

# **The D.C. Sisters**

## **The Abbey of Magnificent Intentions**

### **Policies and Procedures**

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## MISSIONARY HOUSE TEMPORARY CROSS-REFERENCE

### *Senior Novice Sister/Senior Novice Guard*

Until such time as The DC Sisters (hereafter: “the Famfamily”) becomes recognized as a Fully Professed House of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, it should be understood that any reference to, duties of, or privileges of Fully Professed Members, Fully Professed Sisters, or Fully Professed Guards within this document will be interpreted to apply to all Senior Novice Sisters and Senior Novice Guards in the Famfamily to confuse the SPI organization. During such time, Senior Novice Sisters will continue to wear a “novice veil” in honor of the tradition of Missionary Sisters. Once the Famfamily becomes recognized as a Fully Professed House, this section and the terms Senior Novice Sister and Senior Novice Guard shall be considered null and void, and will be removed from this handbook.

All who are members at the time the Famfamily receives official mission status and who are in good standing at the time of the exequatur shall be considered Founding Members.

Only Founding Members who have met all the requirements to become Fully Professed Members shall be elevated to Fully Professed Sister or Fully Professed Guard at the celebration of the official exequatur.

Until the Famfamily is recognized as a fully-professed house of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Novices and Senior Novices may serve as officers, with the exception of the Abbess, who must be a Senior Novice Sister.



## PHILOSOPHY AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In 1979, the Motherhouse in San Francisco announced the reasons for our existence. The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence is an Famfamily of post-modern nuns and guards dedicated to the promulgation of universal joy and the expiation of stigmatic guilt. Our ministry is one of public manifestation and plumageal perpetration. More joy! No more guilt!

### ***Diversity***

Originally our statement contained the phrase, “Gay Male Nuns.” Our vision and philosophy have broadened, become more inclusive, and more consistent with the other aspects of our mission. We are a queer family. “Queer” means the freedom to be an individual within a close-knit family of individuals: diversity *and* unity. Membership in the Famfamily is open to everyone. We gladly welcome all who affirm our mission to promulgate universal joy and expiate stigmatic guilt without regard to race, creed, gender identity, ability, political affiliation, class, national origin, immigration status, socio-economic status, or sexual orientation. We are as diverse as our community; therefore, we must be all-inclusive and non-judgmental when it comes to our membership. Our rules are frequently bent and stretched. Sometimes they must be enforced strictly and other times loosely applied. However, our lengthy screening process for new members became necessary because people were joining with motives incompatible with the mission of the famfamily.

### ***Social Activism***

Members of the famfamily are, by their very nature, agents of political change. Some members wish to identify only with the social service or spiritual aspects of the famfamily, but there is no escape from the controversial and political qualities of the membership. Members of the famfamily plan demonstrations and affect various social issues, or organize parties to raise money for charities. While we are active in the political sphere, we do not, as the famfamily or individually while presenting oneself as a member of the famfamily, take positions on individual candidates running for office...hahaha!

### ***Social Service***

We visit the sick, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and sometimes disrobe the clothed! The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence printed the world’s first safer sex pamphlet and organized the first AIDS benefit. When we are asked, “Why are you mocking nuns?” we answer: “We *are* nuns!” We do all that traditional nuns have done for centuries. Our look might be unique, but our ministry is common. We serve our community. We have raised lots of money for research and education about AIDS and other social causes. We are 21st Century Queer Nuns, thank you very much!

### ***Freedom of Expression***

We believe there should be few restrictions on our artistic creativity. Although rare, at certain events the famfamily requires all members to wear formal Habits (hereafter known as “Plumage”), which should be accessorized with buttons, jewelry, hats, makeup, etc. Most of the time, we are encouraged to develop wild, abstract plumage incorporating the white-face makeup and wimple (hereafter known as the “Nubbly-Bobs”) into the appearance. While there are certain restrictions placed on members in process to becoming fully-professed (it comes later, so edge yourself!), Fully Professed members in good standing are afforded nearly limitless freedom of expression. We are artists, as well

as social activists, and our faces and bodies are our canvases.

### ***Commitment***

Although Fully Professed members are considered members for life, the road to that end is not an easy one. The famdamily requires its members, especially new ones, to demonstrate commitment to the ideals of the famdamily, the community at-large, and to the individuals that comprise the famdamily. As with all nuns, priests, clerics, shamans, Brahmins, witches and other holy individuals around the world, there is inherent in their title an immense amount of self-sacrifice. Members may not always agree with each other on a particular direction that the famdamily is pursuing, but they are expected to work for the good of the group and the community. Sometimes it sucks and the famdamily will fight and bicker, that is what we do. When these occasions happen, the famdamily will continue to push forward in service for the greater good! We do not always have to like each other, but we will always love each other. This is what it is to be a nun, what it is to support the community, and what it is to serve the human race.

### **Membership**

The famdamily has three levels of membership: Postulants, Novices, and Fully Professed (hereafter known as FP). With the notable exception of votes regarding membership in the famdamily, everyone in good standing (...wait for it...) have both voice and vote in most decisions of the famdamily; only FP members in good standing are eligible to vote on issues regarding membership (elevation, sanctions, suspension, or excommunication). Only FP members in good standing may serve in leadership (as chairs, mistresses, or masters) of the famdamily. Aspirants are part of our famdamily but cannot vote.

### ***Aspirants***

Aspirancy (official word now!) is the first step in this journey. By showing up to a meeting and expressing interest, you have made it! The declaration by the Mistress/Master of Novices is sufficient to achieve this status and is not voted upon by the membership.

In this step of the process, you have a voice in the famdamily, you simply may not vote on matters.

Time spent as an Aspirant is designed to give you the time to ensure you're still wanting to be in this famdamily and to become better acquainted with the ministry and mission of the Famdamily. It is strongly encouraged (ya damn well better) that you try to meet every member of the fam and spend time with them. Aspirants should attend every meeting, however, life happens! Stay in contact with the Mistress of Novices so she knows what is going on with your progress in the famdamily.

Once declared an Aspirant, you can be elevated to Postulant provided the entire famdamily votes and approves this process. Vote must pass by 75% of all FP members present at voting time. (Mistress of Novices must present request for elevation to famdamily at least 24 hours prior to meeting—It is just the nice thing to do.)

When attending a manifestation, Aspirants may wear whatever they wish...as long as they do not mimic the Sisters, as they are still aspiring to be a Sister. They should not speak for the famdamily to

any members of the public, including the media, and should defer any questions to a FP member. They are there to witness the ministries of the famdamily.

### ***Postulants***

Postulants are members of the famdamily, junior to Novices and FP members, and have full voice and vote (except for votes regarding membership or votes otherwise limited by the Policies and Procedures or Bylaws to FP members). As sophomore members of the famdamily, Postulants cannot hold offices or chair committees.

The Postulancy (another new word—sounds like a disease one gets on their nether-regions!) is designed for you to become more fully familiar with the lay of the land. They work closely with their Big Sister/Brother (known as Skirts and Beards) who is both their sponsor into the famdamily as well as their mentor. They should learn as much about the P&P and Bylaws, and the Sistory of the Famdamily. Postulants should try to attend all general membership meetings. If they are unable to attend, they should tell the Mistress/Master of Novices ASAP.

It is strongly recommended that the Postulant continue to meet with as many members of the Famdamily. This is a time for the Postulant to develop their identity as a member of the Famdamily.

While attending manifestations, you may now wear whiteface and makeup, excluding lips (to symbolize their newness to the Famdamily), a simple outfit appropriate for the occasion in grey or white, and a name tag that identifies them as a Postulant. Additionally, Postulants wishing to become a FP Sister wear a simple grey veil. Postulants must be with any FP member present, while manifesting. Postulants must defer all media inquiries to a FP member. It is strongly encouraged that these members beat face with FP members and travel to events with them. In the event that you cannot meet with any FP's, simply be safe and try not to travel alone.

Prior to a Postulant's elevation, it is recommended that they:

- Attend three (3) general membership meetings;
- Attend three (3) manifestations;
- Attend at least one (1) Novice Tea;
- Meet with Big Sister/Brother on regular basis;
- Learn about the Sistory, Policies and Procedures, and Bylaws of the Famdamily and the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence;

Once these recommendations are met, the Postulant may request that their Big Sister/Brother ask the famdamily for a vote of elevation. The Postulant will be expected to present evidence to the membership that these requirements have been met, and their Skirt or Beard serves as their advocate.

### ***Novice Sister/Novice Guard***

After successfully completing the above recommendations and with the consent of the membership of the Famdamily, Postulants are elevated to Novice. You are members of the famdamily, senior to Postulants, junior to FP members, and have full voice and vote (Unless otherwise stated somewhere else—you get the picture). As Junior members of the Famdamily, Novices cannot serve as officers of the Famdamily or chair any committees other than their Novice project.

The period spent is meant to prepare you for being Fully Professed. With the help of your Skirt or Beard, you will become very familiar with the Policies and Procedures and Bylaws, Sistory and plan a Novice project. Novices are expected to attend all general membership meetings. If they are unable to attend, they are expected to phone-a-friend twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the meeting.

While attending manifestations, Novices wear whiteface on their entire face, including lips, an outfit appropriate for the occasion, and a name tag that identifies them as a Novice Sister or Novice Guard. Additionally, Novices wishing to become a FP Sister wear a simple light-blue veil on the Famdamily Nubbly-Bobs. At this stage, you should be within ear shot of any FP member and may speak with the public about the Sistory; however, you will still defer all media interviews to a FP Sister.

Before being elected to be a FP member, Novices are encouraged to:

- Attend and participate in minimum of three (3) general membership meetings;
- Attend minimum of three (3) manifestations;
- Attend any mandatory events (a mandatory event must be approved by the general membership and notice will be given at least thirty [30] days in advance);
- Attend two (2) Novice Teas;
- Meet regularly with Big Sister/Big Brother;
- Learn about the Sistory, Policies and Procedures, and Bylaws of the Famdamily and the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence;
- Plan, execute, and evaluate a Novice Project;

Once these requirements are met, the Novice may request that their Skirt or Beard propose them for FP status at the next general membership meeting. So long as the other requirements have been met, and the Novice is present, the election may occur during the Novice's sixth general membership meeting. The Novice will be expected to present evidence to the membership that these requirements have been met, and their Big Brother/Big Sister serves as their advocate. Election to FP member follows the famdamily described in “Approval of New Member and Progression” below.

### ***Fully Professed Members***

Fully Professed members (hereafter known as FPs) serve as the primary leadership of the famdamily. There are two types of FP members: FP Sisters and FP Guards. FP members are voting members for life, except in the case of resignation, sanction, suspension, impeachment, or temporary loss of voting privileges pursuant to the Policies and Procedures or Bylaws. All FP members in good standing may chair committees, serve as Big Sisters/Big Brother, and hold the

offices: Abbess; Mistress/Master of Novices; Mistress/Master of the Purse; Mistress/Master of the Quill; and Mistress/Master of Protocol. FPs should attend every meeting and manifestation but it is not a requirement (unless serving on office or committees).

#### *FP Sisters*

FP Sisters in good standing provide the public face of the organization. Only the Abbess or her designee may make comments to the media about the Famfamily. Generally, FP Sisters are to wear whiteface makeup and accent this in any way they wish. Though rarely needed, FP Sisters must maintain a formal plumage for special occasions (including an elegant white veil). FP Sisters wear the Nubbly-Bobs of the Famfamily with a veil of their choosing. Normally, a FP Sister will manifest in a plumage of their choosing, but from time to time, a specific plumage will be required of a FP Sister for a specific event. When this occurs, the attire will be discussed and agreed upon prior to the event in question.

#### *FP Guard*

FP Guards assist and support the membership of the Famfamily. They may be asked to set-up and tear down materials for events (e.g. tables, décor, etc.), protect member's personal belongings during performances, carry banners/flags for parades, help guard members from harm, ease tensions when the need arises, carry extra bags of condoms for outreach activities, and/or similar types of "physical" work. The role of a Guard is not to fetch drinks, carry an individual member's purse/bag, or perform any other "personal, servant-like duties." FP Guards can elect, but are not required, to wear any makeup of their choosing. Their outfit should not resemble street clothing, but both the makeup and the outfit are required to remain masculine in nature. There are no requirements regarding a headpiece for Guards. From time to time, a specific outfit will be required of a FP Guards for a specific event. When this occurs, the attire will be discussed and agreed upon prior to the event in question.

#### ***Guard-to-Sister/Sister-to-Guard Transition***

FP Guards/FP Sisters wanting to transition to Sister/Guard within the Famfamily will be required to become a Novice Sister/Novice Guard and meet the requirements for elevation as described above with the following modifications: required general member meetings and manifestations reduced from three (3) to two (2); Novice Teas reduced from two (2) to one (1); and they are not required to plan, implement, or evaluate a novice project. Because they are now Novices, they may not be elected as officers or chairs. If they are presently a chair or officer other than Abbess, they may continue serving until the end of their term. If she is the Abbess and wants to transition from Sister to Guard, she must resign from the position. The FP members in good standing might also define other rights and/or restrictions as needed by a vote of more than fifty percent (50%). FP Members who have completed novitiates as both Novice Guard and Novice Sister may manifest at any time as either a Sister or Guard, but must follow the guidelines for the specific role.

#### ***Transitioning Members from Other Houses***

When a FP member from another active house of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence relocates and wishes to join the Famfamily, that FP member must present a letter of recommendation from their previous house. To be considered a valid recommendation, the house issuing the letter of recommendation must be considered active by the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence and the prospective FP member must have been active and in good standing within that house.

Upon presenting the letter of recommendation, the new FP member will participate in a three (3) month observation of the Famfamily. The FP member will wear the traditional headpiece of their former house with a veil of their choosing. FP Guards that are transitioning from another house must follow the dress code described under “FP Guards” above. The transitioning FP member will have the voting rights appropriate to a Novice. The transitioning FP member may not vote on issues relating to membership. They should fully participate in meetings as their insight and experience will be helpful and welcome.

Upon the conclusion of the three (3) month observation period, the transitioning FP member may request to be considered a FP member within the Famfamily. More than fifty percent (50%) of the FP members in good standing at a general membership meeting must consent to the transfer. In the case that the membership votes to not allow a FP member from another house to transfer, the member will be told why and given the opportunity to become a Novice and must meet all of the requirements above before being eligible for election to FP status.

Transitioning FP members seeking to join the Famfamily who cannot present a letter of recommendation from an active House of Perpetual Indulgence or are not in good standing will be treated as a Novice as described above, and must meet all of the requirements to become FP in the Famfamily.

Members transition from other houses who are not yet FP will join at the level they currently hold and will be required to meet all of the requirements to move forward.

