

ETHICS IN MINISTRY

1 CHRISTIAN MORALITY

- 1.1 Christian morality cannot be reduced to following moral rules. While rules play a part in the moral life of Christians, it is the person and work of Jesus Christ that shapes morals and motivates right behaviour. Through faith, Christians participate in the death and resurrection of Christ, being made new creatures by dying to sin and rising again to righteousness. As new creatures *in Christ* they are called to imitate Him.
- 1.2 Jesus, the Son of Man, came not to be served but to serve. The overruling idea of imitating Christ encompasses a humility and self-abasement before God and a self-giving service to one's neighbours. The New Testament contains numerous moral virtues, the chief of which is love. While *love fulfils the law* it goes beyond it. It not only refuses to harm others, it counts others greater than self.
- 1.3 The Christian ethic is not an ethic of power but an ethic of service. It focuses on what can be done for others rather than what can be demanded from others as a right. Every Christian is expected to exhibit the attitudes, values and commitment which characterise their new nature in Christ. For those who occupy positions of leadership, an ethic of service means that as leaders they are not only responsible for, but also accountable to, those whom they serve.
- 1.4 The Christian ethic is also an ethic of love. Love demands a concern for the spiritual welfare of the offender as well as the offended. Any discipline should include a call to the offender for change and renewal.

2 TO WHOM DOES THIS DOCUMENT RELATE?

- 2.1 This Code applies to all clergy, lay employees and lay volunteers serving in the Diocese of Newcastle in positions where pastoral responsibility is involved.
- 2.2. Clergy are to ensure that those who exercise any form of ministry under their authority have the maturity, ability and supervision necessary for that ministry and are acquainted with the standards and boundaries set by this Code and that they conform to them as they apply to their ministries. Failure to conform will require action to be taken by the clergy. It is to be noted that *Guidelines for Church Workers, Ministering to Children and Youth*, has application to both clergy and lay church workers.
- 2.3 The clergy are assumed always to have the greater influence. Therefore in pastoral relationships the onus is on them to maintain standards and guard the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. These boundaries and standards are aspects of being *in Christ*.
- 2.4 Clergy are given a status which authorises and enables them to undertake various functions in relation to others. The authority and influence held by them can be exercised in a fashion which is not consistent with Christian morality. Authority and power can be used to advantage self rather than used in ways which will glorify and witness to Christ, as well as benefit those people who look to the church and its leaders for guidance and help.

3 GUIDELINES FOR MAINTAINING PROPER RELATIONSHIPS

3.1 Awareness of Risk Factors

Ministry generally has certain characteristics which give rise to the risk of abuse of power and of blurring the boundaries between professional/pastoral and personal relationships. With this there is the potential for moving into improper personal relationships. Whilst some of these characteristics are essential and unavoidable aspects of the clergy and church workers role, they can foster inappropriate feelings and conditions of intimacy between the minister and parishioner, co-worker or other persons. They can also be used to exploit [unwittingly or not] those people, especially when they are vulnerable or dependent on approval.

3.2 These characteristics may include:

- * Ambiguous and unclear role expectations;
- * Being privy to intimate details of parishioners' lives;
- * Dealing with people who are emotionally hurting or in crisis;
- * Easy access to, and having authority to initiate contact with parishioners, often in solitary settings;
- * Opportunities for privacy - private office, lack of supervision, flexible schedule;
- * Personal characteristics such as sensitivity, warmth and attentiveness;
- * Power, prestige and influence of the ministerial role.

3.3 The potential for crossing the boundaries into unacceptable behaviour may increase if other factors are present in the life of the clergy and church workers, including:

- * A marital relationship which needs attention.
- * An inappropriate need for power or control. It is widely accepted by experts that sexual offenders are driven more by the need to control than by sexual need, and their non-sexual behaviour is characterised by control.
- * Emotional vulnerability through personal experiences or crises, such as loss and grief, situational stress, periods of doubt and disillusionment, depression, physical and mental illness.
- * Family problems or crisis.
- * Unresolved past abuse.
- * Any other emotionally painful event.

