



# Oaks Ministry Collaborative Confidentiality Policy

*Updated July 2026*

## Purpose

People who participate in the ministry of the church often share deeply personal experiences, struggles, and stories. They do so with the expectation that their privacy will be respected and that what they share will be treated with dignity, wisdom, and care.

Maintaining confidentiality is one of the primary ways we demonstrate Christlike love, cultivate trust, and create an environment where healing, discipleship, and restoration can occur.

This policy outlines the confidentiality expectations for all staff members, volunteers, ministry leaders, interns, and partners serving within this ministry. Every individual serving in the ministry is expected to understand and follow these standards.

## What Information Is Confidential?

Confidential information includes any information that is not intended for public disclosure and is learned through ministry involvement.

This may include:

### Personal Information

Personal information includes any information shared by an individual receiving ministry care that could reasonably identify them, including:

- Their name or identity
- The fact that they are receiving ministry support
- Personal stories or experiences
- Health, family, relational, financial, or spiritual information
- Prayer requests shared in confidence
- Written notes or ministry records

Information is no longer considered confidential if:

- The individual has given permission for it to be shared.
- The information has become publicly known through no action of the ministry or its volunteers.
- Disclosure is otherwise appropriate under this policy.

## Ministry Information

Those serving within the ministry may also have access to information intended only for internal ministry use, including:

- Ministry processes and procedures
- Internal communications
- Training materials
- Volunteer discussions
- Ministry records
- Strategic plans
- Other information designated as confidential by ministry leadership

This information should not be shared outside the ministry without permission.

## Confidentiality Expectations

Those serving in this ministry are expected to:

- Protect the privacy of every individual receiving ministry care.
- Share confidential information only with those who have an appropriate ministry responsibility or legitimate need to know.
- Avoid discussing confidential matters in public places or in ways that could allow others to overhear.
- Use discretion when communicating electronically or storing ministry information.
- Take reasonable precautions to protect written, electronic, and verbal confidential information.

Whenever there is uncertainty about whether information should be shared, volunteers should seek guidance from ministry leadership before disclosing it.

## Appropriate Ministry Communication

Confidentiality does not mean complete secrecy.

There are times when sharing information with appropriate ministry leaders or supervisors is necessary to provide wise care, ensure accountability, seek consultation, or protect the wellbeing of those involved.

When confidential information is discussed internally, it should always be limited to those who have a legitimate ministry purpose for receiving the information and should only include the information necessary for that purpose.

## Situations Requiring Disclosure

Although confidentiality is a foundational value of this ministry, there are circumstances in which information should or must be disclosed.

These may include situations involving:

- Suspected abuse or neglect of a child, elder, or vulnerable adult
- Threats of serious harm to oneself or another person
- Situations involving criminal activity
- Legal requirements or court orders
- Other circumstances required by applicable law

Whenever possible, ministry leadership should be consulted before confidential information is disclosed in these situations.

## Ministry Records and Materials

Any notes, records, documents, recordings, or electronic files created as part of ministry belong to the ministry unless otherwise stated by policy.

When an individual concludes their ministry role, they are expected to return or securely destroy ministry records according to the ministry's established procedures.

Personal copies of confidential ministry records should not be retained.

## Questions About Confidentiality

Questions about confidentiality should always be brought to ministry leadership before information is shared.

When in doubt, it is better to ask than to risk violating another person's privacy.

## Failure to Follow This Policy

Confidentiality is essential to maintaining trust within the ministry.

Failure to uphold this policy may result in additional training, modification of ministry responsibilities, suspension from serving, or removal from ministry involvement, depending on the nature and severity of the concern.

## Our Biblical Commitment

As followers of Christ, we desire to honor one another by protecting the stories and struggles entrusted to us.

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up...” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Confidentiality is an expression of love, humility, wisdom, and faithful stewardship. We recognize that every person’s story ultimately belongs to God, and we seek to handle those stories with the same care and compassion that Christ has shown us.

When questions or disagreements arise regarding the application of this policy, we encourage individuals to pursue biblical reconciliation in accordance with Matthew 18:15–20 and 1 Corinthians 6:1–8, following the ministry’s established process for resolving concerns whenever appropriate.

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## Acknowledgement

I have read and understand this Confidentiality Policy.

I understand the importance of protecting the privacy of those receiving ministry care and agree to uphold these confidentiality expectations while serving in this ministry.

**Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Church:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_