

Foreword

This Code of Conduct has some parts which have been adapted from “A Guide to developing a Code of Conduct for Church Leaders” by the Baptist Union Leaders of Victoria and from “Code of Conduct for Church Personnel of the Archdiocese of Baltimore”. These can be found at <https://www.buv.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/A-Guide-to-Developing-a-Code-of-Conduct-for-Church-Leaders.pdf> and <https://www.archbalt.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Code-of-Conduct-Text-FINAL.pdf> respectively.

Code of Conduct

We, St Andrew’s United Reformed Church, Upper Hanover St, Sheffield S3 7RQ, believe that our behaviour should be of a high ethical standard that brings glory and honour to God. We believe that every human has been made in the image of God and as such should be treated with dignity and respect. Our desire as a church team is to inspire, encourage and build one-another up in our efforts to glorify God in our work.

The Code of Conduct has been created to lay out clear guidelines about the behaviours that are expected by the Church and behaviours that will NOT be condoned. It does not provide specific guidance for every individual situation that may arise in the Church or at church events and is not intended to be exhaustive. Instead, it aims to advise church staff in making informed decisions about appropriate behaviours.

St Andrew’s United Reformed Church values the social, physical, mental and interpersonal wellbeing of people. We respect the importance of pastoral work carried out by our church leaders and encourage transparent, accountable relationships that promote trust and confidence in the work of the Church and in the Church itself.

We, St Andrew’s United Reformed Church value living in accordance with the gospel and commit ourselves to living out the following qualities in all areas of our lives:

- Loving others
- Kindness
- Generosity and Thankfulness
- Compassion
- Community
- Humility
- Justice
- Patience
- Slow to Anger
- Forgiveness
- Putting others first
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Equality
- Service and Stewardship
- Confidentiality

We commit ourselves to:

1. Carry out our duties in a way that glorifies God and honours his Church.
2. Treat everyone with care, kindness, honesty, love and respect whatever their **age**, race, gender, sexuality, position or religious beliefs.
3. In all financial matters act with integrity and transparency, being able to give an account publicly for all monies handled by us on behalf of others.
4. Be truthful and honest with each other in our opinions, ideas, concerns and reflections. Communicate genuinely and openly with one another.
5. To be thorough and diligent in our work when providing each other with information and resources to fulfil our roles and be aware of the expectations others have of us.

6. Encourage and support each other and church members.
7. Where disagreements or grievances occur and a resolution is not forthcoming, we will seek additional assistance.
8. In instances of conflict or division, we will make every effort to biblically pursue reconciliation and resolution.
9. Issues pertaining to criminal actions, allegations of abuse, serious misconduct, bullying or sexual misconduct will be referred to the appropriate authorities.

Harassment and Bullying

We will actively promote a safe environment that is free from abuse of any nature. This includes:

1. Harassment- this is unwelcome conduct verbal or physical, intentional or unintentional, that makes a person feel offended, belittled or threatened. This can be because of race, gender, national origin, age, disability or handicap. It may be an isolated event or a series of incidents over time. It can include:
 - Unwelcome physical contact
 - Unjustified or unnecessary comments about a person's attributes or abilities
 - Gestures or language that could give offence including unwarranted shouting
 - Display of offensive materials
 - Requests for sexual favours
2. Bullying - this can include exclusion from a group or activity; intimidation or extortion.

Interactions with Minors

When interacting with minors (people under the age of 18) we shall promote trustworthy and honest relationships between minors and adults and recognise our responsibilities as stated in our Safeguarding Policy, which was updated on 16 September, 2021 in line with Safeguarding 5(URC).

1. Church personnel shall never physically discipline a minor.
2. Adequate staffing will be provided, and sensible precautions shall be taken to ensure church personnel avoid working alone with a minor.
3. Church personnel shall not drive alone with a minor.
4. Church personnel shall never send inappropriate electronic communications or content to a minor. All contact with a minor shall be church-related and will never be hidden from parents or others.
5. Appropriate boundaries shall be established and respected. Inappropriate contact between a minor and church personnel will never take place. Church personnel will not engage in any sexual or inappropriate physical touch with a minor. Any sexualized touch or 'secret interaction with a minor is never appropriate.
6. Church personnel will never supply a minor with alcohol, drugs, illegal substances, tobacco products, pornography or other inappropriate material.

Support

When offering guidance or spiritual direction, we shall be confidential, respectful and progress the welfare of the individual.

1. Those providing counselling, spiritual direction or guidance shall be aware of their competencies and will not act beyond them. Instead, they will advise the person they are counselling to seek further professional assistance.
2. Those providing counselling, spiritual direction or guidance will take full responsibility for maintaining clear and appropriate boundaries in their professional relationships.
3. Before meeting with an individual, the Elder will take time to evaluate the appropriateness of entering into a long-term guidance relationship with someone, particularly if they already have a pre-existing relationship with said individual.

4. Physical contact should be respectful and consistent with the aims to make a suitable, safe and appropriate environment for counselling.
5. Knowledge that arises from professional contact may be used in teaching, writing or other public presentations only when certain that you are able to absolutely safeguard both the individual's identity and the confidentiality of the disclosures.
6. Information gained through the course of sessions with adults shall be confidential except for compelling professional reasons or those required by law.
 - 6.1. If there is clear or imminent danger to the client or to others, those providing guidance, counselling and direction shall disclose the information necessary to protect the parties affected and to prevent harm.
 - 6.2. Suspected abuse or neglect must be reported to civil authorities.
7. The person providing pastoring, counselling, guidance or spiritual direction will, as soon as possible, explain the nature of confidentiality and its limitations with each person.

Sexual Conduct

1. Church personnel must not exploit the trust placed in them by the faith community for sexual gain or intimacy.
2. Church personnel must be particularly careful to avoid sexual misconduct, including possession of or distribution of pornography in the workplace. Church personnel should avoid even the appearance of sexual misconduct.
3. Church personnel should report to the Safeguarding Officer or Church Secretary or (if appropriate) to the required legal authorities any violation of the sexual conduct laid out above.

Upholding this Code of Conduct

Anyone experiencing or witnessing any breaches of the Code of Conduct are expected to report them to the Church Secretary.

Those who breach the Code of Conduct will be subject to St Andrew's United Reformed Church's disciplinary action which in some cases may result in exclusion. Serious breaches may also result in the person responsible being reported to the police.

St Andrew's United Reformed Church is committed to ensuring a safe and respectful environment for everyone, whatever their age, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or race.

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed (annually) on or before 28 September, 2023.

Signed:

Date: