



# Newtown Mission – Leaders Code of Conduct

(Including Jordan Café, Annandale Creative Arts Centre and Tempe Uniting Church)



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This Leaders Code of Conduct outlines ministry-appropriate boundaries. It applies to all elders, church councillors and program leaders in our church, both paid and volunteer.

We acknowledge that everyone 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, protected from spiritual, physical, sexual, emotional or psychological harm. We want everyone who comes to our churches, or who in some manner interacts with our church communities, to be able to acknowledge them as safe places.

**In light of the above, we therefore commit to the following ministry standards:**

**1. We minister out of a relationship with God by:**

- a. joining regularly in the life and ministry of the church.
- b. studying the Scriptures in private and in groups.
- c. praying regularly in private and in fellowship with and for the people and ministry of the church.
- d. giving of our time and finances to the work of the church, as an expression of our gratitude to God.

**2. We serve others in the context of healthy relationships by:**

- a. loving and caring for our families; paying attention to the effect of ministry on them.
- b. treating others with respect; teaching and exercising authority respectfully.
- c. upholding confidentiality; not disclosing to anyone any confidential information without the consent of the person providing the information. (There is an exception where there is a legal obligation or a duty of care issue.)
- d. being a team player; cooperating with others in ministry and being receptive to feedback.
- e. using words that build up; not ridiculing or embarrassing people.
- f. avoiding ongoing counselling of people with whom we have pastoral (ministry) relationships.
- g. making alternative arrangements for pastoral ministry for any person with whom we develop a romantic relationship.

**3. As Christian leaders we will:**

- a. be accountable to our team, watch out for each other and protect each other's integrity, e.g. never alone with one child or vulnerable adult.
- b. treat every program participant equally, 'no favourites'.
- c. communicate with integrity, including accountable and wise use of electronic communication, commit to following our team guidelines for electronic communication.
- d. acknowledge when we are out of our depth and/or do not possess the required skills in difficult pastoral situations, such as helping a victim of abuse, or a person who needs professional counselling, and seek help from a supervisor or denominational leader.
- e. not take property belonging to others, including intellectual property (copyright).
- f. not knowingly making false, misleading, deceptive or defamatory statements.
- g. not engage in bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, sexual grooming or spiritual abuse of any person.
- h. not act violently or intentionally provoke violence when engaged in civil disobedience.

- i. be responsible in our use of addictive substances and services (e.g. prescriptions, alcohol) and not use any prohibited substance.
- j. act with sexual integrity, expressing our sexuality in healthy and God-honouring ways.
- k. act with financial integrity, including having accountable and transparent systems in place for financial matters.
- l. not seek personal advantage or financial gain from our positions, other than in wages, recognised allowances and deductions.
- m. disclose to the church council if we are or have been investigated for any criminal offences or have any knowledge of serious criminal activity.

**4. When the Leaders Code of Conduct is breached**

- a. **Minor breach:** Everyone is capable of sin but can repent and be forgiven (1 John 1:8-9). When this code is breached in an area that is not a breach of civil or criminal law, steps will be taken to ensure that the breach does not occur again. In some cases it may be necessary to step a person aside from their duties whilst this takes place.
- b. **Repeated breach:** There are breaches that are not a breach of civil or criminal law, but still unacceptable behaviour in a ministry context. Where a leader has been made aware of their behaviour and yet refuses to change:
  - I. the Senior Minister will meet with the person for behaviour review meetings (no more than 3 meetings).
  - II. If behaviour continues, a small group of elders and / or pastors - as considered appropriate by the Senior Minister - will arrange a meeting to address the behaviour. Stepping aside of the person 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.

Written notes of all meetings to be carefully taken and a copy given to all parties.

- c. **Breaches of the law or allegations of abuse:** Such breaches will be referred to the appropriate government authorities, in line with Uniting Church in Australia Synod of NSW & ACT processes. Contact will be made with the Synod Associate Secretary on 02 8267 4323.

I, - \_\_\_\_\_ have read the Safety and Protection Policy, the above Code of Conduct and the Guidelines for Electronic Communication.

I understand my responsibilities in working with children, young people and other vulnerable people and will work within the Policy and Code of Conduct.