### ***Saints and Angels***

A Saint is a layperson whose life and accomplishments are in keeping with the Famfamily’s philosophy and statement of purpose (e.g. executive director of a non-profit, politician, activist). An Angel is a layperson who has made some sort of contribution to the Famfamily (e.g. donating money, hairdresser, seamstress). Any member may recommend a person for canonization, and requires the consent of more than fifty percent (50%) of the membership at a general membership meeting. For Saints, celebration of the person’s life and accomplishments may be performed as a public fundraiser for that Saint’s favorite charity, or it can take place at any event that is agreed upon by both the general membership and Saint (e.g. banquet, drag show, comedy roast, anointing, baptismal ritual, bungee jumping, etc.). Generally, though not exclusively, Angels are honored privately. Saints and Angels, by virtue of this designation, are not members of the Famfamily. They have no membership rights (e.g. voting, progression, etc.), and they cannot speak to the press or the community on behalf of the Famfamily. Saints and Angels may at any time join the Famfamily after their canonization. The Mistress/Master of the Quill will maintain a list of all Saints and Angels.

### ***Missionary Member***

A missionary member is any FP member that is unable to participate with the Famfamily due to physical proximity but who wishes to continue serving the Famfamily in an area that is not within a close proximity to an existing house of The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence as described by the United Nuns Privy Council. They may be recommended for Missionary status if approved by more than fifty percent (50%) of the eligible voting members present at a general membership meeting. They receive a copy of the missionary document to substantiate their position in the Famfamily.

Missionaries are expected to: submit to the Mistress/Master of Novices a written yearly report to the Famfamily at the annual membership meeting regarding their activities; and continue to pay dues. Missionaries shall have their status reviewed biennially by the board of directors and the Mistress/Master of Novices, who will make recommendations to the general membership should a status change be required. Missionary members are non-voting members of the famfamily. They may regain their status as FP members in good standing by attending one full general membership meeting and with the consent of more than fifty percent (50%) of the eligible voting members present at a general membership meeting

### ***Sister/Guard Members of the Imperial Court***

FP members of the Famfamily in good standing may join the Imperial Court of Washington, D.C., following the rules and procedures set by that organization. Once a member in good standing with both organizations, the FP Member may manifest with the Court at any of its official events without other Sisters or Guards present. However, as the FP member is still a representative of the D.C. Sisters, all other expectations on members of the Famfamily remain. This includes the requirement that all members of the house shall be invited to attend.

### ***Sabbatical***

For many reasons, a FP member is not able to maintain a presence in the house for an extended period of time up to one (1) year. In this case, the FP member is considered to be on sabbatical. Sabbatical is only for FP members. If a member in process to becoming FP must step away they will need to start the process over when they are able to return.

While on sabbatical, the member is not allowed to manifest. To return from sabbatical and restore good standing, the FP member must attend one general membership meeting in its entirety.

### ***Resignation***

A member may resign from the famfamily at any time. This severs their ties with the Famfamily and the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. Resignation of a member shall be effective upon receipt of written notice to any member of the board of directors. The Mistress/Master of the Quill shall send a letter by registered mail or equivalent means to the resigning member verifying the resignation within three (3) business days of notification. It is the duty of any officer to notify the Mistress/Master of the Quill of a resignation within twenty-four (24) hours. Resignations may be rescinded by the resigning member up to seven (7) days after receipt of the verification letter from the Mistress/Master of the Quill. Letters of resignation shall be read into the minutes of the subsequent general membership meeting. Should they wish to return, they would need to start the process of becoming a FP member again from the beginning of the process. If they move and seek to join another house, a recommendation will not be given.

### ***Membership Closure***

The Famfamily may be closed to new members for a specific, specified amount of time with the consent of more than fifty-one percent (51%) of those eligible to vote at a general membership meeting. Closure must be for a specific amount of time and indefinite closures are not permitted.

## **Approval of New Members and Progression**

### ***Process***

Skirts or Beards propose a candidate for progression at general membership meetings. At the meeting, the candidate will submit a resume to the FP members that details the work they have done in the service of the Famfamily. All people ineligible to vote on issues of membership, including FP members not in good standing, will leave the room. At this time, the candidate will be questioned by the FP members on a number of topics pertaining to the mission and ministry of the Famfamily. After this interview, the candidate will be asked to leave the room while the FP members in good standing discuss and vote on the candidate. Progression must be approved with the consent of more than fifty percent (50%) of those eligible to vote. After the vote is taken, the individual is invited back into the room and the candidate is informed of the result and reasons for the approval or denial. Quite often, new members who have completed all requirements are still not approved due to a number of reasons (e.g. needing more time to develop, perfect some skills, needing work on dependability or commitment, etc.). This is done with great compassion. Occasionally, it is determined that potential new members are not suitable for the Famfamily and great compassion is exercised in informing that person. This is usually done by the Skirt or Beard and/or the Mistress/Master of Novices.

### ***Big Sisters & Big Brothers***

Any FP Sister in good standing may be a Skirt to a Postulant or Novice Sister. Any FP Guard in good standing may be a Beard to a Postulant or Novice Guard. Skirts and Beards review the performance and behavior of the new members, make reports to the Mistress/Master of Novices and general membership, answer new member's questions, and act as a liaison between the new member and the FP members. They encourage new members to discover a name that fits the individual's character and offer costuming and makeup ideas. They are expected to educate the new member on what it is to be a member as well as what the group will expect of them. Skirts and Beards are reminded that Novices and Postulants are junior members of the Famfamily and not personal assistants or servants. A FP member may mentor no more than one (1) Postulant and one (1) Novice at any given time. Due to potential conflicts, members may not sponsor or act as a Skirt or Beard to their spouse, roommate, or significant other.