3.4 It should be emphasised that, although a combination of factors may increase the risk of unacceptable behaviour, there can be no excuses for this behaviour. It is the responsibility of the clergy and church workers to be aware of, and attend to, these factors. Maintaining acceptable conduct is always the responsibility of the clergy and church workers, regardless of the initiating party or consent. The issue is one of abuse of power, trust and responsibility, and breaches of conduct are not to be minimised or excused.

3.5 PERSONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL LIFE

In recognition of these risk factors clergy should pay close attention to the following:

* **A balanced life**

Clergy and church workers should make provision for a balanced personal life; for physical, emotional, social and spiritual self-care and recreational time. As

well as being sources of continuing refreshment, these help to avoid burn-out and stress.

* **Relationships and Nurture**

Continuing attention needs to be given to the maintaining and nurturing of personal and family relationships, especially the marriage relationship. Consideration should be given to meeting regularly with an experienced and trusted person(s) for the purpose of prayer and accountability.

* **Clarification of Roles**

Clergy and church workers should have clearly understood job descriptions, including duties and lines of accountability. It is helpful for these to be in writing.

Those who hold the Bishop's licence are required to have clearly understood written job descriptions that include duties and lines of accountability.

Clear guidelines should be provided for volunteers undertaking particular ministries.

* **Workloads**

Workloads should be monitored to guard against overloading.

* **Feedback and Appraisal**

Opportunities for regular feedback and appraisal are appropriate. Regular opportunities should be made to review and plan work, to share experiences, and to talk about relationships with others.

* **Training**

Regular opportunities should be made to receive training to refresh, update or enhance theological knowledge, ministry and other skills.

* **Leadership Styles**

Many and various styles of leadership may be adopted to meet different situations or opportunities. However, styles of leadership that develop control created by fear, and which have little or no accountability, are unacceptable.

4 GUIDELINES REGARDING CONFIDENTIALITY

- 4.1 Clergy and church workers have a responsibility to care for members of the Church and the wider community. The exercise of pastoral care involves the development of relationships marked by mutual trust and understanding. An important aspect of pastoral care is confidentiality. Facts or circumstances discovered by clergy and church workers in pastoral relationships should not normally be disclosed to any other person, including one's spouse, without informed consent from the parishioner.
- 4.2 The need for confidentiality arises from the duty of care and cannot override that duty. Confidentiality is not an absolute commitment to silence at all costs. Like all types of secrecy, confidentiality can cover up as well as protect.
- 4.3 Clergy and church workers should advise any person who comes for pastoral help of the duties and responsibilities they have with respect to disclosure of information, and what level of confidentiality that person can expect.

- 4.4 Subject to 4.1 informed consent does not have to be obtained in a situation where the clergy or church worker has a legal obligation to disclose - refer section 4.9.
- 4.5 There may be situations where there is no legal obligation to disclose, but where disclosure in the view of the clergy or church worker, is necessary in order to avoid the risk of physical, financial or emotional harm or hardship to the parishioner or another person. In the light of community expectations that clergy and church workers maintain confidentiality, with the subsequent risk of legal action if confidentiality is broken, clergy and church workers should consider obtaining advice from the Diocesan Registrar in such situations.
- 4.6 In assessing the need to disclose information, clergy and church workers shall have regard not only to the legal or other obligations placed upon them but the likely effects of disclosure or non-disclosure on pastoral relationships and ministry generally.
- 4.7 Notwithstanding the provision of this Code, clergy and church workers may seek advice from or debrief with a colleague, or speak with a supervisor, about their counselling of parishioners or members of the public so long as complete anonymity of the person or persons concerned is maintained.
- 4.9 Under Section 127 of the evidence Act 1995 [NSW], a person who is or was a member of the clergy of any church is entitled to refuse to divulge that a religious confession was made, or the contents of that confession made, to the person when a member of the clergy.

