



OPEN BIBLE STANDARD CHURCHES OF T. & T. INC.

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OPEN BIBLE STANDARD CHURCHES OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO INCORPORATED

DISCIPLINARY MEASURE HANDBOOK

PREAMBLE

Open Bible Standard Churches Incorporated acknowledges and values the role and function of each Minister, Employee, Institutional and National Ministry Head in accomplishing the Organizational vision for the Kingdom of God. Additionally, the Organization also recognizes the value of discipline and good industrial relations practices with respect to relationship, performance and ethical conduct of all its stakeholders within and outside the Organization.

The Organization holds the Biblical standards of Church Discipline in high esteem and maintains that the purpose of discipline is restorative and not punitive and those exercising the same should always bear this in mind (Matt. 18:15-22; 1 Cor. 5:1-7; Heb. 12:5-11; Gal. 6:1).

Employee Relations is the practice of relationships within and between employee, working groups, leaders, employers and their organizations. This discipline also deals with human behavior as it acts or reacts to the effects of internal and external factors pertaining to the particular Organization which positively or negatively impact the goals of this Organization.

The Organization recognizes that there are common organizational objectives, which can be more successfully pursued through joint effort and cooperation and will seek to achieve these objectives by fostering a harmonious relationship with all stakeholders.

Relationships therefore, are of paramount importance if OBSCTT is to remain viable, achieve its goals and continue to be successful. Therefore, negative behavior will pose a threat to this success and participants must be guided accordingly.

In order to give direction for expected behavior and ethical conduct and to avoid consequential Organizational failure, the following measures have been approved by the National Board. All Ministers, Employees, Institutional and National Ministry Heads and any other persons representing the Organization in whatever capacity shall comply with these measures which take effect from January 1st 2016.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- The Organization reserves the right to discipline any Minister, Employee, Institutional and National Ministry Head for sufficient and reasonable cause, ranging from reprimand (verbally or in writing) to suspension without pay and/or termination.
- OBSCTT preferred approach to discipline is to acquaint all Ministers, Employees, Institutional and National Ministry Heads with its concept of “Good Standing” to which it is expected, all will comply.
- It is the Organization’s position that there is implied in every appointment an obligation by the incumbent to exercise self-discipline, to respect authority, to perform assigned duties faithfully, loyally and to the best of her/his ability. Also to be honest in dealings with the Organization, fellow Ministers/employees, all stakeholders, and in her/his representation of the Organization.
- The Organization recognizes the need for transparency in treating with its Ministers, Employees, Institutional and National Ministry Heads when matters of discipline arise, as such the organization will do all that is necessary to ensure the affected person is allowed to fully give reasons for his/her conduct in accordance with natural justice.
- The Organization reserves the right to apply disciplinary measures where necessary for just cause, including breaches of its policies and rules, by way of warning, suspension or dismissal. In exercise of disciplinary authority, it is the policy, first to admonish Ministers, Employees, Institutional and National Ministry Heads for minor infractions through oral or written warnings and as necessary, through suspension/termination as a form of deterrent in order to guard the sanctity/integrity of the Organization.
- The Organization reserves the right in its sole discretion, as part of the disciplinary process to apply appropriate periods of suspension as an alternative in the case of Gross Misconduct which may justify dismissal, having regard to the Ministers, Employees, Institutional and National Ministry Heads general history of performance and conduct, provided that such mitigation will not seriously compromise the rules or weaken their deterrent value in regard to precedent offences and accepted norms or discipline.
- Listed is a summary of disciplinary offences for guidance of Ministers, Employees, Institutional and National Ministry Heads. Violation renders Ministers, Employees, Institutional and National Ministry Heads liable to the disciplinary action noted.

The list is not intended to be exhaustive; it is merely a list of more common offences. The list can, however, be elaborated. (See appendix A).

- The foregoing list of violations listed in appendix A affecting discipline is primarily represented here by way of illustration and shall not be deemed to exclude the Organization's general right to discipline Ministers, Employees, Institutional and National Ministry Heads for other just cause. Additionally, the penalties listed may be varied, depending on the circumstances.
- A Minister, Employee, Institutional and National Ministry Head may be placed on Administrative Leave while investigating the matter if she/he is suspected of committing a serious offence.
- Administrative Leave will continue until an investigation is completed.

