

# Code of Conduct

## Purpose

Central Mountains Baptist Church is a group of followers of Jesus Christ in the Blue Mountains of NSW seeking to reflect the teachings of Christ and of the New Testament with integrity and humility. Beyond personal faith in the redeeming work of Christ in His death and resurrection, we accept that this faith is worked out and expressed in the quality of relationships we develop as a church community and all those with whom we interact in our daily lives. Jesus summarised God's expectation for the conduct of His people into one famous and succinct sentence: *'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbours as yourself.'* (Luke 10:27). He reinforced this 'law of love' by adding, *'By this shall all men know that you are my disciples; if you love one another!'* (John 13:35). Jesus also taught and demonstrated the importance of truth and honesty, of justice and mercy as essential to healthy relationships.

This **Code of Conduct** seeks to apply to the ministerial, or pastoral relationship those ethical standards that God expects of all people. People in various forms of recognised ministry are therefore expected to be examples and models of Christian faith and practice. It is the duty of any person in a ministry position not to use the influence or authority of their position for personal gain, whether that gain is financial or in terms of power, sexual gratification, or otherwise. This includes any action, verbal, written or electronic, physical or emotional that could be interpreted as emotional, sexual or spiritual abuse, and applies especially when working with children.

The adoption of this **Code of Conduct** and the related Procedural Documents for investigating breaches of the Code, reflects a deep desire to follow an open, accountable process that seeks to express justice, acceptance and compassion to all parties, rather than to protect the organisation.

This Code has been written in recognition of the power differential between people in ministry roles and the people they serve. The potential for this power imbalance to impact detrimentally on relationships is high. These guidelines have been established to help inform the conduct expectations in all aspects of personal relationships between people in ministry and those they serve.

## Our Commitment

Our commitment to expressing the love of Christ leads us to the view that all people should be able to live, work and learn in an environment that is free from abuse of any kind. Our commitment is to cultivate an environment where a diversity of people, regardless of age, gender, race and national culture can thrive and grow holistically. That is, we are committed to Central Mountains Baptist Church being a safe place for all people, with a special focus on the safety and wellbeing of children.

This **Code of Conduct** aims to detail the standards of conduct expected by staff (paid and voluntary) in the performance of their duties and to provide guidance in areas where there is a need to make personal and ethical decisions.

The **Code of Conduct** recognises and is aligned with all statutory and compliance requirements enshrined in State and Federal law. Central Mountains Baptist Church is committed to operating in accordance with this code of conduct, so that it provides a safe, ethical, and caring place for all users and activities.

## Complaints regarding child abuse

Where there is a complaint made regarding child abuse, especially child sexual abuse, the procedures for reporting such abuse are outlined in Section 4.

## Specific Expectations to Protect Children from Abuse

All those who minister or work under the auspices of Central Mountains Baptist Church with children should be fully aware of our **Child Protection Policy** and this **Code of Conduct**. Abusive behaviour towards children will not be tolerated and any and all allegations will be investigated and reported if found to be substantially true.

## DO:

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of, or in connection with, Central Mountains Baptist Church must:

- ◆ contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of harm/self-harm (telephone '000');
- ◆ adhere to the Child Protection Policy and Procedure and uphold Central Mountains Baptist Church's statement of commitment to child safety at all times;
- ◆ take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- ◆ contact a parent/guardian of the child to change a nappy or assist a child to go to the toilet.
- ◆ conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as an employee, volunteer, leader, worker, or contractor of Central Mountains Baptist Church and as a positive role model to children and young people;
- ◆ work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of Central Mountains Baptist Church;
- ◆ be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;
- ◆ maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;
- ◆ establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
- ◆ take care in the context of physical games, both in regard to injury that may be caused, and also in relation to the example that is set for the children.
- ◆ be fair, considerate and honest with others;
- ◆ treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas, opinions and backgrounds;
- ◆ promote the cultural safety acceptance, participation and encouragement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island child's self-identification);
- ◆ promote the safety acceptance, participation and encouragement of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination);
- ◆ promote the safety, participation and encouragement of children with a disability;
- ◆ listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they are or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child;
- ◆ ensure (as far as practicable) that adults are not alone with a child;
- ◆ ensure that a child worker should be present with children from the arrival of the first child to the departure of the last child.
- ◆ During a camp situation where children will be staying away from their parents/guardians overnight sleeping arrangements will be organised to ensure the children's safety. Normally parents/guardians will be informed of the intended sleeping arrangements beforehand.
- ◆ For trips, camps and outings I acknowledge that there are to be at least two workers supervising the children at all times, and I will take care that there are adequate workers to ensure the appropriate oversight and safety of the children at all times. Anyone transporting children not belonging to their family must be over 18 years of age. Minimum licence level P2.
- ◆ comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to reporting under legislation (see Section 4 – Procedures for Handling of Complaints and Allegations).
- ◆ raise concerns about suspected abuse with the pastor and/or Child Protection Officer as soon as possible;
- ◆ record and act upon (including all mandatory requirements) all allegations or suspicions of abuse, discrimination or harassment;
- ◆ if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) is/are safe;
- ◆ be professional in their actions;
- ◆ maintain strict impartiality;
- ◆ respect confidentiality when sharing information about children in accordance with the Child Protection Policy and Procedure and your reporting obligations;
- ◆ maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people;
- ◆ act with reasonable care towards children when they are present at church even when the primary responsibility rests with the parents/guardians. For example, if I see a toddler enter a car park unsupervised, I will act;
- ◆ carry out my ministry responsibility with faithfulness. I will make proper arrangements if for some reason I must be absent from a ministry commitment. Proper arrangements include contacting my ministry leader or, if I am a ministry leader, the pastor.
- ◆ cooperate with the overall program of the church and with my ministry leader. If at any time this becomes impossible, I will resign and let someone else take my place so that the cause of Christ may not be harmed.
- ◆ spend adequate time preparing for each ministry opportunity.
- ◆ pray regularly for those children under me in ministry; and
- ◆ operate within the policies, procedures and guidelines of Central Mountains Baptist Church and this Code.

