



wollongong

BAPTIST CHURCH

Code of Conduct For All Attendees, Staff and Volunteers

Adopted by the eldership on 21 September 2021

Purpose

The Church is committed to creating safe spaces where people can be confident that they will be cared for, nurtured and encouraged as they grow and at the same time, protected from spiritual, physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

As part of this commitment, all attendees of Wollongong Baptist Church congregations are expected to abide by Part A of the Code of Conduct. All staff and volunteers are additionally required to sign and abide by Part B of the *Code of Conduct*.

Part A of the *Code of Conduct* sets out the following:

- The responsibility of parents who bring their children to WBC
- The general code of conduct that applies to all attendees of Wollongong Baptist Church.

Part B of the *Code of Conduct* sets out the following:

- the ministry commitments of staff and volunteers
- minimum behavioural standards and appropriate boundaries required of staff and volunteers
- the obligation of staff and volunteers to comply with Safe Church Policy and Procedures
- the steps to be taken in the event of a potential breach of this Code.

The *Code of Conduct* seeks to reflect the biblical call to godliness and faithfulness in ministry (e.g. 1 Timothy 3) but it is not intended as a replacement for the Bible as a fundamental guide for faith and practice.

Scope

The Wollongong Baptist Church *Code of Conduct* is in two parts.

Part A applies to all attendees, parents, staff and volunteers

Part B applies to all staff and volunteers aged 16 and over, and commitment to it is a requirement for all staff and volunteers

The Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the *Safe Church Policy* and:

- *Procedure for Staff and Volunteers*
- *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*
- *Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers*
- *Procedure for Conflict Resolution.*

Code of Conduct Part A

Applies to all attendees, parents, staff and volunteers

1. Responsibility of Parents

When families attend a WBC event where children are not involved in a scheduled children's or youth activity, parents and carers remain fully responsible for their own children. When parents and carers leave their child in the care of WBC ministry leaders for the purpose of a children's or youth activity, they must ensure that they can be contacted at all times by ministry leaders.

Furthermore, parents and carers must take all reasonable steps to ensure their child behaves appropriately whilst participating in a WBC children's or youth activity. Should a child's behaviour be considered dangerous, disruptive, or otherwise inappropriate by ministry leaders, the parents of that child will be contacted and ministry leaders will work with them to resolve the situation. The child's continuing participation in the activity will depend on a satisfactory resolution being reached.

2. All Attendees, staff and volunteers are to comply with the following

DO:

- Be a positive role model for children and young people.
- Treat children and young people with respect.
- Carefully plan all activities and programs to provide safe experiences.
- Respect the privacy of participants and their families, exercising discretion in the handling of any sensitive information.
- Make every effort to obtain parental consent before providing transport to a child or young person.
- Avoid situations where you are alone with a child who is not yours. If this is required for pastoral reasons, do obtain parental consent beforehand and conduct the meeting in a public space where others can see you.
- Report any concerns you may have that a child or young person may be at risk of harm or abuse to a Pastor or a Safe Church Team member.

DO NOT:

- Engage in any activity or behaviour with a child or young person that is likely to physically, emotionally or spiritually harm them.
- Use any form of physical force or restraint, especially in behavioural management. An exception would be the use of restraint in situations when a child is in immediate danger, or is causing danger to themselves or others.
- Initiate any form of physical contact with children who are not in your care. In general, physical interactions with children should be guided by their needs and not the needs of the adult (e.g. a crèche helper may comfort a distressed child by picking them up).
- Seek to give children or young people individual gifts (e.g. food, toys) without first obtaining parental consent.

- Take a child or young person to your home, in a motor vehicle, or encourage meetings with them without parental consent and without another adult being present.
- Communicate with a child by electronic media (email, text message, picture message, social media, Zoom, Skype, etc.) without parental consent. One-to-one interactions with a child through these media are generally inappropriate.

Code of Conduct **Part B**

Applies to all staff and volunteers aged 16 and over and commitment to it is a requirement of all staff and volunteers.

In addition to the commitment to Part A, Part B of the Code of Conduct further specifies the higher level of commitment required of staff and volunteers, requiring all staff and volunteers to sign.

