

# Code of Conduct Template

## for FIEC Senior Pastors and ministry staff

### PREAMBLE

#### The Grace of God Trains Us For Godly Ministry

The New Testament teaches that the grace of God that has appeared in our Lord Jesus Christ brings salvation, and is received by faith, and not on the basis of any works that we do (Rom. 3:22-25; 5:6-8; Eph. 2:8-9, Titus 2:11.) This same full, free, gracious and unmerited salvation is also the beginning of a transformed life because the grace of God liberates us into a life in union with Christ in which we do good works prepared beforehand for us to walk in (Eph. 2:10.)

Those who are involved in leadership amongst God's people, especially in the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, are responsible to be exemplary in their living in this strong, free, transforming grace of God. They are to give serious and consistent attention to the shaping of their lives by the salvation that has appeared in Jesus Christ. While the complete scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain much instruction on the way in which this grace is to work out in the lives of those involved in preaching and teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the pastoral letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus are particular instructive. It should be noted that much of what Paul says in these letters relates to the character and personal life of these leaders, and not simply to their behaviour in the "public setting" of their ministry. These letters should be read as the proper context for this Code of Conduct.

For these reasons, this Code of Conduct for Senior Pastors and ministry staff may differ from the codes of conduct of other organisations in that the Code proceeds with the understanding that the private and public conduct of staff must not be separated. Also, the Code does not attempt to describe the totality of the behaviour of those trained by grace, but rather particular issues relating to the nature of ministry in a church setting.

This Code applies to Senior Pastors and ministry staff. If the behaviour and practices it outlines are followed, it is hoped that our ministries of FIEC churches will be known to be settings where people are safe from harm or abuse, where integrity is honoured, accountability is practised, and misconduct is openly dealt with. As well as serving this educative and exhortatory role, this Code of Conduct provides a framework for the supervision of the conduct of Senior pastors and ministry staff, and is set in a policy context in which disciplinary action may be taken.

It is in a network of relationships that the gracious godliness we are called to is given expression.

1. Personal godliness and family relationships
2. Relationships with church members
3. Relationships with other staff

The needed character and virtue for good and godly ministry are the fruit of the Spirit as He brings home to the human heart the work of Christ's saving death and resurrection. Such ministry of the gospel flows from the work of the gospel in the one who ministers the gospel. Let us

entrust ourselves to the God of grace for the ministry to which He calls us in His grace. All staff should be familiar with this code of Conduct. When staff are unclear as to what the Code of Conduct means or how it might apply to them, they should consult their supervisor, or if necessary the National Director, for clarification.

## PERSONAL GODLINESS AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

As Pastoral staff we will:

1. Carefully attend to the responsibilities of love that we have to our spouse (if married), children (if any) and wider family. We recognise the priority of these relationships over all others, save that with God Himself.
2. Be exclusively faithful within heterosexual marriage, or celibate in singleness. Except within heterosexual marriage all sexual or sexualized behaviour is forbidden. Sexualised behaviour includes sexual relations, harassment, molestation, and any other conduct of a sexual nature which is inconsistent with the integrity of a person in a position of authority. It includes behaviour that may reasonably be perceived to be of a sexual nature according to the standards of the person to whom it is directed.
3. Endeavour to keep spiritually healthy through a regular discipline of reflective reading of the Scriptures, private and public prayer, and regularly attending a congregation of God's people.
4. Be responsible and moderate in our use of alcohol and other intoxicating or addictive substances.
5. Obey the law, in so far as that law is not contrary to the Holy Scriptures and does not unjustly prohibit the expression of faith in Christ.
6. Take proper care to be faithful stewards of our finances and to fulfill our obligations with regard to taxation and Centrelink matters.
7. Properly and honestly report church related financial dealings, and handle gifts given in support according to guidelines developed by the church.
8. Acknowledge that there are limits to the ministry we can properly provide. We should maintain our own health scheduling regular time for exercise, recreation and rest, including appropriately using our allocated allowance of annual leave.
9. Look for, and take advantage of, opportunities to maintain and enhance our ministry skills, through various means which may include: professional supervision / consultation; peer support; having a mentor; and regular feedback.
10. Participate in a ministry review at least every three years.
11. Avoid viewing or possessing pornographic or other restricted material. Where pornography or sexual fantasizing is a problem, we affirm as of first importance honesty and openness and resolve to take practical initiatives. We commit ourselves to seeking appropriate accountability with staff peers or supervisors, seek counseling where needed, and to make responsible use, for example, of any internet filtering mechanisms that may help.