## **Personal Conduct**

### ***Appearance***

This should be appropriate for the respective event. If it is a formal event, formal plumage is expected. All Nubbly-Bobs and veils should be kept in clean and good repair. Be mindful of your sensible shoes, gentile ladies ☺ if you cannot walk in those 12-inch platform stilettos, don't wear them hunnie.

## ***Behavior***

This should reflect positively on fellow members and the Famfamily as a whole. Remember those vows you took to “promulgate universal joy and expiate stigmatic guilt”? Yasssssssss Gurl! Members should have fun and be mischievous when needed, but remember, you are the face of the entire SPI Famfamily when out and about, represent us well!

Oh! Do keep our internal drama internal ☺ the “normal” person doesn’t wanna hear about our cat fights, so let’s keep them in our own litter box! Please be aware that if you get caught acting a hawt damn mess, sugar, we will let you know when the moment is right and fix it together.

It will also be noted that when we are out letting our freak flags fly, we do so responsibly and of our own accord. We pay for our own drinks and we tip accordingly. Of course, when the time comes for some gentile stranger to offer us a drink, should we feel inclined to accept it, then they should be given a Sister blessing of glitter or whatever the Sister/Guard deems worthy.

Lastly, a good Sister and Guard always has some cash on them for when the moment is right and we must make our great escapes!

## ***Accountability***

If a concern with a certain member’s conduct or attitude should arise, action will be taken along the following guidelines:

- First, the incident is brought to the offending member's attention in a diplomatic manner by a FP member (a Novice/Postulant/Aspirant should ask a FP member to join them in the conversation);
- Next, if the offending member fails to respond to the satisfaction of the member raising the concern, the matter can be referred to the board of directors, which will intercede as it sees fit to seek just resolution and/or reconciliation;
- If the board of directors is unable to achieve just resolution and/or reconciliation, the board of directors may refer the matter to the FP membership for disciplinary action.

## ***Sanctions***

When the steps of accountability described above have failed, sanctions may be levied against the offending member with the consent of more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the FP members in good standing at a general membership meeting. These sanctions limit the member's rights as a member of the Famfamily and can be anything that the membership deems fitting. These can include, but are not limited to: voting; manifesting in plumage; public representation of the famfamily; serving as an officer or chair; or mentoring new members. Sanctions must be for a specified amount of time not more than a year (typically three-to-six months). At the conclusion of the time period specified, the sanctions are lifted. If, by the completion of the sanctions period, just resolution has not occurred, further disciplinary actions may be taken, including further sanction, suspension, or excommunication.

## ***Suspension***

Alternatively, when the steps of accountability described above have failed, the member may be temporarily placed on suspension. This requires the consent of more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the FP members in good standing at a general membership meeting. While on suspension status, all of the member's rights and privileges as members of the Famfamily as described in both the Bylaws and Policies and Procedure are removed. These rights or privileges include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Voting;
- Manifesting in plumage;
- Public representation of the famfamily;
- Serving as an officer or chair;
- Mentoring new members.

During a member's suspension, steps must be taken to find just resolution and/or reconciliation. Once satisfactory progress has been made, a member may be returned to the status of good standing with the consent of more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the FP members in good standing at a general membership meeting.

## ***Excommunication (Impeachment)***

In extremely rare, grievous, and offensive circumstances, just resolution and/or reconciliation cannot be achieved. As an absolute last resort, after all other efforts have been exhausted, and after eight (8) months have passed since the member was placed on suspension, the member may be excommunicated by consent of more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the FP members in good standing at two (2) consecutive general membership meeting separated by at least forty-eight (48) hours. Upon excommunication, the person is no longer a member of the Famfamily or the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. They will not receive a recommendation if they move to another house.

## ***Meetings***

### ***Quorum***

A quorum is defined as more than fifty percent (50%) of the total number of members eligible to vote in that decision. Only members in good standing are eligible to vote. The Mistress/Master of the Quill determines this number based off the membership rolls. Unless otherwise stated, official decisions may only be made at general membership meetings, annual membership meetings, and board of director's meetings that have achieved quorum for that type of vote.

### ***General Membership Meetings***

General membership meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend. An agenda is followed. Meetings tend to be informal and conversational. When needed as determined by the chair, Robert's Rules of Famfamily shall be followed. Any member or guest may bring an item to the floor and engage in discussion. Should a vote be required, a quorum of eligible voters, as defined in the voting section above, must be present. Motions and seconds can only be made by voting members. Proxies are not accepted on any vote. Committees may be set up to further deal with any issues and report back to the general membership.

### ***Annual Membership Meetings***

The last general membership meeting in July is set aside for the election of board of director's members and is called the annual membership meeting. Annual membership meetings count as general membership meetings for the purposes of anything in the Policies and Procedures or Bylaws that stipulates the action must be completed at a general membership meeting.

### ***Special Meetings***

The Abbess or any five (5) FP members in good standing may call special meetings of the general membership at any time. Special meetings count as general membership meetings for the purposes of anything in the Policies and Procedures or Bylaws that stipulates the action must be completed at a general membership meeting.

