

SEXUAL ABUSE, SEXUAL MISCONDUCT & SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Glossary of Terms & Definitions

Office of the General Counsel

August 1, 2026



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The Church of God in Christ, Inc. (COGIC) is a Christian organization in the Holiness-Pentecostal tradition. It is the largest Pentecostal denomination in the United States. The membership is predominantly African-American with more than six million members. The Church has congregations in 63 countries around the world.

This information is provided as part of the Church's compliance curriculum and to communicate that it is never permissible or acceptable for a church member, officer, employee, or volunteer to engage in sexual misconduct

DEFINITIONS

Sexual abuse is any form of sexual contact or conduct involving minors, vulnerable adults or non-consenting adults. Sexual abuse may include direct sexual contact as well as other exploitive behaviors including but not limited to:

- Inappropriate verbal stimulation;
- Taking or showing sexually explicit photographs of or to a minor or vulnerable adult; or
- Exposing a minor or vulnerable adult to pornography or other sexual activity.

Sexual misconduct is sexual contact or conduct with an adult who may otherwise be consenting; however, the following conditions are in place:

- The perpetrator is acting on behalf of or representing a church, school, institution or agency of the Denomination; and
- There is a ministerial relationship of trust; therefore
- A disparity of power is presumed.

Sexual harassment, is unwelcome advances, request for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such a conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to sexual comments, innuendoes, displays or jokes; unwelcome invitations to sexual activity; unwelcome touches, pinches or hugs; or pressure to engage in sexual activity as a condition of employment or promotion.

Ministerial Boundaries: Sexual contact or sexualized behavior within the ministerial relationship, between otherwise consenting adults, is a violation of ministerial boundaries. There is a difference in power between a person in a ministerial role and a member or his or her faith community or a counselee. Because of this difference in power, meaningful consent cannot be given to the sexual relationship.

Minors are individuals under the age of 18.

Vulnerable adults include:

- Any person over 60 unable to care for him or herself;
- Certain individuals with developmental disabilities;
- Anyone over the age of 18 who has a legal guardian;
- Individuals receiving in home care through a licensed health, hospice or home health care agency or from an aide hired on their own;
- Certain individuals receiving pastoral care services; or
- Individuals incarcerated in a correctional facility.