as Pastoral staff, will not:

1. Physically, sexually, emotionally or verbally abuse our spouse, children or other members of our family.
2. Undertake any pastoral ministry when we are impaired by alcohol or any other mind-altering or addictive substances. Use any substance in a manner that results in intoxication.
3. Steal property belonging to others, including intellectual property.
4. Knowingly make statements that are false, misleading or deceptive.
5. Knowingly use sexual, violent, racist, or foul language which is likely to cause offence to those listening or to dishonor other persons.
6. Bully, unlawfully discriminate or harass another person. Bullying is as defined according to the Fair Work Act. See the website <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/bullying-and-harassment>.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHURCH MEMBERS

We, as FIEC Pastoral staff, will:

1. Recognise the God-given value of each person that the Lord brings us to in ministry, and seek to honour the unique ways that they each have been gifted by the Lord. Staff relationships with students will flow from, and demonstrate the love and grace of God that has been made known in our Lord Jesus. The power in ministry relationships must always be exercised in the service of others
2. Recognise that there normally exists a disparity of power in the ministry relationship. The role of pastor and teacher is held in high esteem in our churches. Additionally many in church have less biblical knowledge or are more vulnerable for a range of reasons. At all times care must be given to be gentle, not quarrelsome, nor violent, nor quick-tempered, and that all persuasion will be gracious and self-controlled.
3. Pay carefully attention to what a church member is communicating, noticing and responding to both verbal and non-verbal.
4. Have due regard for the confidentiality of matters raised by church members in pastoral conversation.
  - When seeking or providing professional supervision / consultation staff will not identify any person and only disclose what is necessary to obtain the supervision or advice.
  - We should tell someone who is confiding in us, of the limits to confidentiality and the arrangements for supervision or obtaining advice. Wherever possible, this should be done before the disclosure of the confidential information, such as at the beginning of an interview.
  - If a church member discloses that they have been abused in childhood or more recently, or are at risk of suffering or harm, staff will offer appropriate care and advice, referring

them to other professionals as needed Advice should be sought in order to be aware of and comply with relevant laws.

- Staff would be wise to consider keeping a diarised record of our daily pastoral activity. Where there has been disagreement with, or significant disclosure by the student, it would be wise to record details such as the date, time, place, participants, subject, and any proposed action arising from each activity. Record significant personal remarks accurately.
- We should acquaint ourselves with the relevant principles of the applicable privacy legislation in relation to the collection, use, disclosure and management of personal information. These have implications for the publication of personal information in AFES publications, directories, newsletters, rosters and websites, and the recording and publication of voices and images of individuals.
- Take care to ensure that all contacts with church members are godly and above reproach. As staff we want to encourage and model healthy, honouring, and godly relationships, and particularly so between men and women. Trust is important when developing and maintaining ministry relationships and boundaries are essential for maintaining trust to minimise either the threefold risk of
  - a. Our relating being misinterpreted by a church member
  - b. Our being accused of misconduct, or,
  - c. At its worst, our engaging in misconduct. Therefore we should give due consideration to the following matters, whether the situation is of contact between people of opposite gender or the same gender, and particularly in one to one relationships:
    1. Whether we are dressed appropriately, giving particular attention to dressing modestly;
    2. Whether the physical location is appropriate, in particular whether it allows for privacy of conversation while maintaining the opportunity for appropriate supervision and visibility;
    3. The physical distance between us and the other person to maintain both hospitality and respect;
    4. Whether the circumstances would suggest a social interaction;
    5. The propriety and circumstances of the contact when visiting or being visited alone, especially at night;
    6. The personal safety and comfort of all participants;
    7. Establishing at the outset, the meeting's purpose and the boundaries with respect to the subject matter, confidentiality and its duration;
    8. The appropriateness of initiating or receiving any physical contact, such as gestures of comfort, that may be unwanted or misinterpreted;
    - Establishing a supervisory relationship with a third party if the contact is likely to be an ongoing pastoral relationship.