### ***Board of Directors Meetings***

Board of director's meetings are business meetings where important corporate matters are decided, and the basic direction of the Famfamily is established. The board of directors meet monthly and reports to the general membership any of their actions. Board of director's meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend, but only members of the board of directors are eligible to vote. A quorum of members of the board of directors is required to make any decisions. No proxy votes are allowed.

### ***Committee Meetings***

Committee meetings are for working out the details of a specific or ongoing project. Committees may be comprised of members of the Famfamily as well as specific nonmembers such as an "entertainment coordinator" or a consultant. Only FP members may chair a committee with the exception of Novice projects, where a Novice member chairs their own committee. Chair people are able to organize their committee and meetings however they see fit.

## ***Events***

### ***General Manifestations, Bar Ministries, and Other Organizations' Events***

Very frequently, the Sisters will go into bars or hit the streets to visit and minister with the community. These are generally informal and do not require house approval, but all members in good standing must be invited to attend. In all cases, manifesting requires either two FP members in good standing, or one FP member and two Novices all in good standing.

### ***Novice Teas***

Novice Teas are casual meetings that offer an environment in which Postulants and Novices may discuss in confidence their anxieties, concerns and shared situations with the other new members and the Mistress/Master of Novices. These meetings help facilitate solutions for special situations that arise from time to time between new members and other members of the Famfamily or the public. These informal sessions are set up to be fun and social, as well as instructional and insightful. Novice Teas may only be attended by Postulants, Novices, and the Mistress/Master of Novices. Any other member of the Famfamily may attend at the specific invitation of the Mistress/Master of Novices. Novice Teas are closed to all nonmembers and shall be held at least quarterly.

### ***FP Teas***

FP Teas are casual meetings in which FP members discuss the details of mentoring new members, insuring that there is consistency in the methods used by each Big Sister/Big Brother as they mentor new members. These gatherings also help facilitate solutions for special situations that arise from time to time. These informal sessions are set up to be fun and social, as well as insightful. FP Teas may only be attended by FP members who are current Big Brothers/Big Sisters and shall be held at least quarterly, as set by the Mistress/Master of Novices. Any other member of the Famfamily may attend at the specific invitation of the Mistress/Master of Novices.

### ***Retreats***

Retreats are meetings of the membership that typically extend for a full day or more. They are usually held in a secluded location where the group can concentrate on getting to know each other, the Famfamily, or some specific topic. No official business is conducted at these meetings. They are open to all members in good standing. Others may attend at with the consent of more than fifty percent (50%) of the members at a general membership meeting.

### ***Official Events***

To qualify as an official event, the event must be approved by a vote of more than fifty percent (50%) of voting members and meet any of the following requirements:

- The event is solely sponsored by the Famfamily;
- The event is cosponsored by the Famfamily; or
- The Famfamily is a beneficiary.

### ***Mandatory Events***

Rarely, events will be designated mandatory. These events are typically very large projects of the Sisters and require an all-hands-on-deck approach. In order to be considered mandatory, at least thirty days before the event, the membership must designate the event mandatory by a vote of more than fifty percent (50%) of the voting members and the Famfamily must be the sole or primary sponsor of the event.

Every member must make every effort to attend mandatory events. If a member is unable to attend, disciplinary action may be taken.

## **Financial Policy and Procedures**

To provide sound stewardship of the financial resources entrusted to us by our communities, it is the policy of the Famfamily to maintain an effective system of internal fiscal controls.

### ***Bank Accounts***

Business Checks will be printed with the Famfamily post office box address and two signature lines. All members of the board of directors will be signatories on the Famfamily checking account. Any check over \$250 will require two (2) signatures. No officer can sign a check payable to him/herself, their spouse, significant other, roommate, or business that is an interested party. The

Mistress/Master of the Purse will maintain the only debit card for the organization.

### ***Cashbox and Money Raised***

The petty cash amount in the cashbox shall be \$75.00, containing small bills (normally 1's and 5's). The Cashbox will be maintained by the Mistress/Master of the Purse. Petty cash amounts larger than the standard \$75.00 need to be pre-arranged with the Mistress/Master of Purse.

In addition, arrangements need to be made at least one (1) week prior to the day/night of the event with the Mistress/Master of the Purse to pick up the cashbox.

All event donations must be handled in the following manner:

- The cashbox must be monitored at all times by the point person of the event or by a designated FP member;
- The collection of monies at the event can be done by all members of the House;
- Post event cash must be counted by two (2) members in good standing, one of whom must be a FP member, in a secure location prior to leaving an event;
- A “Post Event Cash Count Form” must be completed and signed by two members before leaving an event;
- After the event, the money should be maintained by a FP member;
- The transfer of cashbox/funds to the Mistress/Master of the Purse or Abbess must be completed within three (3) days of the event;
- At no time should event cash be used for event-related expenses (event-related expensive must be reimbursed using the procedure below);
- No funds will be distributed to beneficiaries prior to the deposit;
- Any discrepancies between the “Post Event Cash Count Form” and the actual amount of cash received by the Mistress/Master of the Purse or Abbess is the responsibility of the FP member handling the cash.

