



## **POLICY AND PROCEDUES**

### **Code of Conduct**

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## 1. OVERVIEW

- a) Through His Word, God directs us to be imitators of Him (Eph 5:1-2) and to conform to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29). This is the highest standard of behaviour and conduct that we can aim for both personally and in Assembly ministry. Wilson Gospel Chapel (WGC) is therefore committed to this Biblical standard and expects those in leadership, volunteer roles, and general fellowship to live a life consistent with Biblical principles.
- b) We acknowledge that every member and person who attends our church needs to be confident that they will be cared for, nurtured, and encouraged as they grow and, at the same time, are protected from spiritual, physical, and emotional harm. All those in fellowship are encouraged to strive to be productive and contributing members of WGC.

## 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to outline the expectations of behaviour for leadership specifically and our interactions with one another generally. It is not intended to cover every set of circumstances, but to provide guidelines on appropriate boundaries and to inform what actions are supported and which are not. It applies to all members in fellowship at WGC.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

- a) **Assembly** means the members who meet regularly in fellowship at WGC.
- b) **Child** means an individual or group of individuals who are under the age of 18 years. In the absence of positive evidence as to age, a child is a person who appears to be under 18 years of age.
- c) **Leader** means anyone who has some responsibility at WGC. This responsibility may include a delegation of authority, the care or supervision of others (including children), the ability to recruit others, or being able to make decisions that will affect ministry participants. A leader acts as a representative of WGC.
- d) **Ministry** means the services, programs, and any other activities organised and run by WGC.
- e) **Oversight** means the management committee of Wilson Gospel Chapel Inc. The Oversight consists of the Elders of the Assembly and a Deacon appointed as Treasurer.



## 4. POLICY STATEMENTS

### 4.1 General Standards

These standards are applicable to all who attend or are in fellowship at WGC:

- a) We aim to preserve the unity of the body of Christ by:
  - i. treating others with respect and dignity;
  - ii. working together across all aspects of the Assembly to ensure a safe and harmonious fellowship;
  - iii. being sensitive and respectful towards differing family and cultural traditions;
  - iv. actively discouraging harassment and discrimination and avoiding language and actions that might be construed as bullying, threatening, belittling, humiliating, or otherwise causing unnecessary offence or embarrassment;
  - v. being faithful to our appointed tasks and striving to be productive and contributing members of WGC;
  
- b) We minister out of a personal relationship with God by:
  - i. joining regularly in the life and ministries of WGC;
  - ii. studying the Scriptures in private and in groups;
  - iii. praying regularly in private and in fellowship with and for the people and ministries of WGC;
  - iv. giving of our time and finances to the work of WGC as an expression of our gratitude to God;
  
- c) We serve others in the context of healthy relationships by:
  - i. loving and caring for our families, paying attention to the effect of ministries on them;
  - ii. respecting one another's right to privacy and upholding confidentiality;
  - iii. being a team player, submitting to the Oversight, and cooperating with leaders and those in fellowship;
  - iv. using language that encourages and builds others up; not ridiculing, embarrassing or gossiping about people;
  - v. treating all adults and children with respect as individuals made in the image of God, and never using physical punishment or abusive language even as a form of discipline;
  - vi. exercising appropriate, nonsexual physical contact.



## 4.2 Leadership Standards

As leaders, God directs us to live out our roles with integrity, enthusiasm, compassion, and patience (2 Cor 6:3; 2 Tim 4:2; 2 Tim 4:5). These standards apply primarily to those in positions of leadership.

As Christian leaders we will:

- a) maintain the priority of Scripture as our final authority on all matters of faith and conduct;
- b) be accountable to each other as a leadership team, watching out for one another and protecting each other's integrity (e.g. never alone with one child or a vulnerable adult);
- c) teach and exercise our authority respectfully, giving careful consideration to the choice of ministry activities that will be undertaken and ensuring adequate supervision;
- d) ensure that there are sufficient adults (18 years and over) present to provide adequate supervision in the case of ministries to those under 18 years;
- e) always act in the best interests of those we serve and encourage openness by listening to people's concerns with a desire to nurture their spiritual growth and meet their individual needs;
- f) treat every member and visitor equally as precious in God's sight, with no appearance of favouritism or 'special' relationships;
- g) communicate with integrity, including accountable and wise use of electronic communication;
- h) respect the privacy of others and their right to have their personal information handled correctly;
- i) uphold confidentiality, including not disclosing to anyone any confidential information without the consent of the person providing the information. The only exception to this is where there is a legal obligation to disclose information or a duty of care issue;
- j) avoid ongoing counselling of people with whom we have a ministry/pastoral relationship; assisting people to find appropriate and qualified help where needed;



