

Kew Baptist Church Code of Conduct

We, Kew Baptist Church, commit ourselves to a standard of responsible and ethical behaviour which is expected in our church and will bring honour and glory to God. Our code is underpinned by trust and a belief that everyone should be treated with respect and dignity.

This Code of Conduct sets out the behaviour which expects from all people associated with or representing it. It gives guidance about what practices (actions) are supported and what practices are NOT condoned. The Code of Conduct is not exhaustive and does not foresee every set of circumstances that may arise across the variety of Church events and activities. The Code of Conduct should be viewed as an educational guide to the principles that help inform what appropriate conduct is.

The Code of Conduct values the social, relational and interpersonal safety and wellbeing of people of all ages. The Code of Conduct also values the role of leaders and mentors by prompting transparent, accountable relationships that promote trust and confidence in the Church and its programs.

Having a Code of Conduct that everyone adheres to also protects the organisation because opportunities for harm are actively reduced.

1. KEW BAPTIST CHURCH AFFIRMS THE VALUES THAT GUIDE OUR MINISTRY

We, Kew Baptist Church value: Love, Respect, Humility, Faith and Integrity. We commit ourselves to living out these values in all areas of our lives.

Love

Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples (John 13:34-35).

- Accept and take an active interest in people in our ministry.
- Listen to the real needs of each person.
- Show compassion.
- Loving and caring for our families; paying attention to the effect of ministry on them.

Respect

Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God (1 Peter 2:17).

- Treat all people fairly, impartially, honestly and with respect, irrespective of their race, gender, position or religious position.
- Act with care with our words and attitudes.
- Using words that build up; do not ridicule or embarrass people.
- Work in partnership with others.
- Care for other's belongings with consideration of the owners.
- Treating others with respect; teach and exercise authority respectfully.
- Not jump to conclusions about others.
- Not engage in bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, sexual abuse or spiritual abuse of any person, including family members.
- Actively promote a safe environment where abuse, bullying or harassment of any nature is neither tolerated nor able to take place. Bullying can include: exclusion from a group or

activity, intimidation, or extortion. Harassment is unwelcome conduct whether intended or not which makes another person feel offended, belittled, threatened which may occur through a single incident or a series of incidents over a period of time. Harassment can include: unwelcome physical contact, gestures or language that could give offence including unwarranted shouting, or unjustified or unnecessary comments about a person's attributes or abilities.

Humility

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2).

May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:14).

- Be patient with everyone attached to our ministry.
- Accept the decisions of the leadership team, and work through established procedures to express a different point of view if disagreeing with a decision.

Faith

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation -if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel (Colossians 1:21-23).

- Acknowledge the Lordship and authority of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for fellow leaders, church participants and the Church.
- Join regularly in the life and ministry of the Church.
- Study the Scriptures in private and in groups.
- Pray regularly in private and in fellowship with and for the people and ministry of the Church.
- Give of our time and finances to the work of the Church, as an expression of your gratitude to God.

Integrity

Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out (Proverbs 10:9).

- Act in the best interests of those under our care and their families.
- Be blameless in our relationship with all.
- Behave in ways that honour and gain respect for God, oneself and the Church, and advances the ministry, both when seen and in daily activities.
- Upholding confidential information; do not disclose to anyone (including spouse), any confidential information without the consent of the person providing the information. Confidentiality and trust are fundamental to sound church relationships and must be upheld within the constraints of the law and statutory requirements (there is an exception where there is a legal obligation or a duty of care issue).
- Avoiding professionally counselling people with whom we have personal relationships.
- Making alternative arrangements for pastoral ministry for any person if you begin to develop a romantic relationship with them.
- Obey the law, other than any law that is contrary to the Scriptures.