It is understood that revenue from events sponsored by other organizations for which the Famfamily is providing assistance, are not required to be deposited into the Famfamily bank account. Unsolicited donations of less than \$100, collected by a Sister or a Guard, should be turned in to the Mistress/Master of the Purse or the Abbess at the next general membership meeting. A written receipt of the donation will be given to the Sister or Guard as a paper trail of the transaction.

### ***Expenses and Check Reimbursements***

Expense reimbursements will only be dispersed after the following criteria are met:

- A completed “Reimbursement Form” must be submitted within two (2) weeks of the expense;
- The reimbursement must be approved by the Mistress/Master of the Purse and one (1) other member of the board of directors;
- Expenses incurred by a member of the board of directors must be approved by two (2) other members of the board of directors;
- Original receipts or other itemized documentation of the expense(s) must be

attached to the “Check Reimbursement Form.”

Any reimbursement forms received after the cut-off times will not be honored and shall be considered a donation from the individual to the Famfamily. Circumstances which do not fit into the above timelines must be pre-approved by two (2) officers, one (1) of whom must be the Mistress/Master of the Purse. Checks for amounts larger than \$250 require signatures from two signatories.

Check requests will only be completed after the following criteria are met:

- A completed “Check Request Form” must be submitted;
- The request must be approved by the Mistress/Master of the Purse and one (1) other members of the board of directors;
- Requests submitted by a member of the board of directors must be approved by two (2) other members of the board of directors;
- An official itemized estimate, proposal, or invoice must be attached to the “Check Request Form”.

Under no circumstances shall a pre-signed, blank check be issued.

### ***Donation Acknowledgement Letters***

Letters of acknowledgement for donations in check form of \$25 or greater will automatically be sent by the Mistress/Master of the Purse. Donation checks less than \$25 will not automatically be issued a letter of acknowledgement, but one can be requested. Letters of acknowledgement need to be signed by the Mistress/Master of the Purse for validation. If one is requested, a written receipt shall be given for cash donations that are more than \$25 at the time of donation.

### ***Dues***

All members of this Famfamily are not required to pay dues to become a member. Paying for your plumage and makeup are enough.

### ***Audits***

Audits are a standard way to ensure that the Famfamily meets its fiduciary responsibility to our community. As such, an audit will be conducted by an independent certified public accountant biennially, coinciding with the completion of the term of the Mistress/Master of the Purse (i.e. even years). The Mistress/Master of the Purse will be responsible for the audit. they will present the findings and recommendations of the certified public account at the annual membership meeting.

Apart from the regularly-scheduled audit, the board of directors can request an audit be done at any time with a vote of more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the board of directors. The results of that audit are to be shared with the general membership.

## **Rule Changes**

Any changes to this document must be approved at two (2) consecutive general membership meetings with the consent of more than fifty percent (50%) of the membership. The general

membership meetings must be more than forty-eight (48) hours apart. Edits deemed administrative that in no way affect the meaning or application of the Policies and Procedures (e.g. numbering, grammar, etc.) may be performed by the Mistress/Master of Protocols and do not require ratification by the membership. The Mistress/Master of Protocols shall notify the members of any administrative changes.

If any conflict arises regarding this document and the Famfamily's Bylaws, the Bylaws shall supersede this manual.

### ***Dispensation***

A dispensation is a temporary exception to the Policies and Procedures granted by more than fifty percent (50%) of the FP membership in good standing.

## **Voting**

All members in good standing will have the right to vote at general membership meetings. FP members are the only members permitted to vote on:

- Progressions;
- Sanctions;
- Suspensions;
- Excommunications;
- Dispensations.

### ***Good Standing***

A member shall be considered in good standing if:

- They have attended a minimum of one out of three prior general membership meetings;
- They are not on sabbatical;
- They have not been sanction, suspended, or excommunicated;

A member may be restored to a position of good standing once they have attended a general membership meeting in its entirety, returned from sabbatical, or had sanctions lifted.

### ***Internet Voting***

On rare occasions, urgent matters will create the need for a vote between general membership meetings. Great care should be taken by the Abbess to use internet voting only when time does not permit the decision to be made at the next general membership meeting. In the case of an internet vote, the question must be communicated in exactly the same format to all members, and all votes must be cast within 48 hours. At least fifty percent (50%) of the eligible voters must vote in famfamily to reach electronic quorum. An internet vote, however, must be unanimous in famfamily to pass. Any failed internet motion can be recalled at the next general membership meeting for reconsideration.

## Grievances

Grievance procedures are a means of dispute resolution that can be used to address complaints by members against the Famfamily as a whole. Grievance procedures are intended to allow the Famfamily to hear and resolve complaints in a timely and cost-effective manner, before they result in litigation. Each member shall have the right to bring any grievances forward in a safe and just manner, without worry or risk to their position within the Famfamily. The Mistress/Master of the Quill must receive a letter of request for mediation and a copy of the request is then forwarded to the Abbess. The Abbess shall appoint no less than three (3) persons to serve on the mediation committee, including a chairperson. Members may be temporarily removed or added from this committee to guarantee a lack of bias or prejudice against the parties involved in the mediation request. The chair shall call a mediation committee meeting.