From the Crimes Act 1900 [NSW] - Section 311 Definitions:

Serious offence means an offence punishable by imprisonment or penal servitude for 5 years or more or for life.

Section 316

If a person has committed a serious offence and another person who knows or believes that the offence has been committed and that he or she has information which might be of material assistance in securing the apprehension of the offender or the prosecution or conviction of the offender for it fails without reasonable excuse to bring that information to the attention of a member of the Police Force or other appropriate authority, that other person is liable to imprisonment for 2 years.

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

For effective pastoral care to take place, the following are desirable:

- 5.1 All interview times, places and people present be recorded in the clergy or church worker's diary.
- 5.2 The door to the interview room, if closed, not be locked during the interview.
- 5.3 A suitable distance be maintained between the clergy or church worker and the person being interviewed.
- 5.4 If notes are kept of the interview, they be marked *Confidential* and kept secure.
- 5.5 After three or four interviews with the same person focusing on a single issue or related issues, clergy and church workers enlist the service of an adequately trained counsellor to act as their supervisor.
- 5.6 When ongoing counselling is required, and the clergy or church worker is not adequately trained, appropriate agencies or personnel be referred to.

- 5.7 Clergy and church workers be especially aware of the need for specialist counselling for victims or survivors of abuse and domestic violence and the perpetrators of abuse.
- 5.8 Clergy and church workers be aware of the need for specialist counselling for people with marital, family or significant personal problems.
- 5.9 When interviewing, either one-off or ongoing, limits be set. The length and number of sessions be determined in advance. Settings not suggest a social or dating context.
- 5.10 Wisdom be exercised regarding home visitation where it is known that the person being visited will be alone. Consideration be given to these visits being made with another church representative and being of limited duration.
- 5.11 Wisdom and sensitivity be exercised regarding affectionate gestures or touch, such as *hugging*. Such gestures may be regarded by some individuals as unwanted sexual behaviours, and clergy and church workers need to be sensitive as to whether these gestures are acceptable to the recipient and not an expression of their own personal need. It is generally unwise for expressions of affection to occur where there are no other people present.

6 Guidelines Regarding Sexual Behaviour

- 6.1 We recognise that those exercising ministry are in a position of authority relative to those with whom they minister. This authority means that sexual relations within any ministry can never be equal.
- 6.2 Clergy and church workers must not take advantage of their position to gain sexual favour from a parishioner or any other person. Clergy in particular must recognise and understand the influence and responsibility they carry as Church and community leaders.
- 6.3 Certain sexual behaviour constitutes sexual abuse. Clergy and church workers must not take advantage of their position to sexually harass a colleague, subordinate, employee, parishioner, or any other person. Even spontaneous expressions of affection, verbal or physical, initiated by clergy and church workers may be misunderstood. Clergy and church workers, therefore, must consider whether their expressions of affection are mutually acceptable.
- 6.4 In dealing with children, clergy and church workers must exercise a special duty of care. Certain sexual behaviour with children constitutes a criminal offence punishable at law. However, the responsibility of clergy and church workers toward children in their care goes beyond the legal liability and extends to any form of behaviour which may be interpreted as sexual abuse.
- 6.5 It is important that anyone who exercises any form of ministry in the church should be chosen with care. Whilst there is no procedure which can guarantee against the occurrence of abuse, it is possible to take measures which may reduce the risk of abuse.
- 6.6 Where allegations of abuse of a child by a person have led to those allegations being upheld by a court or by a church or other disciplinary procedure, or to a conviction of the alleged offender, then that person must not be placed in a ministry to do with children or adolescents.
- 6.7 A person convicted of any offence must be thoroughly interviewed and not appointed to any ministry which may be seen to provide an opportunity for reoffending.

- 6.8 When sexual misconduct is suspected to have occurred the *Principles and Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Misconduct, Harassment or Abuse* for the Diocese of Newcastle must be consulted.