If I breach this Code in any way, for any reason, whether or not a child was harmed, I must inform my supervisor or other Senior Leader of my actions and the reasons for them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness (Signature)



\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# Newtown Mission – Safety and Protection Policy

(Including Jordan Café, Annandale Creative Arts Centre and Tempe Uniting Church)



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We affirm that all people have the right to be emotionally and physically safe, respected, and have their views and opinions valued at all times.

Our Safety and Protection Policy has been developed to help us live out our mission, especially in our ministries with vulnerable people and in acknowledgment of our own vulnerabilities, as well as to meet our responsibilities as part of the Uniting Church in Australia and under Australian legislation.

This Safety and Protection Policy applies to all staff members, elders, church councillors, program leaders and helpers associated with the ministry in our church.

## 1. OUR POLICY AIMS TO:

- a. minimise the risk of abuse, ministry misconduct and the misuse of power.
- b. ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and ministry misconduct are handled thoroughly.
- c. ensure that leaders and programs are safe.
- d. ensure that all people are respected and valued.

## 2. WE COMMIT TO:

### a. Safe recruitment of leaders

- i. We require all church councillors, elders and program leaders to participate regularly in the communal life of the church.
- ii. We will screen all prospective church councillors, elders, program leaders and helpers in our ministries, before they are appointed, as appropriate (i.e. Working with Children's Check and National police check), as appropriate.
- iii. We require all prospective church councillors, elders and program leaders to have participated in the communal life of the church for at least 12 months prior to their appointment.

### b. Adequate training of leaders

- i. We will ensure that all church councillors, elders, program leaders and helpers understand their responsibilities under this Safety and Protection Policy.
- ii. We require that all church councillors, elders and program leaders attend a Safe Ministry Induction (or Safe Church Training Agreement endorsed) workshop within their first year of ministry and attend a refresher workshop every 3 years.
- iii. We require all program leaders and helpers to attend additional ministry-specific training as required.

### c. Continued supervision of leaders

- i. We commit to ongoing leadership training, supervision and support for church councillors, elders, program leaders and helpers as appropriate.
- ii. All church councillors, elders and program leaders will agree to follow our Leader's Code of Conduct.

### d. Responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) or serious ministry misconduct

- i. We acknowledge that churches have not always dealt appropriately with allegations and instances of abuse, and have prioritised the concerns of institutions above the needs of victims. We commit ourselves to ensuring that this is not repeated.
- ii. All church councillors, elders, program leaders and helpers will report disclosures or suspicions of abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, according to our procedure. We will not hesitate to involve external agencies such as the police.
- iii. Where a church councillor, elder, program leader or helper has an allegation of ministry misconduct made against them we will provide support to alleged victims and perpetrators and seek appropriate denominational help for a just and fair resolution.

**e. Safe environments in our ministry programs**

- i. We will take steps to keep all those in our care safe, including from e.g. spiritual, physical, sexual, emotional abuse (including bullying) or neglect.
- ii. As servants of Christ we will serve our people and the community, commit to the good news of Jesus and lead in spiritually non-abusive ways.
- iii. We will afford participants, including children and vulnerable adults, a say in the programs and the activities in which they participate.
- iv. We will obtain appropriate information relating to the program participants, including children's health and family situation, to ensure as far as possible that we are able to care for their physical and emotional needs.
- v. All church councillors, elders and program leaders will discharge their duty of care through the use of forms, checklists and templates for establishment and maintenance of safe environments in our church.
- vi. A Safe Church Team will be appointed to establish and maintain: this Safety and Protection Policy and supporting documentation and processes, workplace health and safety, fire safety, building safety, first aid, food safety, safe transport, incident and emergency procedures.
- vii. Program leaders will complete a written ministry approval process, for approval by the church council, at the start of new ministry programs/activities which take place in the church's name. These programs/activities will be reviewed on an annual basis.

**DEFINITIONS**

- Child:** a person who is under the age of 18 years.
- Vulnerable Adult:** a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may be because of a health issue (physical or mental), a disability or sensory impairment, age, grief, trauma, social isolation, homelessness, or drug and alcohol issues. This vulnerability can be temporary or permanent, and any adult may fall into this category from time to time.
- Elders:** share with the minister in spiritual oversight of the congregation. They are responsible for building up the congregation in faith and love, sustaining its members in hope, and leading them into a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world.
- Church Councillors:** Members of the church council, which is the body with oversight of the total life and mission of the congregation.
- Program leaders:** People responsible for a ministry program or set of programs.
- Helpers:** People who assist or help with ministry activities.