## DO NOT:

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of Central Mountains Baptist Church must not:

- ◆ ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- ◆ put a child at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors for an improper reason);
- ◆ speak to a child in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Some examples are:
  - swearing or using inappropriate language in the presence of a child;
  - yelling at a child, except in an emergency situation where a child's safety may be in danger;
  - dealing with a child while the adult is angry with the child; and
  - using hurtful sarcasm.
- ◆ discuss sexual activities with a child unless it is a specific job requirement (e.g., counsellor) and the person is equipped to discuss these matters;
- ◆ have contact with a child outside of church activities without the knowledge and/or consent of Central Mountains Baptist Church's leadership and/or the parents/guardian;
- ◆ have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) unless their parents/guardian or ministry worker are copied in (that is, fully informed of the content of any online contact);
- ◆ use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account to communicate with a child without parental/guardian knowledge;
- ◆ exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child unless necessary; if this is necessary it should be done through the parents/guardians
- ◆ make use of a breakout room when using online platforms with children and young people.
- ◆ allow children or young people to enter an online meeting until two or more are present in the waiting room.
- ◆ use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol while in the presence of or while supervising a child;
- ◆ use, possess, or be under the influence of any impairing substances whether prescription or illegal while in the presence of or while supervising a child;
- ◆ provide or allow a child to consume alcohol;
- ◆ provide or allow a child to consume illegal drugs or abuse prescription drugs;
- ◆ initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
- ◆ engage in rough physical games, hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive way;
- ◆ engage in any sexual contact with a child for any purpose;
- ◆ take a child to your home or encourage meetings outside program activities (unless parental/guardian permission has been provided and the pastor informed);
- ◆ be naked in the presence of a child;
- ◆ possess sexually explicit printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.);
- ◆ sleep in the same bed, sleeping bag, room or tent with a child/children;
- ◆ discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender identity, sex, race, culture, sexuality, or disability;
- ◆ engage in any activity with a child that is likely can be reasonably expected to physically or emotionally harm them; Biblical teaching protects children
- ◆ be alone with a child unnecessarily and for more than a very short time;
- ◆ develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child for their own needs;
- ◆ show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
- ◆ photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
- ◆ administer physical punishment;
- ◆ do anything in contravention of Central Mountains Baptist Church's policies, procedures, guidelines or this Code.

**DECLARATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read the Code of Conduct and the Child Protection Policy and Procedures that express the intent of Central Mountains Baptist Church to protect and nurture children and other vulnerable people.

I declare that:

I have never made any kind of sexual approach to a child whether verbal or physical at any place nor at any time. I have never been involved with or convicted of, nor am I currently under investigation for any violence, sexual assault, or other crime against a child. I understand that a NSW Government 'Working With Children Check' showing clearance to work with children must be obtained to verify my claims (not applicable if you are less than 18 years old). I will make the results of this check available to the clerical assistant for verification. I understand this clearance lasts for five years. I understand that the applicable government agency responsible for child protection will conduct interim criminal history checks during this period. I understand my responsibilities as a mandatory reporter in my role in children's ministry and my responsibilities under the Reportable Conduct Scheme overseen by the Office of the Children's Guardian.

I understand that should I fail to meet my commitments as set out above, I could be asked to withdraw from children's ministry at Central Mountains Baptist Church.

I make this declaration believing it to be true.

I agree to comply with these rules, expectations, Child Protection Policy and Procedures and Code of Conduct. I am aware that if I breach these, and/or break the law, that my actions will be reported to the Police and/or the Child Protection agencies.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_

**Pastor and Child Protection Officer Only**

When a report of inappropriate activity is received, I will ensure that an appropriate investigation / action / report will be implemented. According to the circumstances, this response plan may include reporting the situation to the police, to the relevant government department, and to the insurers.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_

**For Contractors, subcontractors, delivery persons or others engaged to provide services on the premises of Central Mountains Baptist Church**

I have been provided with a copy of Central Mountains Baptist Church's 'Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People'. I am willing to comply with the expectations set down in this policy and code of conduct. I have never made any kind of sexual approach to a child whether verbal or physical at any place nor at any time. I have never been involved with or convicted of, nor am I currently under investigation for any violence, sexual assault, or other crime against a child.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_

