WOLLONGONG
BAPTIST CHURCH

Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

Adopted by the Eldership on 23 January 2024

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, staff and volunteers are required to sign and abide by this *Code of Conduct.*

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, and
- 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 *Code of Conduct* applies to 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*

© Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT 2023

1. Staff and Volunteers are encouraged to:

Nurture their own relationship with God

- join regularly in the life and ministry of the Church
- study and reflect on the Scriptures in private and in groups
- pray regularly in private and in fellowship with and for the people and ministry of the Church, and
- give of their time and finances to the work of the Church, as an expression of our gratitude to God.

Nurture healthy relationships:

- treat others with respect
- love and care for their family (including paying attention to the effect of ministry on them)
- be a team player
- be accountable
- cooperate with other staff and volunteers
- treat every program participant fairly and equitably, paying special care to include those who may find it difficult to participate, and
- acknowledge 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.

© Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT 2023

2. Staff and Volunteers commitments:

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

a) respect and support the mission, beliefs and values of the Church and any other doctrinal statements of the Church (as may be outlined in the Church Constitution or other Church documents)

b) uphold, support and abide by the *Safe Church Policy*

c) respond to reasonable directions from the person with responsibility for the ministry I am involved in

d) communicate with integrity, including wise and accountable use of electronic communication, including in accordance with *Guidelines for Activities with Children and Young People*

e) not knowingly make false, misleading, or deceptive statements

f) not engage in bullying, harassment, emotional abuse, spiritual abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, of any person including my own family

g) not engage in sexual misconduct involving children

h) not act violently or intentionally provoke violence

i) uphold confidentiality; not disclose any confidential information without the consent of the person providing the information (except where there is a legal or ethical obligation to disclose)

j) report concerns about misconduct and/or abuse according to the Church's *Safe Church Policy* and relevant procedures

k) disclose all relevant information as part of completing the *Screening Check Questionnaire* if I have not already done so

l) 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 as soon as practicable.

m) 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, and
- give consideration to any power imbalances in intimate relationships.

n) act with financial integrity, including:

- having accountable and transparent systems in place for financial matters, and
- not seeking personal advantage or financial gain from our position (other than in wages, recognised allowances and deductions).

© Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT 2023

o) not take or use property belonging to others without express consent, including intellectual property (copyright)

p) not use any prohibited substance and be responsible in my use of substances that may be addictive (e.g., prescriptions, alcohol)

q) avoid ongoing counselling of people with whom I have pastoral relationships, and

r) make alternative arrangements for pastoral ministry 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 serious misconduct and/or abuse (including child sexual abuse), 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 a Pastoral staff member, I:*

a) agree to uphold and be bound by the *Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Code of Ethics and Conduc*t

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*, and

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 (preferably 100 years).

© Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT 2023