you have been instructed not to share.
- Private discussions with Executive Leaders, staff, or volunteers that would be considered detrimental to the individuals, TVC church staff, or church family members.

We have set out to identify the behaviors that should define our staff values and culture. The privacy of those we serve and work with must be held in the utmost confidence as a way to:

- Build and maintain trust amongst each other as staff and mentors.
- Keep confidential, materials or information that may be deemed sensitive in nature.
- Nurture a healthy, trustworthy culture as TVC staff.
- Diminish any potential to cause harm.

It is imperative in maintaining a healthy staff culture that staff and mentors keep confidential information in confidence.

As staff/mentor, you will be expected to maintain the following practical rules:

- Whatever is told in confidence, should not be repeated. Make sure that you clarify if the information is confidential or can be shared at the end of the meeting.

*A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaims folly.  
(Proverbs 10:23)*

- Whenever discussions involve people, do not gossip. Leave it up to others to share the information, unless it is prudent that someone knows for their ministry.

*Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.  
(Ephesians 4:29 ESV)*

- When there are disagreements, do not slander. We are not always going to agree over everything, that is okay! However, slandering is one way to diminish yourself as a leader.
- Information regarding staff or church business should not be discussed with volunteers or anyone outside of the staff/mentor circle.
- There may be times that you come across confidential information that should not have been shared. If you come across confidential information that should not have been disclosed to you, please do the following:
  - If it is digital, let the sender know right away and delete the correspondence.
  - If it is physical in the form a paper copy, please bring the paper to the proper person and forget the information.
  - Please do not physically or digitally store confidential information that is shared with you by mistake.

### **Consequences for not adhering to confidentiality guidelines stated in this document.**

- First indiscretion for sharing information that is considered prudent, confidential or for gossiping will be a verbal warning from staff members direct.
- Second indiscretion will result in a meeting with lead team.

- Third indiscretion will result in a meeting with the Lead Pastor, and it will be at his discretion what actions will be taken.

As in any family, there will be times of disagreement and we want to encourage each other to work through those times in a positive, productive manner. Below are some guidelines to help navigate those conversations.

**Clear Conversation Expectations:** *“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also for them, for this is the Law and Prophet.” (Matthew 7:12 ESV)*

- Communicate face-to-face for matters that could be considered sensitive in nature or could easily be misunderstood through text or email. Nonverbal gestures like facial expressions are important to understand the context of someone’s dialogue.
- Take ownership of your words.
- Watch your emotions. If time is needed to settle emotions, make sure to take it. Being calm and composed can help you communicate more effectively.
- Put yourself in the others perspective.
- Keep it simple and be direct.
- Have the hard conversations, so that we can grow together.
- Hold each other accountable as staff. Gossip spreads quickly and easily. It takes all of us to effectively implement this into our culture.

#### Exceptions to Confidentiality

- Illegal or damaging unethical behavior
- The 3 Hurts: The individual is hurting themselves, the individual is being hurt by someone else, the individual is hurting someone else.

TVC has the highest regard for the integrity of each staff and church member. Staff/Mentors who improperly use or disclose confidential information may have accountability actions taken that would be at the discretion of the individuals direct or the Executive Team Leaders. We won’t always get it right; but agreeing to these commitments allows for us all to move together in a healthy, trusting and team-oriented direction.