- Not take property belonging to others, including intellectual property (copyright) and knowingly making false, misleading or deceptive statements.
- Not seek personal advantage or financial gain from your position, other than in wages, recognised allowances and deductions.
- Disclose to the church leadership if we are or have been investigated for any criminal offences.
- Be transparent in my actions and whereabouts.
- Be responsible in our use of addictive substances and services (e.g. prescriptions/alcohol).
- Not use any prohibited substance.
- Act with sexual purity. Sexuality is a gift from God. We will express our sexuality in healthy and God directed ways.
- In all financial matters act with scrupulous honesty and integrity, and publically account for all monies handled by us on behalf of others.
- Have in place systems for accountability and transparency in financial matters.
- Not engage in tax evasion.

2. KEW BAPTIST CHURCH ASKS LEADERS TO BE ACCOUNTABLE

Accountability through honesty, humility and working as a cohesive team is integral to the success of the ministry, i.e. with participants, pastors, deacons and the church.

2.1 Accountability to the Church

In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another... (1 Peter 5:5-6).

- Agree to an annual review.
- Accept the authority of team leaders.
- Maintain an open and honest relationship with church participants.
- Agree to abide by the Kew Baptist Church Child Safe Policy.

2.2 Accountability to other leaders in the ministry team

... be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.
 ...Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph 5:18-21).

- Pray and provide practical support for other leaders, as well as for the congregation and for the mission of the church.
- Participate in social gatherings that foster relationships in the team.
- Participate in team meetings.
- We will respect and accept each other and learn to serve together.
- We will support and care for each other.
- We will be aware of each other's personal pressures and family situations.
- We will look out for each other and be willing to raise concerns appropriately with each other.
- Be loyal in our support of each other in our discussions with other team members, staff, and members of the congregation.
- Being a team player; cooperating with other ministry leaders, there will be areas that overlap and someone else may have the advice that you need.
- We will seek assistance when needed.

- We will be purposeful in stimulating each other in our commitments to learn, grow and explore new ideas.
- Be diligent in providing each other with information and resources to fulfil our roles and be mindful of the expectations others have of us.
- We will share with each other information and insights which are important for us to discuss together for the sake of the church community.
- Be truthful and honest in our communication with each other.
- We will avoid allowing ourselves and others to be “triangled” or manipulated.
- We will practice the disciplines of listening to God, listening to the congregation and listening to each other both personally and collectively.
- We will be accountable to each other to develop a balanced lifestyle, to fulfil our responsibilities to the church and maintain spiritual health.
- We will affirm the value of having different personalities and leadership styles.
- We will be willing to share our reflections, concerns and ideas with each other.
- Mindful of our own weaknesses, we will challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse.
- Be accountable to our team, watch out for each other and protect each other’s integrity, e.g. when ministering to children have a buddy system in place (never alone with one child).
- We will not avoid disagreement and be willing to resolve conflict in a healthy context by following biblical principles.

2.3 Working in partnership with the wider church

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. ...Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12).

- Consider others’ perspectives when making decisions.
- Communicate and consult with others in a timely, understandable and sensitive manner.
- Takes suitable action, in consultation with team leaders, when responding to participants’ concerns.
- Consider the church’s perspectives when making decisions.
- We will be intentional in giving priority to meetings, gatherings of God’s people and our own ministries in the church.
- We will be accountable to the congregation for our leadership as members of this team through regular communication and reporting.
- Express our opinions robustly but understand that once collective decisions have been reached we support the outcomes.
- Treat the church property, and other users, with respect.
- Maintain a high standard of behaviour, as representatives of the church.
- Not rely on your reputation or that of the church to protect you.
- Immediately disclose any information of charges, convictions of abuse and policy non-compliance made against oneself or others in accordance with appropriate procedures.
- Not act violently or intentionally provoke violence when engaged in civil disobedience.
- Where grievances occur and a resolution is not forthcoming, seek additional assistance. We will seek every effort to pursue reconciliation following biblical principles when conflict or division occurs. Issues pertaining to criminal actions, bullying or sexual misconduct will be handled in accordance with Baptist Union of Victoria policies and we will report to the Police as required by law.
- Discussing openly our values in Christ.