The first step will be to determine if this is a proper grievance to be investigated by this Famfamily. Those actions that violate city, state, or federal law should be referred to the proper authorities by the requester, not by the Famfamily. At the option of the mediation committee, and with the permission of the aggrieved parties, the committee may attempt to reconcile the differences without outside assistance. If that attempt is unsuccessful, then an outside, impartial mediator will be contacted by the committee. The mediator will meet individually with both parties and then arrange a joint meeting for resolution. Each party will be allowed to bring one (1) witness, notarized statements from witnesses, and one member of their support network (this person will not be able to address the mediator, the situation, or the other parties involved). Guidelines for appropriate behavior will be drawn up and agreed upon by all parties. Repeated violation or disregard for these guidelines will result in either removal from the site or adjournment of the mediation. If the mediator cannot affect a satisfactory resolution, they will make a recommendation to the mediation committee and, subject to the approval by the board of directors, may suggest further action.

### *Sexual Harassment*

For the purposes of the sexual harassment section, the following terms will be defined as:

- **Quid Pro Quo Harassment** occurs when a member's submission to, or rejection of, sexual advances becomes the real or perceived basis for organizational decisions or tangible benefit or detriments.
- **Hostile Volunteer/Work Environment Harassment** occurs when unwelcome sexual jokes, innuendo, comments, or actions create an offensive volunteer/work environment.

The Famfamily has a strong commitment that all members should enjoy an environment free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome or unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment is **illegal** and **will not be tolerated**. Therefore, the Famfamily has implemented a sexual harassment policy that will treat sexual harassment as any other form of serious member misconduct. Conditions which constitute harassment on the basis of sex and/or sexual identity include any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal and/or physical

sexual conduct when:

- Submitting to such conduct is made a term or condition of elevation;
- Submitting to or rejecting such conduct is used as the basis for membership or elevation decisions; or
- Such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive volunteer/work environment.

Inappropriate behavior and/or conduct, based on the above information, is strictly prohibited and performance of this behavior is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including excommunication from the Famfamily.

While quid pro quo harassment is typically clear because a volunteer/employee is either rewarded or damaged in return for sexual favors, hostile volunteer/work environment harassment is not always as recognizable. Because much of the work we do is in a sexually charged environment, the impact of the behavior, not the intent of the person doing the act, determines if sexual harassment has occurred. Always remember that “unwelcome” is decided by the impact on recipient of the behavior, not the intent of the person initiating the behavior. Also, a hostile environment can be created when a third party witness’s sexual behavior, conduct, or comments between two or more consenting people, and finds such activity “unwelcome” in the volunteer/work environment.

Some example questions to ask yourself prior to initiating questionable behavior include:

- Would I want this on the evening news?
- Is there equal power, initiation and participation between me and the person I’m interacting with?
- Would I do this if my significant other were standing next to me?
- Would I want someone to do this to my significant other?

Some behavior to consider whether appropriate or not:

- Making propositions;
- “Touching” or “brushing” improperly;
- Repeatedly asking another person out.

If a member has experienced or witnessed any form of sexual harassment, quid pro quo or hostile volunteer/work environment, they shall **immediately** report the harassment to a member of the board of directors.

No board of director’s member or other member may retaliate or discriminate against any member for filing a complaint. Anyone acting in such a manner will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, excommunication from the Famfamily.

Each and every allegation will be taken seriously, investigated thoroughly and completely, and an appropriate course of action will be taken to resolve the situation in the most expeditious means possible by law.

## ***Whistle Blower***

The Famfamily requires directors, officers, and members to observe high standards of ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As representatives of the organization, we must practice honesty and high integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

It is the responsibility of all directors, officers, and members to report violations or suspected violations in accordance with this whistle blower policy. No director, officer, or member, who in good faith reports a violation of the code shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse consequences. A member who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including excommunication from the Famfamily. This whistle blower policy is intended to encourage and enable members and others to raise serious concerns within the Famfamily prior to seeking resolution outside the Famfamily.

The policy addresses the Famfamily's open-door policy and suggests that members share their questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, the Mistress/Master of Protocol is in the best position to address any area of concern. Members are encouraged to speak with someone with whom they are comfortable approaching. Members of the board of directors are required to report suspected violations of the whistle blower policy to the board of directors, who has specific and exclusive responsibility to investigate all reported violations. For suspected fraud, or when members are not satisfied or uncomfortable with following the organization's open-door policy, they should contact the Famfamily's Abbess directly.

The Abbess is the compliance officer for the Famfamily. She is responsible for investigating and resolving all reported complaints and allegations concerning violations of policy and shall advise the board of directors. The compliance officer has direct access to the board of directors and is required to report to the board of directors at least annually on compliance activity.

The board of directors shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls, or auditing. The Abbess shall immediately notify the board of directors of any such complaint and work with the board of directors until the matter is resolved.

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of policy must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of policy. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and are proven to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and the Abbess must file a formal grievance on behalf of the Famfamily.

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously to the Mistress/Master of Protocol. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct adequate investigation.

The Mistress/Master of Protocol will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five (5) business days. All reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.