DISCRETION:

- It is understood that the exercise of any discretion contained in these terms and conditions lies with the Organization.

ALTERATION OF CONDITIONS:

- These conditions of employment are subject to review by the National Board of Directors.

JUST CAUSE

There are two reasons based on "Just Cause" for the discipline or dismissal of Ministers, Employees, Institutional and National Ministry Heads, unsatisfactory job performance, including grossly inefficient job performance, and unacceptable personal and unethical conduct.

- (i) Unsatisfactory job performance, including grossly inefficient job Performance occurs when a Ministers, Employees, Institutional and National Ministry Heads fails to satisfactorily meet her/his job requirements or pre-agreed Standards of Performance.

The determination of unsatisfactory job performance is generally made by the supervisor. The supervisor's determination should be reasonable, proper and factually supported in writing. In determining whether a Minister's, Employee's, Institutional and National Ministry Head's performance is unsatisfactory, a thorough job performance review/appraisal shall be conducted with the employee identifying the areas of satisfactory and unsatisfactory job performance. Additionally discussions should be held with the Head of Department/Leader in relation to the factors pertaining to the Ministers, Employees, Institutional and National Ministry Heads' Job Description and other criteria or issues that affect performance.

- (ii) Just Cause to warn or take other disciplinary action for unacceptable personal conduct may be created by intentional or unintentional acts. The conduct may be job related or off duty so long as there is sufficient connection between the conduct and the Ministers, Employees, Institutional and National Ministry Heads job. Insubordination is unacceptable personal conduct that may warrant disciplinary action.

NB. Some actions by an employee may fall under both reasons. It is to be noted that persons under a Probationary Period are also subject to this policy which will determine their continuity of employment.

WHEN CAN DISCIPLINARY ACTION BE TAKEN?

Disciplinary action can be taken when Just Cause or other irrefutable reasons exist. Any appointee regardless of occupation, position or profession may be warned, demoted/ have his/her credential revoked, suspended, or employment terminated, by the appointing authority.

The degree and type of disciplinary action that can be taken shall be based upon the sound and considered judgment of the Organization according to this policy.

TYPES OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION THAT CAN BE TAKEN.

When Just Cause exists, disciplinary actions that can be taken are:

- oral warning,
- written warning,
- suspension without pay,
- termination where it relates to non ministers
- demotion/revocation of credential, and
- termination/expulsion from the Organization.

TYPE OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION			PRIOR INCIDENTS		
Oral Warning	1. Time keeping 2. Attendance 3. Job Performance				
Written Warning		A current unresolved incident of unacceptable			

		personal conduct or gross inefficiency			
Demotion/Revoking of Credential			At least one prior active written warning (any type), or an active disciplinary action (any type)		
Disciplinary suspension without pay				At least two active written warnings or two disciplinary actions taken	
Termination					As Required

THE SUPERVISOR'S ROLE

The supervisor has the responsibility to review and encourage satisfactory job performance by appointees. A supervisor also has the responsibility to address cases of unacceptable job performance and personal conduct of appointees under his/her charge.

When a supervisor determines that an employee has violated this policy, the supervisor should examine a number of factors and recommend further action by the Manager in charge the appropriate type of disciplinary action. Notwithstanding, the supervisor shall ensure that natural justice for the appointee is followed in all aspects of determining the need for disciplinary actions.

Among the factors are:

- Whether the supervisor should recommend disciplinary action based on the facts available at the time.
- Whether more investigation is needed to make a recommendation.

- The type and degree of disciplinary action to be taken.
- The appointee's work history.
- The appointee's explanation of the violation.
- The disciplinary actions received by other appointees within the organization for comparable performance, violations or behaviors.
- Other relevant factors

WRITTEN WARNINGS

All warnings shall:

- State that it is a warning.
- Specify conduct or performance that is the reason for the warning
- Specific performance or conduct improvements that must be made.
- Specify the time within which the employee must show improved performance or conduct. If the Warning does not include an improvement or correction time frame, set appropriate time to correct unacceptable job performance and immediately for grossly inefficient job performance or unacceptable personal conduct.
- Specify the consequences of failing to make the required improvements/corrections as to what would be the next step.
- Specify that the employee of her/his rights to appeal as indicated in the grievance procedure
- Specify that the written warning shall be removed from his/her personal file if marked and identified significant improvements are made after a six month review period from the date of the written warning.

