#  *Insert Church name*

# **“Above Reproach”**

### Setting a Biblical Example in the Leadership of Youth and Children

1 Timothy 3:1-10

We are so glad that you have decided to be involved in Ministry to Children and/or Youth. These ministries are an exciting and important part of our church and it is wonderful that you want to be involved in serving the families and young people in this way.

We want our ministries to be characterised by grace and forgiveness, rather than rules and regulations, but leaders should have a particularly high standard in their personal life.

Leaders will want to be above reproach in their whole lives, with lives full of integrity and faithfulness, above and beyond what the law demands. We take the leadership of children and young people very seriously.

This booklet is intended to be an introduction to leadership expectations in our church and it is part of the application process for becoming a leader. In it you will find some of the practical ways that you can be a leader who is above reproach. It also offers you the opportunity to share with us what it means to be a leader in Christian ministry and why you wish to be a leader in our church.

Throughout this document you will also find references to Faithfulness in Service (2017). This is the Anglican Church’s national code of conduct as adopted by the Sydney Diocese. As a leader in ministry you should be familiar with this code.

Leader Details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Application Date: |    |
| Name: |   | Date of Birth: |  |
| WWCC Number: |   | Safe Ministry date: |  |
| Contact Number: |  | Email: |  |

Leader INterview

*Please take time to consider these questions carefully. In answering these questions, please be brief and honest.*

Describe how you became a Christian

Describe 3 major ways you have grown as a Christian over time

What do you think is the main point of the gospel?

How do you know when you are going well as a Christian?

What spiritual gifts do you feel you have been given by God?

What experiences have helped you develop your capacity to lead?

How will you balance present commitments with the commitment that comes with serving on a leadership team?

As a Christian what is your view on drinking alcohol, smoking and drug use? When you are over 18 how will this be different?

What is your view on dating?

Why do you think it’s important to be a role model to those you lead? What would be examples of godly role modelling?

Have you ever been to court for something you have done? If yes, please explain.

MINISTRY Code of Conduct

FiS refers to the document *Faithfulness in Service* which can be found on the Sydney Anglican Professional Standards Unit website.

1. Being above reproach in OUR COMMITMENT: (Heb 10:25) (FiS 4.11, 4.12, 4.13)

1. Any commitment by a leader to Youth and Children’s Ministry must be carefully, prayerfully and personally considered.
2. We expect leaders to confer with their team leader before making a commitment to other ministries at church or elsewhere.
3. Leaders set a strong example to those they lead. Therefore, leaders need to be committed to
	1. full attendance at the group they have committed to lead,
	2. attending any additional activities with this group that may be required such as camps
	3. regular attendance at a church service and, if possible, a small group/Bible study group
4. Leaders will show respect to other team members and the group by their commitment to
	1. arriving on time. Call (in preference to SMS) your senior leader if you will be late
	2. being prepared for the program and its activities
5. We want to model our faith to our families. To avoid stress and miscommunication, it is very helpful to let your family know your weekly leadership and church commitments so, where possible, important family events can be scheduled for other days.

**2. Being above reproach in WHAT WE SAY:** (Eph 5:1-4) (FiS 6.12, 6.21)

1. Set an example in our language to ensure it doesn't degrade God or anything good He has created
2. Be genuine encouragers, speaking positive words to each other and to those whom we serve
3. Avoid cynicism in our hearts and refrain from being argumentative, divisive or inappropriately finding fault with individuals

**3. Being above reproach in OUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**:

(1 Thess 4:1-8) (FiS 6.18, 7.4, 7.7)

1. Our relationships must be 'above reproach'. We ought not to place ourselves in situations where our integrity in our relationships with others may be - or even thought to be - compromised. For example all leaders should strive for purity and to not engage in sexual activity before or outside marriage. We must avoid all sexual immorality and be very careful about time spent alone with a boyfriend/girlfriend and make sure we are accountable to others in this.
2. Family relationships must be maintained in a respectful and loving way. Leaders must always be aware that they are being observed as role models and are seen as an example to follow.
3. No youthleader should become involved romantically with
	1. any young person in the youth ministry (Years 7-12). If there are any questions about this, then please speak to your leaders.
	2. any person they have pastoral responsibility for, including other leaders.
	3. someone who is not a follower of Christ.
4. If a relationship begins between leaders in the same team, then three things should occur:
	1. The main leader of the ministry needs to be informed.
	2. The couple ought to avoid ‘couple-like’ behaviour during leaders’ meetings and youth activities.
	3. If problems do occur, and a resolution cannot be found, this may result in one or both of the leaders being taken out of their positions by the main leader of the ministry in consultation with staff.

