



Student Code of Conduct

1 The Rationale for a Code

Ministry is a call to serve both God and people. Students are firstly accountable to God (1 Corinthians 4:4-5), but also to church members and those who receive ministry (Ephesians 4:1-2). Ministers are public figures whose lives are on display and are viewed with considerable public scrutiny. A high degree of conformity is expected with the biblical call to holiness (Matthew 5:48; Titus 2:7-8). Accordingly, personal relationships are to be characterised by love, justice, care, and compassion (Micah 6:8). A minister is firstly a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 2:6), and as such ministry is grounded in prayer, Bible study, regular worship and a readiness to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20).

Students of our College are to live and minister in accordance with biblical values. Additionally, it is expected that every profession have a code of conduct that sets an benchmark of excellence for the society in which it seeks to minister. Ministers are to be examples in the creation of healthy communities. Students are likewise called to the highest standards as they train for ministry and leadership in the Christian community.

The following guidelines are designed to identify areas, articulate relevant principles, note areas of caution, and state what is clearly prohibited in terms of biblical conduct for the students of our College.

2 The Purpose of the Code

This code is intended to guide the behaviour of students of our College. It is articulated to assist students to serve in such a manner that it will cause our churches and ministries to be safe places for all; places where integrity is honoured, accountability is practised, misconduct is not concealed, and forgiveness is encouraged to bring about healing and restoration.

Improper conduct is generally regarded as behaviour that in all the circumstances of a case is an inappropriate or incorrect way of discharging a person's duties, obligations, or responsibilities.

This Code of Conduct sets out the standard that is expected of students, and therefore is an important document for determining whether a person has committed improper conduct. A breach of a **"Prohibited"** provision will always be improper conduct and will result in disciplinary action. A breach of a **"Cautionary"** provision, depending on the circumstances may be improper conduct, and may result in disciplinary action.

3 The Code of Conduct

3.1 Pastoral Example

Students should live with integrity (1 Timothy 1:11-12). The values of the Gospel of Christ should be obvious to members of the church and wider society (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1). It is also important for students to have a healthy lifestyle and a balance of service, recreation, and family (Ecclesiastes 3:1-11; Titus 1:6).

Students should be good citizens and obey the laws of the community (Proverbs 24:21; Romans 13:1-4; 1 Peter 2:11-17). The only rare exception may be when a Christian engages in non-violent civil disobedience as a matter of protest (Acts 4:18-20).



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Caution

Addictive behaviours: Scripture requires that we exercise caution in the use of alcohol (Proverbs 20:1; 1 Corinthians 6:12; 1 Corinthians 8). Abstinence is a stand that is highly respected in our College. Students must not smoke anywhere on the college premises. Extreme caution must also be exercised with all potentially addictive and harmful behaviours that bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardise our own or another's faith.

Language: The use of offensive language should also be avoided (such as swear words, sexual connotations, and racial or religious slurs).

Prohibited

Students must avoid drunkenness, gambling, and abstain from the use of all illegal drugs (Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:21).

3.2 Ministry Matters

Authority to minister comes from Jesus Christ; the head of the Church (Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 12:27). Christian leadership must never be manipulative or authoritarian (John 15:15). Students are servants of Christ, who should endeavour to become servant leaders as modelled by Jesus (John 13:3-14). Leadership in all its dimensions must always be accountable, and it is essential that students act responsibly in the best interests of the entire college community (James 3:1; 1 Peter 5:2-4).

Caution

Qualifications: Students must not misrepresent their competence, qualifications, training, or experience. Students should recognise their level of skill and experience. If they are unsure, they must seek additional advice from other colleagues or other professionals.

Personal Relationships: Students should also be aware of the danger of dependency developing in personal relationships, and seek supervision or advice when such concerns arise. A balance should be found between the need for mutual support and the need for accountability.

Ministry Gifts: The College encourages the operation of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7). There are a variety of gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4) and the true exercise of these gifts will always be consistent with the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). For example, prophecy is to be exercised for "**strengthening, encouragement and comfort**" (1 Corinthians 14:3). Students must always be willing to held accountable, admitting to the possibility of human error when exercising the gifts of the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21).

Public Comments: We live in a society that has become increasingly sensitive to matters of discrimination and vilification. Students must show respect and godly care to all people, inside or outside the college community (Colossians 4:6). Care must be taken in how students speak of the ministry of Harvest, Christian leaders and others in all public forums (including social networking sites) (Mark 9:40), since reputation is highly valued in Scripture (Proverbs 22:1).

Care must also be exercised when students express a personal opinion on controversial matters, and distinguish the expressing of a personal opinion, from speaking on behalf of the College (1 Corinthians 7:12).



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Prohibited

Students must not be abusive in any way toward others (1 Timothy 3:2-5; Titus 1:7).

The misuse of authority can be a particular temptation in leadership and must be avoided. Students must not attempt to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit to manipulate or coerce a person. This includes attempting to use healing for financial gain; attributing miracles for personal glory; or using a word of knowledge to control an individual; or using prophecy to change church membership or to enlist support for a ministry. Accountability in all areas of ministry is essential.

3.3 Sexual Behaviour

Sexuality is a gift from God and integral to human nature. Students must value this gift by maintaining chastity in singleness and faithfulness in heterosexual marriage (Proverbs 5:18, 6:32; 1 Corinthians 7:2). All immoral behaviour, including homosexual behaviour is not tolerated by the college.

The college encourages modesty in personal presentation and dress, both at college and elsewhere.

Caution

Children: Being especially vulnerable, children are entitled to be safe and protected. All student interaction with children must be characterised by absolute trustworthiness.

Physical contact: Caution must always be exercised when initiating or receiving physical contact including gestures of comfort that may be unwanted or misinterpreted.

Pastoral conversations: Students must be careful in personal conversations when discussing matters of sexual intimacy.

Prohibited

All inappropriate sexual behaviour is forbidden.

Sexual innuendo or compliments of a sexual nature are always inappropriate.

Students must not view pornographic material or go to places of commercialised sex such as strip clubs or visit a brothel (Matthew 5:28; 2 Peter 2:14a; Proverbs 5:3-6; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Ephesians 5:12). Additionally, they must avoid chat rooms or internet sites of a sexual nature.

3.4 Financial Matters

Students must set an example and practice integrity in all their financial dealings.

Caution

Conflicts of interest: It is important to avoid any potential conflict between personal finances and pastoral responsibilities. Anything that could lead to a conflict of interest must be immediately disclosed to students' pastoral oversight or appropriate manager. (2 Corinthians 8:21; James 2:1, 2-4).

Students must avoid borrowing money from, or lending money to, a person with whom there is a pastoral relationship.



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Confidentiality

Trust is essential in personal ministry. Those involved in personal care must note that both formal interviews and casual conversations in a ministry context are personal encounters where confidences are shared and confidential information received. This information must not be disclosed, and must be treated with the utmost care. Exceptions may include, disclosure is required by law (subpoena or abuse notifications), where there are concerns for the safety of the person or others, or when the information is in the public domain.

IV The Implementation of the Code

If questions arise with areas of “**Caution**,” the individual student must contact the Director of Training and make full disclosure.

With any breach of the Code of Conduct in a “**Prohibited**” area the student in breach must notify the Director of Training (or the person fulfilling those duties at that time) within 7 days (24 hours if civil or criminal action is involved).

Failure to notify in accordance with the paragraph above will itself be a “**Prohibited**” breach of the code.

Acknowledgements.

This code has drawn on the following codes of conduct, ethical statements, and ministerial guidelines:

1. *ACC Victoria Minister's Manual 2009: State Minister's Manual for Assemblies of God (Australia), Victorian Edition.*
2. *Faithfulness in Service: A national code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and church workers (General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia Child Protection Committee, Draft - 2004)*
3. *Code of Professional Ethics for the practice of Pastoral Ministry: A guide for church workers and their communities (General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia Child Protection Committee, Draft - 2003)*
4. *The Code of Good Practice: (Anglican Church of Australia Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, 2005)*
5. *Code of Ethics applicable to ministers of Churches of Christ and The protocol for investigating complaints on matters pertaining to Sexuality: (Churches of Christ in Australia adopted 1997 and amended for Churches of Christ in Queensland 1998-1999)*
6. *Pentecostal Ministerial Ethics: Pastor Harry Leesment (1988)*
7. *Statement of Moral Integrity: Pastor Rick Warren.*
8. *A Statement of Restoration and Re-instatement of Disciplined Ministers.*
9. New South Wales Registration Board Guidelines for Psychologists.