- k) acknowledge when we are out of our depth or do not possess the required skills or knowledge in a given situation (e.g. helping a victim of abuse, or a person who needs professional counselling) and to seek appropriate advice and help;
- l) not take property belonging to others, including intellectual property (copyright);
- m) not knowingly make false, misleading, deceptive, or defamatory statements;
- n) not engage in bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, sexual grooming, or spiritual abuse of any person, including our own families;
- o) not act violently or intentionally provoke violence if engaged in civil disobedience;
- p) be responsible in our use of addictive substances and services (e.g. prescribed medications, alcohol);
- q) not use any prohibited substance, and not attend WGC services, participate in WGC ministries or represent WGC while under the influence of any such substances;
- r) act with sexual purity, viewing sexuality as a gift from God and expressing our sexuality in healthy and God-directed ways (e.g. marriage between a man and a woman);
- s) act with financial integrity, including having accountable and transparent systems in place for financial matters, and not accepting any gifts, money or favours which might compromise our testimony, integrity, or sound judgment;
- t) not seek personal advantage or financial gain from positions of leadership (other than any recognised allowances and deductions which may apply), including converting any funds, information, or property of WGC to our own benefit or assisting another to do so;
- u) ensure that the facilities and activities run at WGC are safe and do not put people at risk of significant harm;
- v) disclose to WGC leadership if we are or have been investigated for any criminal offences or have any knowledge of serious criminal activity;
- w) submit to disciplinary steps if found to have breached this Code of Conduct or otherwise acted in an inappropriate or illegal manner.



### 4.3 Interactions with Children

In our interactions with people under 18 years we will:

- a) avoid working alone or in isolation with a child;
- b) ensure that small group ministries such as Sunday School or devotions occur in the presence of at least two responsible adults in a public space or a location with visibility;
- c) ensure that any counselling given to children is performed in the presence of at least two responsible adults;
- d) to the extent practicable, ensure a child is not alone in a motor vehicle with an adult.

## 5. WHEN THIS CODE IS BREACHED

We acknowledge that 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (Rom 3:23), and yet, we may still repent and be forgiven (1 John 1:8-9). It therefore stands to reason that, despite our best intentions, this Code of Conduct can be breached. In these cases, the following guidelines apply:

- a) **Criminal breaches:** These must be referred to the appropriate authority, including allegations of abuse (physical, sexual, etc.) or serious misconduct.
- b) **Minor breaches:** Where the breach is not in an area of civil or criminal law, those in fellowship should simply cease the conduct. If this is difficult, the person should speak to the Elders about receiving help (e.g. counselling). In some cases, it may be necessary to temporarily remove a person from their duties whilst they deal with the breach. It is crucial to deal with such matters confidentially and sensitively.
- c) **Constant breaches:** There are breaches of this Code that are not a breach of civil or criminal law, but which still constitute unacceptable behaviour in a ministry context. Where a person in fellowship has been made aware of their behaviour and yet refuses to change or modify their behaviour:
  - i. the Elders will meet with the person for behaviour review meetings (no more than three). At these meetings, the breach will be clearly communicated along with the required behaviour. Clear written minutes are to be kept of each behaviour review meeting and copies provided to all parties;
  - ii. if the behaviour continues, the person is to be removed from any duties within the Assembly;
  - iii. if the behaviour continues beyond the review meetings and removal from duties, then respectfully, and upholding confidentiality, the person will be stood down from fellowship for a



set period (in accordance with the pattern for church discipline outlined in Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:12; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

- d) **Unknown breaches:** It is not expected that all leaders will always understand what constitutes unacceptable behaviour as a breach of this Code of Conduct. Even after explaining the Code, some leaders may be unaware that they are continuing to exhibit unacceptable behaviours. Leaders need to be open to correction and humble enough to modify behaviours so as to not discredit the gospel. Removing a leader temporarily from their duties may be necessary.
- e) **Record keeping:** Copies of all minutes and documentation regarding branches will be kept confidentially by Wilson Gospel Chapel.
- f) A process for management of concerns and complaints is outlined in our Safe Ministry Policy.
- g) A process for management of an incident is outlined in our Safe Ministry Incident Management Policy.