7 GUIDELINES REGARDING FINANCES

- 7.1 Clergy and church workers must behave in a way that is not detrimental to the community of the Gospel or the good standing of the Church. Behaviour in relation to finances must be such as to enhance and embody the communication of the Gospel and the good standing of the Church.
- 7.2 Clergy and church workers must act in relation to finances in such a way as to justify and maintain public trust and confidence in accredited ministers of the Church.
- 7.3 Clergy and church workers should therefore be scrupulously honest and publicly accountable for all moneys handled by them by ensuring the careful keeping of records in the form of receipts, diary entries, invoices, accounts and account statements.
- 7.4 Clergy and church workers should not allow the counting of collection moneys by less than two unrelated lay people.
- 7.5 Clergy and church workers are not to abuse a position of trust with respect to finances nor are they to exploit a relationship with a parishioner or member of the public for the purpose of personal financial gain.
- 7.6 Where a gift is offered as a result of a pastoral relationship clergy and church workers must use their discretion concerning the acceptance or return of the gift by considering the intention of the giver and whether the giver can afford the gift. Advice should be sought from a colleague or supervisor if there is any uncertainty as to the appropriateness of the gift.
- 7.7 Clergy and church workers must not allow themselves to be influenced by offers of money or personal reward.
- 7.8 Misappropriation or misuse of parish funds or property [including the use of such funds or property without prior approval of the appropriate authority] or personal effects entrusted to a member of the clergy or a church worker by a parishioner or any other person or organisation shall be deemed to be a violation of this Code.

8 GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

8.1 Behaviour and Language

Children and young people learn as much from what leaders do as from what they say. So during an activity, behaviour, attitudes and language are often as important as what is taught. The way leaders communicate with children needs to reflect the conviction that Jesus welcomed children. That means language and ways of relating that affirm worth, dignity and significance.

There needs to be no behaviour which gives the impression of favouritism or encourages *special* relationships with individual children or young people. It is too easy to *love the lovable*. The children who are not easy to love often need more love from us. It is also important to remember that the way leaders communicate with one another is observed. Nick names, *put downs*, and sexist language only reinforce behaviour that children may already see all too often. Where parents or members of

the wider community observe leaders at work they need to see a caring style that demonstrates the credibility of Christianity.

8.2 Qualifications and Experience

All team members must have sufficient maturity to undertake their tasks. Only experienced people are given the responsibility of team leadership.

All team members need to complete an application form. [All team members will be screened with all nominated referees being contacted. Only team members found to be suitable by the screening body, after suitable responses are received from referees, will be accepted.]

Where activities are coeducational, female and male group leaders need to be present.

8.3 Emergency Procedures

Every team needs to consider safety issues as a part of preparation of the program.

8.4 First Aid

Teams should try to include someone trained in first aid. Such training is readily available from the St John's Ambulance Association or Red Cross. Generally first aid should be gender specific: ie a male should give first aid to a male, a female should be available to give first aid to females. All accidents should be reported to the responsible body and detailed records kept. Accident forms are available for this purpose.

8.5 Activities and Games

The site of activities and the nature of what happens needs to be carefully considered to minimise the risks. Activities or games which require children to act alone or in pairs, independent of leaders, need to be very carefully considered. If, during an activity, it is possible for children to come into contact with strangers, then great care must be exercised. If in doubt, cancel the activity.

Any activity needs to have defined boundaries that are easily observed or patrolled. Leaders need to avoid situations where it is possible to become physically isolated. Games or activities which may exploit gender, physical or intellectual differences must be assessed as to whether or not they are appropriate.

Consideration needs to be given to the *message* given to children by activities and events that are organised. That is, the way things are done *speaks* loudly.

These requirements are not meant to be restrictive or prescriptive, but descriptive and protective of the children and young people in our care. It is essential that in providing fun and enjoyment for children and young people we do not create situations which, with hindsight, will be deemed as negligent or irresponsible.

