



February 2024



Leaders, Staff & Volunteers Conduct Covenant

Every staff member and volunteer are required to receive and sign a copy of this Conduct Covenant whenever they start any new position in the church. All Pastors and Church Leaders (including all members of the Church Council) are required to read and review this Conduct Covenant annually. The church will safely and confidentially retain all signed copies of this Conduct Covenant for 100 years.

Purpose:

Ettalong Baptist Church is committed to creating safe spaces where people can be confident that they will be cared for, nurtured, and encouraged as they grow and at the same time, protected from spiritual, physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

As part of this commitment, staff and volunteers are required to sign and abide by this Conduct Covenant.

The *Conduct Covenant* sets out the following:

- the ministry commitments of staff, church leaders and volunteers;
- minimum behavioural standards and appropriate boundaries required of staff, church leaders and volunteers;
- the obligation of staff, church leaders and volunteers to comply with Safe Church Policy and Procedures; and
- the steps to be taken in the event of a potential breach of this Covenant.

This *Conduct Covenant* seeks to reflect the biblical call to godliness and faithfulness in ministry (e.g. 1 Timothy 3) but it is not intended as a replacement for the Bible as a The Conduct Covenant seeks to reflect the biblical call to fundamental guide for faith and practice.

Scope:

The *Conduct Covenant* applies to all staff and volunteers of Ettalong Baptist Church.

The *Conduct Covenant* should be read in conjunction with the *Safe Church Policy* and:

- Procedure for Staff and Volunteers
- Responding to Child Protection Concerns
- Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers
- Conflict Resolution Policy

1. Staff, Church Leaders and Volunteers are encouraged to:

Always respect the beliefs of the church:

Nurture their own relationship with God:

- join regularly in the life and ministry of the Church;
- study and reflect on the Scriptures in private and in groups;
- pray regularly in private and in fellowship with and for the people and ministry of the Church; and
- give of their time and finances to the work of the Church, as an expression of our gratitude to God.

Nurture healthy relationships:

- treat others with respect;
- love and care for their family (including paying attention to the effect of ministry on them);
- be a team player;
- be accountable;
- cooperate with other staff and volunteers;
- treat every program participant fairly and equitably, paying special care to include those who may find it difficult to participate; and
- acknowledge when they are out of their depth, or do not possess the required skill set in difficult pastoral situations (such as helping a victim of abuse, or a person who needs professional counselling), and seek help from the Safe Church Team or a Pastor.

2. Staff, Church Leaders and Volunteers commit to:

As a staff member / leader / volunteer of the Church, I promise to:

- a) respect and support the mission, beliefs and values of the Church and any other doctrinal statements of the Church (as may be outlined in the Church Constitution or other Church documents);
- b) uphold, support, and abide by the Safe Church Policy;
- c) respond to reasonable directions from the person with responsibility for the ministry I am involved in;
- d) communicate with integrity, including wise and accountable use of electronic communication, including in accordance with Guidelines for Activities with Children and Youth;
- e) not knowingly make false, misleading, or deceptive statements;
- f) not engage in bullying, harassment, emotional abuse, spiritual abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, of any person including my own family;
- g) not engage in sexual misconduct (especially minors);
- h) not act violently or intentionally provoke violence;
- i) uphold confidentiality; not disclose any confidential information without the consent of the person providing the information (except where there is a legal or ethical obligation to disclose)
- j) report concerns about misconduct and/or abuse according to the Church's Safe Church Policy and relevant procedures;
- k) disclose all relevant information as part of completing the Safe Ministry Screening Questionnaire if I have not already done so;
- l) disclose to the Church Leadership if I am investigated for any criminal offences or have any knowledge of serious unlawful activity within the church context as soon as practicable;

- m) act with sexual purity, meaning I will:
- respect Ettalong Baptist Churches position on marriage;
 - express my sexuality in healthy and God directed ways;
 - recognise that it is inappropriate to access any type of pornographic material and, if I struggle with this addiction, I will seek professional help;
 - ensure that romantic interactions are meaningfully consensual;
 - give consideration to any power imbalances in intimate relationships; and
 - ***[for those in leadership roles within the church]*** I will restrict sexual intimacy to the confines of the marriage relationship (where marriage has the same meaning as in the Marriage Rites of the Baptist Union of Australia i.e. 'the union between a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life').
- n) act with financial integrity, including:
- having accountable and transparent systems in place for financial matters; and
 - not seeking personal advantage or financial gain from our position (other than in wages, recognised allowances and deductions).
- o) not take or use property belonging to others without express consent, including intellectual property (copyright);
- p) not use any prohibited substance and be responsible in my use of substances that may be addictive (e.g., prescriptions, alcohol);
- q) avoid ongoing counselling of people with whom I have pastoral relationships; and
- r) make alternative arrangements for pastoral ministry for any person with whom I may develop a romantic or intimate relationship.

3. All Staff, Church Leaders & Volunteers must sign this Conduct Covenant:

I understand If there is a complaint against me relating to a breach of this Conduct Covenant:

- a) and it is a plausible complaint relating to serious misconduct and/or abuse (including child sexual abuse), the Church may ask me to step aside from my duties while the complaint is being considered; and/or
- b) if the complaint relates to serious misconduct and/or abuse (including child sexual abuse) it will be reported to relevant authorities in accordance with relevant legal requirements; and/or
- c) I agree to participate in any process initiated under the Procedure for Resolving Conflict, Procedure for Handling Complaints against Staff and Volunteers and/or Procedure for Responding to Child Protection Concerns and agree to be bound by the outcomes of any such process, which may include termination of my employment/engagement as a staff member, church leader or volunteer with the Church.

If I am a Pastoral staff member, I:

- a) agree to uphold and be bound by the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Code of Ethics and Conduct;
- b) understand that a breach of the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Code of Ethics and Conduct will be considered a breach of this Conduct Covenant; and
- c) (if I am an Accredited or Recognised Minister) agree to participate in, and be bound by the outcomes of, any process initiated under the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT Procedures for Handling Allegations.

I, _____ have read and agree to be bound by and uphold this covenant. In God's strength I will strive to keep this covenant and will make amends when I fall short.

Signed

Date