Baptist Churches
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Code of Good Leadership Practices

Through His word God directs us to live out our ministry roles with integrity, enthusiasm, compassion and patience (2 Cor 6:3, 2 Tim 4:2, 2 Tim 4:5, Eph 2:10).

A Code of Good Leadership Practices provides guidelines on appropriate boundaries rather than assuming that people know what the appropriate boundaries are.

The five key sections following provide an overview of what Baptist Churches Western Australia (BCWA) expects of those in leadership as they exercise their ministry and in their personal lives. It also provides a step by step procedure for loving leaders through a healing process when the break or damage the code. This code is not a set of laws to be added to grace, but rather, expressions of our love towards each other and the people to whom we minister.

Maintain a Healthy Relationship with God

We minister to others out of our relationship with God. We can promote our relationship with God by:

- Joining regularly in the life and ministry of the church
- Studying the Scriptures in private and in groups
- Praying regularly in private and in fellowship, with and for, the people and ministry of the church
- Giving of our time and finances to the work of the church as an expression of our gratitude to God.

Be Diligent in Exercising Ministry

If you are exercising a pastoral ministry in a church body you are encouraged to:

- Take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and welfare of those in your care
- Respect, listen to and attempt to meet individual needs
- Give careful consideration to the choice of activities, ensuring adequate supervision and age, gender, ability and cultural appropriateness
- Ensure that in the case of ministry programs to those under 18 years, there are sufficient ratios of adults to children present for the adequate supervision of ministry activities.
- Ensure that Junior Team members, who are under 18 years of age, will not be given sole responsibility to supervise other minors and are to be under the supervision of adults in the same proximity.
- Be welcoming and affirming of others as individuals who are precious in God's sight, avoiding any appearance of favouritism, or 'special' relationships with those under your care

- Provide clear behavioural expectations for those under your care and refrain from any form of corporal punishment
- Ensure that the content of any printed, media, music or digital material to be used is suitable and appropriate to the age and maturity of the group being taught or entertained.

Be Accountable and Transparent in Interactions

As leaders of integrity, we hold ourselves accountable to each other and recognise that we are responsible for our words and actions and how they might impact others. Part of our desire to be accountable relates to utilising transparent practices in our ministry to others. We are to be seen to be doing the right thing and are responsible for our actions. In our interactions with children, it is recommended that:

- You avoid working alone or in isolation
- Individual or small group ministry occurs in the presence of adults, a public place or a location with visibility
- Counselling to children or young people should be performed in the presence of two responsible adults or leaders
- To the extent practicable, avoid being alone with a child in a motor vehicle.

Exercise Appropriate Physical Contact

Appropriate physical contact is important for the healthy development of children. In general:

- Excluding circumstances such as immediate physical danger or medical emergency, physical contact should be initiated by the child
- Ensure that physical contact is of a nonsexual nature
- Great care should be exercised when comforting a distressed person of any age.

Minister with Integrity

The personal behaviour and relationships of all in leadership has a significant impact on the church and the community because they are a model to others. As you consider your impact on others, be mindful of:

- Loving and caring for your family and paying particular attention to the effect of your ministry on your family relationships
- Displaying behaviours and attitudes that are above reproach when interacting with others
- Being sensitive and respectful towards family and cultural traditions different from your own
- Avoiding language that may be misunderstood or that bullies, threatens, belittles, humiliates or causes unnecessary offence or embarrassment
- Exercising discretion and appropriateness when considering, viewing or using restricted material
- Applying appropriate standards of dress as a model to others
- Exercising integrity and accountability in financial matters on behalf of BCWA and in personal dealings
- Exercising integrity in the use of media, print based materials and intellectual property
- Treating all personal information with sensitivity and confidentiality, in accordance with the

Church Privacy Policy and the National Privacy Principles.

When the Code is Damaged

Occasional / Minor Violations

Everyone sins and can be forgiven (1 John 1:8-9). 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 about receiving help. In some cases, it may be necessary to step the person aside from their duties while this takes place. Deal with such matters confidentially.

Unknown Violations

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 not to discredit the gospel. As above, stepping a person aside from their duties may be necessary.

Constant Violations

There are breaches that are not a breach of civil or criminal law. When a leader is made aware of their behaviour and yet refuses to change:

i) The ministry coordinator meets with the person for a series of behaviour review meetings and communicates behavioural changes that are required.

ii) If the behaviour continues, a small group of church leaders are to arrange a meeting to address the behaviour. Stepping aside is appropriate at this point.

iii) If the behaviour continues 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: Witten notes of all meetings are to be carefully taken and a copy given to all attendees. Another copy should be stored in a secure location as part of the record keeping of the church.

Breaches of the Law or Allegations of Abuse

Allegations of abuse or serious misconduct are to be referred to BCWA. If a leader or minister commits a crime, please contact the Baptist Ministry Centre on 6313 6300 as soon as possible.

Contact Information

BCWA
08 6313 6300 | www.baptistwa.asn.au
safechurch@baptistwa.asn.au

These guidelines have been endorsed by the Baptist Churches Western Australia for use in churches and associated organisations.

Baptist Churches Western Australia has adopted the Safe Church Training Agreement through the National Council of Churches in Australia. Due to the autonomy of the local church, we cannot demand that our churches implement the Safe Church Policy. This policy is endorsed by the Baptist Churches Western Australia and in any legal proceedings you may be

asked if such recommendations exist and if so, whether or not they were followed. As such, we strongly encourage you to implement this policy.