8.6 Physical Contact

Many children enjoy physical contact with adults and will actively seek opportunities for this through simple expressions of affection and confidence and in play. Indeed, there may be occasions where physical contact is necessary. However, some children do not seek or enjoy physical contact. Children are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact they have with others except in exceptional circumstances, eg when needing medical attention.

It is therefore inappropriate in the normal course of events to initiate close physical contact .. this should come from the child. As a general rule, open displays of affection initiated by children in the presence of others are acceptable. Physical contact between adults and children may be misconstrued.

Any physical activity which is or may be construed as sexually stimulating for the adult or child is inappropriate and must be avoided. Children may or may not be aware of creating such situations. But it is the duty of the adult to be alert to such circumstances and to act accordingly.

There will be occasions where displays of affection are natural and children must not be shunned if they initiate and demonstrate their need for comfort, bearing in mind the age of the child and the circumstances. Care needs to be exercised that such situations do not occur in private.

Leaders need to be aware that consistent contact with the same person may give the impression of favouritism and may result in others competing for their attention or feeling left out. Situations offering privacy or secrecy need to be avoided. Where private conversations are necessary, the leader and child[ren] should remain visible to other leaders.

On no account must any form of corporal punishment be administered, even in fun. The only form of physical restraint appropriate is to protect children from harm, eg reasonable restraint to stop a fight; to stop bullying; to avoid an accident.

8.7 Concluding an Activity

Activities need to finish promptly at the advertised time. Care must be exercised in dismissing or handing over children. It is not recommended that children be passed to adults who are not known to the leaders or the child. Special care may be needed with very young children. There may be occasions when leaders need to return children to their accommodation.

8.8 Indemnity and Permission Forms

Some activities need parental indemnity and permission forms. Leaders need to decide if their activity requires parental consent and acknowledgment of the risks involved. Leaders should consider getting signed forms for any activity away from the main venue of the program.

8.9 Involvement of adults from the local community

Help from parents and other adults known to leaders in running activities is normally welcomed. However parents and other adults who help casually must not be put in a position of having sole responsibility for children other than their own.

8.10 Multiculturalism

Leaders need to be sensitive to cultures and family traditions different from their own. These cultures and traditions may affect the degrees of participation of children in activities and games. No pressure should be applied to children from other cultures and traditions to encourage participation. Leaders need to show respect for authority structures in other cultures and traditions. Children ought not to hear statements about other religions and cultures which reflect ignorance, bias or ridicule.

8.11 Types of Families and Care Givers

Leaders need to be sensitive to words they use which make assumptions about a child's background, family status and principal care givers. The family has many forms in today's society and leaders must respect the support structures of the kids who come to their activities.

8.12 Recreational Drugs

Alcohol consumption is an endemic problem in many families and among children's peers. All activities with children in this Diocese will be alcohol free. Smoking is increasingly being excluded from public places. This exclusion will apply to all activities involving children in this Diocese. No leader may smoke in the presence or vicinity of children.

8.13 *Medi Alert* bracelets and team medications

Children wearing *Medi Alert* bracelets need to be treated with care in any activity, particularly a strenuous one. Team members' prescription medications need to be kept in a safe place. Responsibility for administration of these medications needs to be allocated to one first aid trained leader only. This avoids duplication of administration of medication.

8.14 *Safety and Care*

The Diocese of Newcastle has a publication entitled *Safety and Care - Guidelines for Care in Working with Children and Youth in the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle*. Any one dealing with children on a regular basis is advised to obtain a copy from the Diocesan Registry or CEY Ministries Department. All forms referred to in Section 8 are set out in *Safety and Care*; all areas of Children's and Youth Ministry fully detailed.

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

ETHICS IN MINISTRY

I, _____

of _____

acknowledge receipt of a copy of the *Ethics in Ministry* document and acknowledge that at all times I will adhere to the guidelines contained therein as these guidelines may be amended from time to time.

Dated:

Signature: