



Name of Policy: CODE OF CONDUCT	Approved By: Trustees
Date Last Updated: Nov 2022	Review Date: Nov 2024

CONTEXT

River Church is committed to its employees, to their development both professionally and spiritually and has a 'duty of care' towards each member of the team. We are committed to act in all circumstances with compassion, grace and pastoral concern. Employees are encouraged to make every reasonable effort and intention to meet the standards of personal conduct and working practice set out in this Code of Conduct.

SCOPE

This document applies to all River Church employees and forms the basis of an understanding of behaviour and expectation of one another at River Church.

This document should be used as part of our recruitment process for new staff team members and as such should form part of any application pack made available to prospective employees. Applicants should be asked to confirm that they will abide by the Code of Conduct as part of the recruitment process.

Roles which have significant leadership or representative responsibilities, or that are central to fulfilling River Church's mission and goals both internally and externally, or to developing and maintaining our Christian ethos, will always be held by people with a personal faith in Jesus. This is developed further in our Equal Opportunities: Justifiability Policy.

POLICY

As a result of our shared mission and values, the following are examples of behaviours we would expect to find within the employee team at River Church:

- Regular commitment and participation in the life of River Church*;
- Willingness to give account of a personal and living faith in Jesus Christ within situations and contexts appropriate to daily work responsibilities*;
- Willingness to contribute to the spiritual growth and development of the staff team by engaging in, and leading regular staff team worship and prayer sessions, and during retreats and training days*;
- Treating each other with grace, respect, courtesy, politeness, forgiveness and self-control as well as justice, integrity and truth; living out River Church's values both in behaviour and in tone of communication;
- Treating all customers and suppliers with respect and dignity and in an honest and fair manner
- Avoiding situations where personal interests are, or appear to be, in conflict with River Church interests
- Safeguarding and properly using River Church proprietary information, assets and resources, as well as those entrusted to the Church by other organizations.
- Adhering to River Church standards for protecting the environment and the safety and health of our employees, our customers, our communities and our contractors
- Becoming familiar with and conducting River Church business in compliance with this Code of Conduct and all applicable laws and Church policy.
- Completing all required training in a timely manner
- Reporting suspected wrongdoing.
- Co-operation and honesty in our interactions, timekeeping and work practice; and
- Commitment to good stewardship of River Church's finance and resources.

**Where posts have been identified as not requiring someone to have an occupational requirement/expressed Christian commitment, it is recognised that there will be specific criteria in this policy which are not applicable, as asterisked above.*

Should a difficult situation develop at work, River Church is committed to act, in all situations, with compassion, grace and pastoral concern, and make decisions based on these. Such issues may be as a result of an incapacity or an error of judgement rather than a lifestyle choice or pre-determined behavioural choice and, as such, River Church undertakes to respond with the ultimate hope of restoration.

It is recognised that the Bible outlines specific behaviours as foundational and in situations where these may have been contravened, River Church will act in accordance with its Disciplinary Procedure within a context of grace and compassion.

We always view the use of disciplinary procedures as a last resort. In no way do they exempt River Church from making every possible effort to guide the honest pursuit of

truth, to encourage wholesome approaches to sexuality, to support stable family life or to model good working relationships, which convey respect for people and property.

As with any disciplinary investigation, staff will be treated within a context of grace and compassion, while time is taken to consider the circumstances of the situation, including:

- Severity of the perceived misconduct;
- Whether the incident is a 'one-off' or part of repeated behaviour or lifestyle;
- Mitigating circumstances, such as personal issues;
- Position of trust of the staff member within River Church;
- Specific duties of the staff member i.e., representational and visibility within the church and local communities;
- Christian maturity and understanding;
- Treatment of similar instances of misconduct by other staff members;
- Employee's length of service;
- Extent of any 'live' disciplinary warnings; and;
- Evidence of regret.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of matters which are considered to be gross misconduct and which would normally result in dismissal:

- Action constituting a serious criminal offence;
- Theft, fraud, forgery, deliberate falsification or failure to complete records or misrepresentation to the advantage of oneself or others;
- Serious breach of River Church's rules and policies such as our Equal Opportunities Policy, Data Protection Policy, and Safeguarding Policy;
- Involvement in any kind of abuse, such as substance, sexual, racial;
- Harassment of any kind, such as sexual, racial, religious or gender related;
- Bullying of any kind;
- Serious breach of confidentiality;
- Disregard for River Church's safety rules, or a single error due to negligence, which causes, or could have caused, significant loss, damage or injury to the church, staff or local community;
- Repeated use of blasphemy or sexual innuendos; and
- Activity which causes reputational damage to River Church, or which undermines our vision, ministry or message.

INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF WORK

There may be instances where inappropriate conduct outside of formal working hours may necessitate disciplinary action. In such cases, as mentioned earlier where difficulties arise at work, we recognise that such issues may be as a result of an

incapacity or an error of judgement, rather than a lifestyle choice, or pre-determined behavioural choice and River Church, as previously stated, undertakes to respond, encouraging restoration.

As with any disciplinary investigation, staff team members will be treated within a context of grace and compassion while time is taken to consider the circumstances of the situation in the same way as a situation arising at work.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of inappropriate conduct and behaviours outside of formal working hours, which are considered to be gross misconduct and which would normally result in dismissal:

- Where it relates to a serious criminal offence;
- Where it renders the employee unsuitable for the type of work they do;
- Where it leads to a breach of mutual trust between employer and employee;
- Where it is damaging to River Church's reputation;
- Where it affects the performance of the employee in their role;
- Where it relates to membership of a group, or by the expression of views which could oppose, or be contrary to, River Church's vision, values and Christian beliefs.

It is understood at River Church that while every staff team member is vulnerable to behaviour which contravenes that laid out in Scripture, our desire as an organisation is to inspire, encourage and build one another up in our Christian faith, in order to honour and glorify God in our work.

This Code of Conduct has been written in a way which seeks to endorse and comply with biblical truths and principles, and sets out the expectations of conduct and behaviours for employees at River Church, in keeping with our mission, goals, values and beliefs. We expect staff to sign the declaration below as part of their conditions of employment.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

Disciplinary

Equal Opportunities

Capability Grievance

DECLARATION

I agree to work towards and uphold the standards of personal conduct and working practice set out in River Church’s Ethos Statement and Code of Conduct and recognise that failure to meet these expectations may result in disciplinary proceedings and possible termination of contract.

Name:

Signed by:.....Date:.....