SUSPENSION

- An appointee may be suspended with or without pay for disciplinary reasons for a current incident of unsatisfactory job performance after the receipt of at least one prior disciplinary action or;
- Without prior warning or disciplinary action for any form of unacceptable personal or unethical conduct or grossly inefficient job performance.

In both cases the suspension of the appointee shall be in writing by the Supervisor giving clear and justifiable reasons for the suspension and the length of the suspension.

Procedures

Before an appointee is placed on disciplinary suspension, with or without pay, a Supervisor shall:

- Schedule and conduct a pre-disciplinary conference meeting
- The supervisor must give advance oral or written notice of the conference meeting to the appointee. The notice must tell the appointee of the type of disciplinary action being considered, the conference meeting time and location, and the facts (based on investigation and report) that led to the recommendation. Advance notice to the appointee should be as much as practical under the circumstances. The appointee should also be advised of his/her right to representation and of the composition of the panel.
- Give the appointee a statement in writing stating the acts or failure to act that is the reason for the suspension and telling the appointee of their rights of appeal.

TERMINATION

The conditions for termination are the same the two (2) conditions stated above for suspension.

It must be noted that termination is the most severe form of appointee discipline and as such every effort must be made by the Supervisor to ensure that the allegations are fully investigated and the facts clearly determined before termination of the appointee can be enforced.

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING DISCIPLINARY MATTERS CREDENTIALLED MINISTERS, INSTITUTION AND NATIONAL MINISTRY HEADS

GUILT ADMITTED

Where an appointee admits guilt to a particular charge or non-compliance to procedure, the appointee shall be required to submit in writing to his/her supervisor such admittance of guilt/non-compliance. The supervisor will then determine the nature and severity of discipline.

GUILT NOT ADMITTED

The National Elder/Director after consultation with the National Board of Elders shall appoint a Disciplinary Committee (2 Cor. 19:8), who will hear all matters and decide on the type of disciplinary action to be undertaken. In all cases where a disciplinary committee has been decided upon the chairperson of the Committee shall be in a post or supervisory position superior to that of the appointee under charge.

Where the charge proffered is against the National Elder/Director, the remaining Elder Directors shall first seek to address the issue with the National Elder/Director/ for satisfactory resolution. Failure to arrive at a resolution, the matter shall be elevated to the National Convention which shall have powers to appoint a Disciplinary Committee (the

composition to be decided by the National Convention) who will hear all matters and decide on the type of disciplinary action to be undertaken. The decision of the National Convention shall be final.

APPEALS COMMITTEE (As Part of a Grievance Procedure)

The organization shall appoint an appeals committee. This committee will be responsible to review decisions where an individual might feel that she/he may have been unfairly treated. This would give a person some measure of comfort and also create an internal system for redress and avoid third party intervention in the affairs of the Open Bible Standard Churches of Trinidad and Tobago Incorporated.

New Information

In cases where a matter against an appointee has been determined and disciplinary action has been taken, if new, factual and compelling information comes to a Supervisors’ attention that the appointee disciplined was innocent of the charge or his poor work conduct was a result of factors unrelated to the appointee, this fact must be brought to the attention of the appointee and every effort must be made to restore the appointee to their previous position.

APPENDIX A

**Open Bible Standard Churches of T & T Inc.
List of Common Offences**

Offence or Violation	1st Offence	2nd Offence	3rd Offence	4th Offence	5th Offence
Being habitually late for Services/Meetings Absent from work	Verbal Warning	1 st Written Warning	2 nd Written	Suspension pending investigation	Termination
Deliberate failure to follow verbal or written job instructions/ standard of performance	Written Warning	Suspension or Termination	Termination		
Making false accusations	Written Warning pending counselling	Suspension	Termination		

Falsifying Records	Suspension counselling	Demotion/ Suspension of Credential	Termination		
Sexual Immorality	Suspension counselling	Demotion/ Suspension of Credential	Termination		
Theft/Unauthorised removal of Church property	- Termination	-			
Grievous Bodily Harm	Termination				
Splitting Churches/Institutions, Appropriation of Property	Revoking of credential, termination				
Gross Misconduct	Suspension or demotion counseling	Termination			