2.4 Accountable to anyone who discloses risk or abuse

When a person, including a child, discloses abuse, or discloses that they are at risk, or when reasonable grounds have been established, these steps should be followed:

1. Report to your *Child Safety Officer*.

Note: When a disclosure occurs or a person's immediate safety is at risk (sexual and physical abuse), go directly to the on-site activity leader, who will in turn phone the police or relevant authority and organise appropriate support for the person concerned.

2. Complete the applicable form: *Risk of Significant Harm Form* or *Reporting Concerns Form*.

The *Child Safety Officer* will have copies of this form for completion if needed. The *Child Safety Officer* will also keep a local church log, upholding privacy principles.

3. When notified of an incident or a concern, the *Child Safety Officer* will then take appropriate steps, e.g. report to police, government agency, denomination liaisons, and other church leaders.

The Child Safety Officer may also contact the Professional Standards Worker for further assistance.

4. The Child Safety Officer should keep a local church log of events, upholding privacy principles.

3. PROCEDURE FOR BREACH OF THIS CODE OF CONDUCT

Staff and volunteers who breach this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures, including any breaches involving external workers or volunteers. All staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to the Child Safety Officer, Head of Organisation or Pastoral Staff.

The core Biblical values that underpin this process are:

- Truth-telling (Eph 4:15,25)
- Justice-seeking (Micah 6:8)
- Grace-giving (Col 3:13)
- Peace-making (Matt 5:9, Eph 4:2-3)

Matthew 18: 15-20 provides an outline for the overall process where Jesus indicates both God's presence in the process of resolution and also the significance which God places on the outcome reached.

Note: The reference in Matt 18:17 of treating people like "tax collectors and sinners" does not mean rejecting them from the church. It means that if a person consistently does not behave like a Christian, then we do not expect them to behave like a Christian and we adjust our expectations for them. That is, that if the expectations we would normally have of Christian disciples, (i.e. that they demonstrate grace, truthfulness, humility and a willingness to see and respond to personal sinfulness) are not being seen in their behaviour, we minister to them as if they were still to join the community like tax collectors and sinners. They are treated with kindness, gentleness but invited to repent and respond to the forgiveness of God, and to begin the journey of Christian discipleship.

Recommended Process:

Step One – Personal Reflection

Take some time before God to pray and reflect on the offence or injury you have received. In some situations you may decide not to take the matter further, in other situations important principles may be at stake and the situation needs to be taken further.

(Optional Step – Wisdom and Accountability)

If you are unsure about the right response and feel the need to seek wise counsel for yourself before taking the situation further it is appropriate to do so. Seek a godly counsellor, pastor, leader or mentor to share with. The focus of this is to gain clarity on the right path to take and to be accountable in the situation to act with integrity, wisdom and towards making peace. This consultation must be distinguished from gossip or sharing the incident with others in order to gain sympathy and support. These are inappropriate.

Step Two – Informal Discussion

A key step in resolution is to go to the other person informally and in private and share your concern. Seek to understand the perspective and viewpoint of the other. Be willing to receive an apology or respond to a process of restoration if it is offered. If the matter is resolved, no further action is needed. If you are on the receiving end of a discussion of this nature, be quick to listen, make sure you understand what the person is sharing. Guard yourself from simply reacting. If you need time to reflect ask for it. If you can see what you have done and can accept responsibility for it, apologise and seek forgiveness.

Step Three – Formal Discussions

If step two fails to reach a resolution ask that it move to a formal process. Here others may be invited to be involved as either support people or informal facilitators. At this level it is appropriate that some record be kept of what occurs. If resolved, no further action is required. Normally the church leadership would be notified that this has happened. The meeting should be pre-arranged and both parties have the opportunity for support people present.