# Newtown Mission – Electronic Communication Guidelines

(Including Jordan Café, Annandale Creative Arts Centre and Tempe Uniting Church)



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## RATIONALE

The use of telephone, social networking sites (such as Facebook) and SMS are a part of everyday life for many children, young people and vulnerable adults. In some ministry situations *general communication* and *general pastoral care* and support may take place through electronic forums.

However, electronic communication may be used by those seeking to harm children, young persons and vulnerable adults. Electronic communication may be used to test or step over relational boundaries. We need to be mindful of the positional power dynamic that exists between those in leadership and the children, young people and vulnerable adults under their care.

*The following guidelines for the safe use of electronic communication forms part of existing Safe Church practices:*

## GENERAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

- a) Safe ministry is about ministering in teams. As such, all interaction with children, young people and some vulnerable adults in electronic form should be carried out in a team context. The use of group emails and SMS from the team is a good practice, indeed for all forms of electronic communication. Any personal emails sent from a church worker to a child, young person or vulnerable adult should also be sent to the team leader (cc'd).
- b) Where possible and practical, and especially for communication to children under 16 years, teams should seek parental / guardian permission before contacting with any electronic communication tool.
- c) Church leaders, staff and volunteers must not knowingly transmit, retrieve or store any communication that is discriminatory or harassing; derogatory to any individual or group; obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic; defamatory or threatening; in violation of any licence governing the use of software; for any purpose that is illegal or contrary to the Newtown Mission Code of Conduct.
- d) Church leaders, staff and volunteers must not send any electronic communication that attempts to hide the identity of the sender or represent the sender as someone else.

## TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION

- a) When telephoning a child or young person, call on the home phone if possible.
- b) If a child or young person initiates a mobile phone call requiring a long conversation, transfer the call to the home phone line where possible.
- c) Whenever possible ensure that the parents / guardians are aware of the phone call e.g. phone the carers and ask if it is okay to speak with their child.
- d) Mobile telephone use should be kept to a minimum and where possible, not used for long calls, especially for pastoral care.

## EMAIL COMMUNICATION

- e) All emails to children, young people and vulnerable adults should have a church email address carbon copied (cc'd) into them. This may include the email address of an appropriate member of staff.
- f) Emails should generally be restricted to purpose only emails e.g. "meet at this place" or general conversations e.g. "how was the excursion today?". Pastoral care or deeper conversations regarding more personal issues should be face to face.
- g) As far as possible save all emails to and from children, young people and vulnerable adults.

### SMS COMMUNICATION

- a) SMS communication should generally be restricted to purpose only communication e.g. "meet at this place at this time".
- b) If a longer SMS conversation begins, phone the child, young person or vulnerable adult, preferably on the home phone.

### SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (e.g. Facebook)

- a) Church leaders, staff and volunteers should not, as a general rule, interact with children, young people or vulnerable adults on social media.
- b) Private messaging should be restricted to purpose only messages.
- c) Writing on "walls" should be kept to a minimum and only of a broad nature.
- d) Do not give out any details of a child or young person on "walls" e.g. name of school, email address, home address, phone numbers, etc.

### VIDEO PHONING (e.g. Facetime, Skype)

- a) Church leaders, staff and volunteers should not enter into conversations of this nature with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

### PHOTOGRAPHY

- a) Any photos of youth / children's ministry activities should be taken by someone appointed by the Minister or ministry coordinator, and with parental consent.
- b) Do not photograph any child, young person or vulnerable adult who has asked not to be photographed.
- c) Photography should focus on the activity or small groups rather than individuals.
- d) Do not identify in writing the person/s in the photograph.
- e) All children, young people and vulnerable persons must be appropriately dressed when photographed.
- f) Only post photos of children and young people on the internet with written parental permission, and of a young person or vulnerable adult with their written consent.
- g) If you do find a photo of a youth or children's activity posted on the internet by a young person, gently ask them if they have permission from everyone in the photo to post it. If they don't, advise them to either seek permission in writing or remove it from the internet.