1. Staff and Volunteers are encouraged to:

Nurture their own relationship with God by

- joining regularly in the life and ministry of the Church;
- studying and reflecting on the Scriptures in private and in groups;
- praying regularly in private and in fellowship with and for the people and ministry of the Church; and
- giving of their time and finances to the work of the Church, as an expression of their gratitude to God.

Nurture healthy relationships by

- treating others with respect;
- loving and caring for their family (including paying attention to the effect of ministry on them);
- being a team player;
- being accountable;
- cooperating with other staff and volunteers;
- treating every program participant fairly and equitably;
- acknowledging when they are out of their depth, or do not possess the required skill set in difficult pastoral situations (such as helping a victim of abuse, or a person who needs professional counselling), and seek help from the Safe Church Team or a Pastor.

2. Staff and Volunteers commit to:

As a staff member/volunteer of the Church, I promise to:

- a. uphold, support and abide by the *Safe Church Policy*;
- b. respond to reasonable directions from the person with responsibility for the ministry I am involved in;
- c. communicate with integrity, including wise and accountable use of electronic communication, including in accordance with *Guidelines for Activities with Children and Young People*;
- d. not knowingly make false, misleading, or deceptive statements;
- e. not engage in bullying, harassment, emotional abuse, spiritual abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, of any person including my own family;
- f. not act violently or intentionally provoke violence;
- g. uphold confidentiality; not disclosing any confidential information without the consent of the person providing the information (the exception being where there is a legal obligation);
- h. report concerns about misconduct and/or abuse according to the Church's *Safe Church Policy* and relevant procedures;
- i. disclose all relevant information as part of completing the *Screening Check Questionnaire* if I have not already done so;
- j. disclose to the Church Leadership if I am investigated for any criminal offences or have any knowledge of serious unlawful activity within the church context;
- k. act with sexual purity, meaning I will:
 - express my sexuality in healthy and God-directed ways;
 - restrict sexual intimacy to the confines of the marriage relationship
 - (where marriage has the same meaning as in the Marriage Rites of the Baptist Union of Australia i.e. 'the union between a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life');
 - (if an individual is unwilling or unable to commit to this requirement, church leaders may choose to endorse them as a volunteer for non-leadership roles)
 - recognise that it is inappropriate to access any type of pornographic material and, if I struggle with this addiction, I will seek professional help;
 - ensure that romantic interactions are meaningfully consensual
 - give consideration to any power imbalances in intimate relationships;
- l. act with financial integrity, including:
 - having accountable and transparent systems in place for financial matters
 - not seeking personal advantage or financial gain from my position (other than in wages, recognised allowances and deductions);
- m. not take or use property belonging to others without express consent, including intellectual property (copyright);
- n. not use any prohibited substance and be responsible in my use of substances that may be addictive (e.g. prescriptions, alcohol);
- o. avoid long term counselling of people with whom I have pastoral relationships; and
- p. make alternative arrangements for pastoral care for any person with whom I may develop a romantic or intimate relationship.

3. *I understand that if there is a complaint against me relating to a breach of this Code of Conduct:*

- a) and it is a plausible complaint relating to Child Sexual Abuse or Sexual Misconduct involving a child, the Church may ask me to step aside from my duties while the complaint is being considered; and/or
- b) if the complaint relates to serious misconduct and/or abuse (including Child Sexual Abuse) it will be reported to relevant government authorities in accordance with relevant legal requirements; and/or
- c) I agree to participate in any process initiated under *the Procedure for Resolving Conflict, Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers* and/or *Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns*, and agree to be bound by the outcomes of any such process, which may include termination of my employment/engagement as a staff member or volunteer with the Church.

4. *If I am an accredited Pastoral staff member, I:*

- a) agree to uphold and be bound by the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT *Code of Ethics and Conduct*;
- b) understand that a breach of the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT *Code of Ethics and Conduct* will be considered a breach of this *Code of Conduct*;
- c) (if I am an Accredited or Recognised Minister) agree to participate in, and be bound by the outcomes of, any process initiated under the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT *Procedures for Handling Allegations*.

I, _____ have read, and agree to be bound by and uphold, the Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers.	
Signature	Date

NOTE: the staff member or volunteer should receive a copy of this *Code of Conduct* and the Church should retain the signed and dated copy of the *Code of Conduct* for at least 45 years.