Step Four – Formal Mediation

If step three fails, then the church (elders or pastor) should be notified and with the agreement of all, a trained mediator should be appointed who will meet with both parties and then facilitate a discussion together. Opportunities for interpersonal reconciliation are usually given. Points of agreement and disagreement are usually documented along with the outcome. Usually a solution which is acceptable to both is negotiated. If agreement is reached, no further action is required. A confidential report is given to the church leadership as well as to the individuals. Keeping the agreement is a matter of trust on both sides.

Step Five – Arbitration

If step four fails, the church and both parties may agree to abide by the ruling of an appointed and agreed arbiter or arbitration panel. Again this person or panel is appointed by the church. In this scenario the arbiter interviews both parties and may ask for further witnesses. The case is examined

and principles of justice applied. A judgement is given and the parties by their own agreement should abide by it. If this step fails, the situation has moved beyond the ability of the community to handle it internally and it must be referred to the civil courts. Within a church environment, both parties would then normally stand down from any leadership positions.

Further considerations regarding the severity of a breach:

i. Minor:

Everyone is capable of sin but can repent and be forgiven (1 John 1:8-9). It stands to reason then, that the code can be breached. When this happens 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 team leader or supervisor about receiving help (e.g. 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.

ii. Unknown:

Not all leaders will understand 'unacceptable' behaviours. Even after explaining the code some may be unaware they are exhibiting unacceptable behaviours. Leaders 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.

iii. Constant:

There are breaches that are not a breach of civil or criminal law, but still unacceptable behaviour in a ministry context. Where a leader has been made aware of their behaviour and yet refuses to change:

- a. The ministry coordinator meets with the person for behaviour review meetings. Communicate required behaviour change (up to 3 meetings).
- b. If behaviour continues, a small group of church leaders are to arrange a meeting to address the behaviour. Stepping aside is appropriate at this point.
- c. If the behaviour/s continue beyond this meeting, then respectfully, and upholding confidentiality, the person will be stood down for a set period. They will be offered help in changing their behaviour via counselling if they are willing.

NB. Written notes of all meeting to be carefully taken and a copy given to all parties.

iv. Breaches of the law or allegations of abuse:

Allegations of abuse or serious misconduct are to be referred to the appropriate government authorities, in line with the Baptist Union of Victoria processes.

The recommended process above is adapted and used with permission from John Mark Ministries (<http://johnmark.net.au/jm/>).

4. REVIEWING THIS CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed every two years and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from staff, volunteers and church participants.

Acknowledgement of Acceptance of Code of Conduct

Leadership Details

Printed Name: _____

Ministry Area/s: _____

Acceptance of Code of Conduct

- (i) I have received a copy of the:
 - a. Kew Baptist Church Code of Conduct (this document), and the
 - b. Kew Baptist Church Child Safe Policy,
- (ii) I have read, understood, accept and agree with the contents of these two documents.
- (iii) With God's help, I will endeavour to fulfil my role to the best of my ability and to abide by the rules outlined in this code and the Child Safe Policy.
- (iv) I am aware that Kew Baptist Church expects me to uphold at all times the standards of behaviour described in the Code of Conduct above.
- (v) I understand that disciplinary measures and legal steps will be taken if I am found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct. I understand that in that process, Kew Baptist Church may have to inform other authorities, in a confidential manner to meet obligations under Australian law.
- (vi) I have a valid Working With Children Check, and a copy (front and back) is attached.
- (vii) I have no criminal convictions in Australia or overseas.
- (viii) I agree to a review of my leadership yearly, or as deemed necessary by a pastor or ministry team leader.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

I have discussed the Kew Baptist Church Code of conduct with:

I have supplied him / her with a copy of the Kew Baptist Church Child Safe Policy.

I am happy that he / she understands the Kew Baptist Church Code of conduct as it applies to them.

Printed Name: _____

Signature _____

Position Held _____

Date: _____