

Code of Conduct

Introduction

Westborough Unitarian Church (Scarborough)* is committed to creating an inclusive and compassionate community rooted in the principles of Unitarianism. Our mission is to nurture spiritual growth, act for justice, and build community through respect, kindness, and love.

** While the congregation's official name is Westborough Unitarian Church (Scarborough), we will refer to ourselves throughout this document by our more commonly used name: "Scarborough Unitarian Church".*

This Code of Conduct sets forth guidelines for behaviour that reflect our values and ensure that all who enter our church feel welcome, respected, and safe. All members, friends, visitors, staff/volunteers, and leaders are expected to abide by this Code of Conduct in all interactions connected with our church.

Participation in the life of Scarborough Unitarian Church constitutes acceptance of and agreement to abide by this Code of Conduct. The Code is available on our website and can also be made available upon request.

Our covenant

We affirm and promote:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
 2. Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.
 3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.
 4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
 5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.
 6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.
 7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.
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Expectations of behaviour

- **Respect and kindness**
 - Treat all individuals with respect, kindness, and dignity.
 - Listen actively and without judgment during conversations.
 - Refrain from derogatory, discriminatory, or harassing language or behaviour.
 - Honour diverse perspectives and opinions, even in disagreement.
- **Safety and wellbeing**
 - Create a safe space for all, ensuring that physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being is prioritised.
 - Report any concerns about safety or inappropriate behaviour to church leadership immediately.
 - Always seek consent before initiating physical contact. Any physical interaction should be **in a public space, appropriate, welcome, age-appropriate, must never exploit a position of trust, authority, or vulnerability.**
 - Refrain from actions or behaviours that may endanger others' physical and/or psychological safety.

Scarborough Unitarian Church is committed to safeguarding children, young people, and adults at risk. All members, volunteers, and leaders are expected to act in accordance with the church's Safeguarding Policy, available on our website or upon request.

No individual should be penalised, excluded, intimidated, or treated unfairly for raising concerns in good faith regarding safety, safeguarding, discrimination, wellbeing, or breaches of this Code of Conduct.

- **Substance use and wellbeing**
 - Scarborough Unitarian Church seeks to provide a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for all.
 - Individuals must not attend church activities under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or other substances in a manner that compromises the safety, wellbeing, dignity, or comfort of others.
 - The misuse or distribution of illegal substances on church premises or during church activities will not be tolerated.

- Smoking and vaping should only take place in outdoor areas and with consideration for the comfort and wellbeing of others.
- Alcohol may, on occasion, be available during church services, events or social gatherings. Where this is the case, all attendees are expected to drink responsibly and behave respectfully toward others.
- Church leadership may ask an individual to leave or refrain from participating in an activity if their behaviour is believed to pose a risk to themselves or others.
- We recognise that addiction and substance dependency are health and wellbeing issues, and we encourage compassionate, non-judgemental support wherever appropriate.
- **Inclusivity and acceptance**
 - Welcome people of all races, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, and backgrounds.
 - Ensure that all are included in church activities, services, and discussions.
 - Avoid exclusionary behaviour, cliques, or favouritism.
- **Integrity and responsibility**
 - Be honest and transparent in all dealings with others.
 - Take responsibility for your words and actions.
 - Seek to resolve conflicts peacefully and with understanding.
 - Be punctual, reliable, and accountable in fulfilling church responsibilities and commitments.
- **Confidentiality**
 - Respect the privacy of others and maintain confidentiality in personal matters.
 - Do not share sensitive information with external parties without permission, unless there is a legal or ethical obligation to do so.
 - Avoid gossip or harmful speculation about others in the community.
- **Media, social media, and digital messaging platforms**
 - Only authorised spokespeople may interact with online communities as an official representative of Scarborough Unitarian Church; this includes sharing content from official social media channels/profiles/pages, and responding to

comments on content shared from official social media channels/profiles/pages.

- Only authorised spokespeople may interact with members of the media as an official representative of Scarborough Unitarian Church. If you are contacted by a journalist or a member of a media outlet, you must not provide comment and direct them immediately to the Lay Person In Charge.
 - Do not seek to represent your own views on social media as being those of Scarborough Unitarian Church.
 - If negative comments, complaints, or criticism relating to Scarborough Unitarian Church arise online, these should be referred to church leadership or an authorised spokesperson rather than responded to independently.
 - Do not engage in harassing or bullying behaviour through digital message services such as Messenger, WhatsApp, or any other platform.
 - Official church communication channels should be used for matters relating to church activities, administration, or governance.
- **Environmental stewardship**
 - Care for our shared spaces and the environment.
 - Reduce waste, recycle, and use resources responsibly.
 - Support efforts to promote sustainability within the church and the broader community.

Consequences of misconduct

Scarborough Unitarian Church is committed to addressing violations of this Code of Conduct promptly and fairly. The following steps will be taken if someone violates the code:

- **Conversation:** A private conversation with church leadership to address the behaviour.
- **Mediation:** If needed, mediation may be facilitated by a neutral party to resolve conflicts.
- **Action:** Repeated or serious misconduct may result in limitations on participation in church activities or, in cases where the physical and/or psychological wellbeing of congregants and members is at risk, withdrawal of permission to attend church services, events and premises.

Church leadership reserves the right to follow any or all of these steps, depending on the nature and seriousness of the breach.

All actions taken will be in line with the church's mission of promoting justice, equity, and compassion.

Conclusion

By adhering to this Code of Conduct, we foster a loving and supportive community that reflects our shared values. Let us commit to building and sustaining a church where everyone feels valued, respected, and safe.

Adopted by Westborough Unitarian Church Scarborough on Sunday 16 March 2025.

Revision history

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed periodically by church leadership and/or the congregation to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and reflective of the values of Scarborough Unitarian Church.

Minor revisions (e.g. wording clarifications, formatting updates, or administrative changes) may be approved by church leadership or committee without formal re-adoption by the congregation. Significant revisions affecting the substance, intent, or application of this Code of Conduct will require formal review and adoption.

Version numbers ending in ".0" indicate major revisions requiring formal review and adoption. Version numbers ending in ".1", ".2", etc. indicate minor administrative, clarificatory, or non-substantive updates.

Version	Date adopted/revised	Summary of changes
1.0	16 March 2025	Initial adoption of Code of Conduct
1.1	17 May 2026	Added safeguarding reference, substance use section, and updated social media wording