



Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches

Code of Conduct

For FIEC staff, church representatives and marriage celebrants

In his letter to the church in Colossae, the Apostle Paul writes, "We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light." Colossians 1:9-12 (NIV)

This too is our prayer in FIEC for everyone involved in the churches in the network and particularly for those who have been placed in positions of leadership in them. Leadership of God's people is a privilege that comes with great responsibility. Leadership is also often hard and demanding personally. In praying for and desiring that our leaders live lives worthy of the Lord and pleasing to him in every way, it is appropriate as a fellowship to set out expectations of what that looks like for our leaders.

1. Purpose of this code of conduct

To set clear expectations within the FIEC regarding appropriate behaviour and conduct so that it is consistent with the Bible. In its present form the Code of Conduct is meant for FIEC church representatives (usually senior pastors), FIEC staff and marriage celebrants (as they represent the FIEC network). We invite individual FIEC churches to adopt this code of conduct for all ministry staff or pastors should they choose to. Our express aim is to encourage our leaders to live lives worthy of the Lord and please him in every way and thus uphold the public reputation of Jesus and his gospel, of the fellowship and the churches that make it up.

This Code of Conduct does not attempt to describe the totality of the behaviour of those in Christian ministry, but rather applies Biblical principles to particular issues relating to the nature of their ministry in a denominational and church setting. The Bible makes it clear that behaviours such as murder, adultery, theft etc. Are unacceptable to God. This Code of Conduct does not address matters such as these and presupposes godly behaviour required of all Christian people as per Paul's lists in Galatians 5:14-26; Ephesians 4:25-32; or Colossians 3:5-9.

FIEC may amend or vary this Code of Conduct, at its discretion, from time to time.

2. Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all FIEC staff, church representatives and marriage celebrants.

3. Responsibilities

All FIEC ministry employees, church representatives and marriage celebrants should be familiar with this Code of Conduct. If you are unclear as to what the Code of Conduct means or how it might apply to you should consult the FIEC National Director, or in the case of Marriage Celebrants, the FIEC Nominating Authority, for clarification

4. The code of conduct

We minister out of a healthy relationship with God

1. I will take care to keep spiritually healthy by:
 - a. Joining regularly in the life and ministry of the church.
 - b. Studying the Scriptures regularly in private and with others.
 - c. Praying regularly in private and in fellowship.

We serve others in the context of healthy relationships

2. With my family I will:
 - a. Carefully attend to the responsibilities of love and leadership that I have to my spouse (if married), children (if any) and wider family. I recognise the priority of these relationships over all others, save that with God himself.
 - b. Pay attention to the effect of my ministry on my family relationships.
3. With ministry colleagues I will:
 - a. Rightly honour those who work in fellowship with me in the ministry of the gospel.
 - b. Seek to ensure that arrogance, belligerence, quick-temper, malice, envy, or slander do not mark my relationships with, or conversations about, ministry colleagues, whether in my own church or in wider Christian networks.
 - c. Seek to resolve disagreements with other staff members or ministry colleagues through personal contact firstly - with all gentleness - and then, should resolution not be reached this way, through the grievance or complaints procedure of either FIEC or my church, depending upon the context.
 - d. Be a team player, cooperating with other ministry leaders.
 - e. Be accountable to my team, watching out for others and protecting each other's integrity.
4. In pastoral relationships I will:
 - a. Be aware of the positional power that is associated with a ministry/pastoral role and take care to avoid any abuse or manipulation of those I lead.
 - b. Treat others with respect - teaching and exercising authority respectfully.
 - c. Be careful with the power given in ministry relationships. I will not engage in any behaviour that involves the misuse of power, including but not limited to bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual harassment or spiritual abuse. I will work hard at creating a culture where this is clearly not tolerated, and will take action to deal with such behaviour should it become evident.
 - d. Value confidentiality, only disclosing information where necessary: for example where there is a legal obligation and duty of care.
 - e. Be careful with my words, using words that build up, aiming to speak the truth in love.
 - f. In the event of a church member disclosing that they have been abused in childhood or more recently, or are at risk of suffering or harm, I will offer appropriate care and advice, referring them to other professionals as needed.
 - g. If I become aware of any reportable criminal offence, I will report it to the relevant civil authorities in accordance with the applicable Commonwealth, State or Territory laws.
5. With the opposite sex I will:
 - a. Model relationships with the opposite sex that are above reproach in both appearance and reality.
 - b. Be aware of the potential for inappropriate emotional or romantic involvement, and especially with those for whom I have pastoral responsibility. I will avoid behaviour and situations that may nurture this type of relationship. (Special care needs to be given to home visits, travelling companions in cars, private meeting and visibility and accessibility in offices.)
6. In regard to children I will:
 - a. Ensure I have a current Working With Children Check or the equivalent in my state or territory.
 - b. Adhere to my church's child protection policy.
7. In regard to alcohol and drugs I will:
 - a. Only drink alcohol in moderation, should I choose to drink at all.
 - b. Give due consideration to the appropriateness of the consumption of alcohol in the presence of others.