**4. Being above reproach in OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:** (Matt 18:1-6) (FiS chapter 5)

**Section 1 – Legalities**

We live in a world where many children and young people have been abused physically, sexually and emotionally by trusted members of their communities, including in churches. As a result, there are requirements that we as leaders must comply with both under NSW law and the Anglican Church’s Ordinances regarding Safe Ministry.

As a leader you are required to:

1. Get a Working With Children Check clearance,
2. Make a formal application for the children’s or youth ministry position, including providing proof of identity and references,
3. Complete the Safe Ministry Check as part of a Safe Ministry Assessment,
4. Complete Safe Ministry training prior to starting as a leader, and attend a Refresher course every three years after that,
5. Read and comply with *Faithfulness in Service* (or *Above Reproach*), and
6. Read and comply with *Safe Ministry Blueprint for Youth Ministry Leaders* or *Safe Ministry Blueprint for Children’s Ministry Leaders* (whichever applies to you).

The most important principle to remember when it comes to being above reproach in our relationships with children and young people is this: **Never be alone with a child or young person**.

There are good reasons for this principle. People who abuse children may try to use group-based activities as a platform for developing trust so that they can engage in one-on-one activities that provide an opportunity for sexual abuse to occur. Sexual abuse often starts with something relatively minor and gradually builds up to more serious behaviour through a process of grooming. It is characterised by secrecy. That is why it is so important that there always be more than one leader present, and that no leader spends time one-on-one with a child or young person.

Following this principle protects children and young people in our churches, and also protects you from situations where your integrity or actions might be questioned.

**5. Being above reproach in FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:** (1 Peter 5:2) (FiS Chapter 8)

1. Leaders need to be financially above reproach. All events must be organised in an orderly way. All money for every event must be accounted for according to the protocols of the church approved by the auditor.
2. You are not to seek personal advantage or financial gain for yourself or your family from your position or from a pastoral relationship, beyond any stipend or wage and recognised allowances and deductions you may be entitled to.
3. Christian leaders of all ages need to show integrity in managing their finances. This involves
	1. your personal commitment to giving in response to the blessings that God has given to us
	2. managing your finances so that personal debts, including those to any church body, are paid when due and in full

**6. Being above reproach CONCERNING ALCOHOL AND DRUGS:** (Gal 5:19-21) (FiS 6.7, 6.8, 6.20)

1. Drunkenness is regularly deemed to be totally unacceptable throughout the Bible [Ephesians 5:18]. All leaders must ensure that this does not happen – publicly or privately. Use of illegal drugs and misuse of legal drugs are equally unacceptable.
2. In the lead up to, and during ministry activities, all leaders should ensure that they are fit to work and are unimpaired by drugs and/or alcohol. The main leader should be immediately notified of any situation where this policy has been breached by any person.
3. All leaders ought to make a practice of not consuming alcohol (or smoking) in front of our children or young people. It may be a stumbling block for many and sets an example for actions that are only acceptable in law for people over the age of 18, but may not be worthy of a Christian of any age.
4. If all members of the leadership team are over 18 years great care should be exercised in choosing whether to drink alcohol (Gal 5:19-21, Rom 14:17-21). All leaders should abstain from drinking with other leaders until all members of the leadership team are 18 years of age or over. This is specifically for children’s/youth leadership gatherings and events where leaders are present. .

**7. Being above reproach in OUR DRIVING:** (Rom 13:1)

1. We need to model safe and responsible driving at all times and abide by the road rules. Be mindful that parents will judge whether our driving is safe or not by the way we drive when their children are NOT in our car.
2. No leader on their RED Provisional license [P] should drive a child or young person to or from ministry events and outings. If you are a ‘Green P’ driver, then you must obtain individual WRITTEN permission from the parent of the child or young person before doing so.

8. Being above reproach in OUR USE OF THE INTERNET: (FiS 5.46)

1. As leaders we need to model wise attitudes and actions in response to the temptations that the internet can bring. This will include
	1. having your computer in a publicly accessible area of the home
	2. installing accountability software on your home/main computer
	3. Recognising that much of the material on the internet has a low value. Great wisdom is required in how we fill our minds with the ideas of the world (Rom 12:1-4)
2. We should not have anything to do with pornography or sexual immorality. If we find ourselves being tempted in this area we should seek help from a leader of the same gender with pastoral oversight over us.
3. We should never involve ourselves in any form of bullying through the internet.
4. We should take extreme care in what we post on our own social media sites and in what we allow others to post. Though these sites allow for your free expression of yourself, they are in the public domain and will reflect on you and your maturity and ability to lead.