- Give appropriate attention to duty of care when dealing with persons who are under 18 years of age, to ensure their safety and welfare.
- 
- Exercise great caution in the development of romantic relationships with students. The imbalance of power in the relationship is a significant factor that must be considered carefully in such a situation. However, where a romantic relationship with a student has developed, or a staff member is aware that it is likely to develop, the staff member must disclose the nature of the relationship to a supervisor to ensure accountability and prevent misunderstanding.
- Communicate our thankfulness to God for those who support us by prayer, fellowship and financial giving, by regularly informing them of the ministry on campus.
- Openly and honestly represent our financial position to our supporters.

We, as Pastoral staff, will not:

- Verbally abuse church members.
- Emotionally abuse church members by any means including: unjust or manipulative systems of inclusion in or exclusion from acceptance; ridicule or humiliation in front of others; name-calling; isolation, control of another's time or affection, or keeping a person in crisis.
- Make sexually suggestive or explicit comments to church members.
- Abuse our position in gaining advantage over a church member for some personal benefit, financial or otherwise.
- Respond to conflict with a church member with physical violence.
- Use coercion, misrepresentation or manipulation in order to gain financial support.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER STAFF

We, as Pastoral staff, will:

1. Rightly honour those who work in fellowship with us in the ministry of the gospel. We will make every effort to ensure that arrogance, belligerence, quick-temper, malice, envy, or slander do not mark our relationships with, or conversations about, other staff.
2. Accept those lines of authority that are in place within the church and FIEC, and give due regard to those who have supervision of us within the organization, being accountable and willing to be subject to supervision or authority and submitting to discipline when it is right and proper.
3. Seek to resolve disagreements with other staff members through personal contact firstly – with all gentleness - and then, should resolution not be reached this way, through the grievance or complaints procedure of the church.

4. When challenged by other staff, give careful consideration to the complaint and respond in a gentle, measured, and honest manner.
5. Exercise great caution in the development of romantic relationships with other staff. An imbalance of power in the relationship is a significant factor that must be considered carefully in such a situation. Given this, pastoral relationships between single staff members may at times legitimately develop into romantic relationships. If this begins to happen the staff person must: disclose the nature of the relationship to a supervisor to ensure accountability and prevent misunderstanding.
6. Properly and honestly report AFES-related financial dealings, and handle gifts given in support according to guidelines developed by AFES.

## BREACHES TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT

All those in pastoral ministry are responsible for meeting the standards set out in this Code and ensuring behavior inconsistent with this Code is not tolerated or covered up. If you are aware of a breach of this Code, by yourself or another person, you should report this to your supervisor. Failure to meet the standards of this Code may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment/engagement.

1. Minor Breaches - Everyone is capable of sin but can repent and be forgiven (1 John 1:8-9). When there is a breach of this Code in an area that is not a breach of civil or criminal law, simply cease the conduct. If this is difficult, the person should see their supervisor about receiving help (eg. counselling). In some cases it may be necessary to step a person aside from their duties whilst this takes place. It is crucial to deal with such matters confidentially and sensitively.
2. Unaware of Breaches - Not all workers will understand or recognise 'unacceptable' behaviours. Even after explaining the Code of Conduct some may be unaware they are exhibiting unacceptable behaviours. Staff need to be open to correction and humble enough to modify behaviours so as to not discredit the gospel. As above, stepping a person aside from their duties may be necessary.
3. Constant Breaches - There are breaches that are not a breach of civil or criminal law, but are still unacceptable behaviour in a ministry context. Where a worker has been made aware of their behaviour and yet refuses to change. These will be handled by the Poor Performance or Misconduct procedure.
4. Serious Breaches - Breaches defined as serious will be handled by the Serious Misconduct Procedure.
5. Breaches of the law or allegations of abuse - Allegations of abuse or serious misconduct are to be referred to the appropriate government authorities and the Serious Misconduct Procedure will be implemented.