- c. Never take prohibited substances.
8. In regard to money I will:
 - a. Be content with what I have and guard against greed.
 - b. Not seek personal advantage or financial gain from my position, other than in wages, recognised allowances and deductions.
 - c. Minister impartially to all, irrespective of their financial means.
 - d. Avoid handling collection money or other church funds, but when it is necessary to ensure another person is with me.
 - e. Take great care in receiving gifts from church members that arise by virtue of my role as a minister of the Gospel.
 - f. With regard to honoraria/payment for ministry work, weddings, preaching etc. in addition to my ministry wages and allowances, - I will abide by the policy worked out with the leadership of my church.
 - g. Take proper care to be a faithful steward of my finances and to fulfil any obligations with regard to taxation and Centrelink matters.
 - h. Be honest and accurate in reporting the financial situation of my church wherever appropriate.
 9. In regard to the law I will:
 - a. Obey the law, in so far as that law is not contrary to the Bible and does not unjustly prohibit the expression of faith in Christ.
 - b. Disclose to the FIEC National Director and my church leadership team if I am being investigated for, or charged with, any criminal offence.
 10. In regard to the wider community/society I will:
 - a. Seek to be in good standing with neighbours and the community at large, as much as it is up to me.
 - b. Be careful and discrete in my use of social media.
 11. I will also:
 - a. Be aware that to minister effectively for the long term I need to care for myself. This includes consideration for: recreation and rest, including appropriately using my allocated allowance of annual leave, and exercise.
 - b. Avoid viewing or possessing pornographic or other restricted material. Where pornography or sexual fantasizing is a problem, I affirm as of first importance honesty and openness and resolve to take practical initiatives. I commit to seeking appropriate accountability with staff peers or supervisors, seek counselling where needed, and to make responsible use, for example, of any internet filtering mechanisms that may help.
 - c. Say and do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Church representatives/marriage celebrants:

I will inform my church leadership team and membership of this code of conduct.

Breaches to this code of conduct

All FIEC staff, church representatives and marriage celebrants are responsible for meeting the expectations set out in this code of conduct and ensuring behaviour inconsistent with this code is not tolerated or covered up.

If you are aware of serious or persistent breaches of this code of conduct, this should be reported to an appropriate person i.e. The FIEC National Director, the FIEC chaplain, or chairman of the FIEC Executive.

The process of dealing with breaches of this code of conduct and possible disciplinary measures will be outlined in the FIEC Grievance Policy – which will function as part 2 of this code of conduct.

Definitions:

FIEC: the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches Inc.

Church Representatives: those people, generally the Senior Pastor, who are appointed to the FIEC General Committee to represent the rights of their church in all matters relating to FIEC. For a full explanation, see Division 2, Section 12 of the FIEC Constitution

Marriage Celebrants: those people who have been registered by FIEC as a minister of religion for the purposes of solemnising marriages according to the Marriage Act, 1961.

FIEC Staff: those people directly employed by FIEC e.g. The National Director etc.

Other definitions:

For definitions of other terms used in this Code of Conduct, please contact the FIEC National Office.

FIEC - Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches

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