**9. Being above reproach in OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH SENIOR LEADERS:**

(Heb 13:17)

1. We will model respect for the leadership of all those who have pastoral oversight over us.
2. We recognise that there are appropriate ways in which to raise a difference of opinion we may have with a senior leader. Where this arises
	1. we will be respectful in our discussion with the senior leader regarding this difference, i.e. we will speak directly to the leader about concerns we have
	2. we will not gossip nor air this publicly
	3. we will accept the senior leader’s decision but if the matter is of great concern we will take it to another senior leader to help mediate
3. We choose to model obedience to our own parents

10. Being above reproach in DEALING WITH MISTAKES:

1. Any incident should be reported to the senior leader, who will decide if further action is required. If in doubt about whether something qualifies as an incident, then err on the side of caution and inform the senior leader. Attempting to cover up an incident undermines trust and may imply guilt.
2. If there is a lapse in any of the above leadership expectations, the leader concerned should be directed to the code of conduct with the aim of rectifying the problem. If the problem cannot be resolved, the leader concerned will be asked to accept the direction of the senior leader of the group.
3. A leader will be asked to step down if there is a gross breach of these expectations which would undermine the confidence of the parents, the leaders and the children or youth in the person’s ability to be a Christian role model. In this situation, the decision will be made in consultation with the Senior Minister. The person is still supported as a brother or sister in Christ, but cannot be supported as a leader.

STATEMENT OF BELIEF

God: There is one God in whom there are three and equal persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is the creator of everything, infinite, eternal, faithful, all powerful and good.

(Matthew 28:19 | 1 Peter 1:1-2)

The Bible: The Bible is the word of God written by holy people inspired by the Spirit. The Bible is our supreme authority in all matters of faith and godly living.

(2 Timothy 3:16 |2 Peter 1:21)

**Humankind:** God created humankind in the image of God and we are unique in all of creation called to live in relationship with our creator, with humanity and as rulers over the rest of creation.

(Genesis 1:28 | Psalm 8)

**Sin.** Every human is by nature sinful, and all of creation suffers the consequences of living in a fundamentally fallen world. In our nature sinful nature we are all guilty before God and deserving God's wrath and condemnation.

(Romans 3.23| Ephesians 2:3)

**Jesus:** Jesus is the Christ, born fully human and fully God, uncorrupted by sin and shared in the struggles and suffering of humanity. Jesus willingly died once for all humankind as our representative and substitute and his sacrifice alone redeems us from the guilt, penalty and power of sin.

(John 1:14 | Hebrews 1:1-4 | 1 Peter 3:18, Hebrews 9:25-27)

**The bodily resurrection:** Jesus was crucified and died, rose in bodily form, is the first fruits of those who have died and ascended to the right hand of the Father where he now rules as king.

(John 20:26-28 |1 Corinthians 15:17-21)

**Salvation by grace:** Salvation is the free gift of God made possible by the Holy Spirit who compels us to repent and believe the good news about Jesus and our need for salvation. Salvation cannot be earned or made more secure by works but God saves the sinner by grace through faith in Christ alone.

(Ephesians 2:10, 2 Peter 1:10-11)

**Christian living:** The Holy Spirit lives in and restores the Christian. The Spirit convicts the Christian of sin, guides the Christian in truth and transforms the mind and conduct of the Christian so they are more like Christ. Christians sin even with the Holy Spirit and this struggle will continue until we are raised perfect with Christ.

(Romans 12:1-2 | 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8).

**The Church:** As Christians we are all gathered by Christ and are part of the body of Christ. Christians express their relationship together by gathering regularly to worship God in a committed community.

(Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:11-13 |Hebrews 10:25)

**The End:** Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead and establish his new heaven and new earth.

(2 Timothy 4:7-9 | Revelation 21:1-4)

MINISTRY Commitment

Personal Commitment

* I have read, and will work within, the expectations as laid out in this ministry Code of Conduct.

Time Commitment

I willingly accept the significant time commitment I am making

* Lead each week during term (including time before and after to prepare, pray and pack up)
* 1.5 hours per week preparing for the ministry
* 2 camps a year
* 3 leaders meetings a term
* 1 training day each term (3 hours)

Ministry Commitment

I will…

* accept the leadership of those responsible for the ministry and acknowledge their authority under God
* be on time and well prepared for the ministry and ministry events
* respond in a timely manner to communication from my leaders
* Pray regularly for those I lead
* Give particular attention to those I lead during the program time
* Look for appropriate opportunities to encourage those I lead outside the structures of the program.
* Appropriately follow up those I lead if they have be absent.
* Connect with parents where possible during the normal life of our Church community

Safe Ministry Commitment

* I have completed Safe Ministry training in the last 3 years
* I have completed a Working with Children Check
* I have completed a Safe Ministry Check form
* I understand that if an allegation is made against me about child abuse or neglect, the matter may be referred to the police or other relevant authority for investigation.

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| Name: |  | Signature: |  | Date: |  |