

# CODE OF CONDUCT

## Context

The Alliance is committed to its staff, to their development both professionally and spiritually and has a 'duty of care' towards each member of the team. The Alliance is committed to act in all circumstances with compassion, grace and pastoral concern. Members of staff 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 is used at recruitment and selection stage for new entrants and forms part of the application pack sent to those interested in applying for vacancies at the Alliance. Applicants will be asked to confirm that they are happy to abide by the code of conduct as part of the recruitment process.

It also forms the basis of an understanding of behaviour and expectation of one another for all staff working at the Alliance.

Roles which have significant leadership or representative responsibilities, or that are central to fulfilling the aims and purposes or developing and maintaining our Christian ethos, will always be held by evangelical Christians. This is further developed in our equal opportunities justifiability policy.

## Policy

As a result of our shared beliefs and values the following are examples of behaviours we would expect to find within the staff team at the Alliance:

- Willingness to give account of a living faith in Jesus Christ within settings and context appropriate to day to day responsibilities\*
- Regular commitment and participation in the life of a local church\*
- The treatment of one another with grace, respect, courtesy, politeness, forgiveness and self-control as well as justice, integrity and truth: living out the Alliance's values both in behaviour and in tone of communication
- Honesty and co-operation in our interactions, timekeeping and work practice
- Respect for authority and diversity as people working together
- Commitment to good stewardship of the Alliance's finance and resources

(\*It is recognised that there will be specific criteria in this policy, as asterisked above, which are only likely to be relevant to posts where there is a occupational requirement relating to being a Christian).

Should a difficult situation develop, the Alliance is committed to act, in all situations, with compassion, grace and pastoral concern, and make decisions based on these.

Such issues may be as the result of an incapacity or an error of judgement rather than lifestyle choice or pre-determined behavioural choice and the Alliance undertakes to respond, encouraging restoration.

It is recognised that the Bible outlines specific behaviours as fundamental and in situations where these may have been contravened, the Alliance would act in accordance with its disciplinary procedure within a context of grace and compassion.

The use of disciplinary procedures should always be viewed as a last resort. In no way do they exempt the Alliance from making every possible effort to guide the honest pursuit of truth, to encourage fulfilling biblical approaches to sex, to support stable family life or to model good working relationships that convey respect for people and property.

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

- The severity of the perceived misconduct
- Whether the incident is a 'one-off' or part of repeated behaviour or lifestyle
- Any mitigating circumstances e.g. personal issues
- The position of trust of the employee within the Alliance
- The particular duties of the employee i.e. representational, visibility in the evangelical constituency
- Christian maturity and understanding
- The treatment of similar instances of misconduct by other employees
- The employee's length of service
- The extent of any 'live' disciplinary warnings
- Repentance or other evidence of regret

The following is a non-exhaustive list of matters which may, subject to the nature and context of the role, be considered to be gross misconduct (which finding would normally result in dismissal):

- Any 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 the Alliance's equal opportunities policy
- Harassment of any kind particularly sexual, racial, religious or gender related (see separate harassment policy)
- Bullying of any kind
- The deliberate viewing or circulation of pornographic material or other similarly offensive materials
- Breach of trust
- Abuse e.g. sexual, racial, alcohol, drug or substance
- Disregard for safety precautions thereby endangering oneself and others
- Promoting, condoning or engaging in other activities or beliefs that conflict with our Christian beliefs or our ethical/moral/public stance on such matters. For the avoidance of doubt, this would include matters pertaining to the authority of the Bible such as our stance on:
  - marriage being a lifelong union between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others;
  - sexual activity outside marriage;
  - God creating male (man) and female (woman), distinct but complementary, being a permanent state determined biologically from conception;
- The repeated use of blasphemy or sexual innuendoes; and
- Involvement in the occult
- Being engaged (without our prior written consent) directly or indirectly with any organisation or event which risks you being perceived as promoting or condoning activities or beliefs that conflict with our Christian beliefs (including our beliefs regarding the authority of the Bible) or our ethical/moral/public stance on such matters
- Activity which risks causing reputational damage to the organisation.

\*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.

## **Inappropriate conduct outside work**

There may be instances where inappropriate conduct outside of formal working hours may necessitate disciplinary action. Such issues may be as the result of an incapacity or an error of judgement rather than lifestyle choice or pre-determined behavioural choice and the Alliance undertakes to respond in a way that encourages restoration.

As with any disciplinary investigation, employees 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

Such instances of inappropriate conduct outside of formal working hours is as following although not an exhaustive list:

- Where it relates to a serious criminal offence
- Where it renders the employee unsuitable for the type of work they do e.g. someone who works with children found guilty of child abuse
- Where it leads to a breach of mutual trust between employer and employee e.g. accountant found guilty of fraud
- Where it is damaging to the reputation of the organisation e.g. a sexual relationship outside marriage
- Where it affects the performance of the employee in their particular role e.g. a driver who loses his/her license where driving is an essential occupational requirement

It is understood that while every member of staff 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 the faith in order to honour, obey and glorify God in our work.

This code of conduct seeks to facilitate this aim in compliance with biblical precepts as agreed by the trustees of the Evangelical Alliance in the Basis of Faith, and by expressing Christian behaviours in the context primarily of employment.

*Last updated July 2019*

## **APPENDIX A: THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE AND THE BIBLE**

The Evangelical Alliance's Basis of Faith affirms 'The divine inspiration of Holy Scripture and its consequent entire trustworthiness in all matters of faith and conduct.' This statement is understood by the Alliance in certain specific senses:

The term 'Holy Scripture' here is synonymous with 'the Bible' and indicates the sixty-six canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as listed in various historic Protestant confessions (e.g. the Belgic Confession (1561), Westminster Confession (1647)). It does not include those books generally known as 'the Apocrypha'. The 'divine inspiration' of Holy Scripture indicates that it has its origin in God, and that it is uniquely God's Word written. While this written Word is given primarily as a witness to Jesus Christ the Word made flesh, and while God used human writers to inscribe it, these writers were moved by God's Holy Spirit in such a way that the Bible is to be regarded as 'God-breathed' (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16). It is thus distinct from all other literature, bearing in its full scope the peerless authority of God himself.

The divine source of Holy Scripture establishes its 'entire trustworthiness', ensuring that it is utterly truthful and reliable in all that it affirms, and is the reference point by which every other claim to truthfulness must be measured. No human opinion or decree can override Scripture. Even creeds and confessions of faith, which attempt to articulate the theology of Scripture, do not possess Scripture's supreme authority. The Alliance's own Basis of Faith is merely a summary of core biblical teaching; our corporate life and ministry is directed by Scripture as a whole.

The supreme authority of Scripture applies alike to 'faith and conduct' - that is, to ethics and lifestyle as well as to formal doctrine. Scripture must be the lens we use to evaluate our lives and the world. Indeed, Scripture will be of little value to us if it does not govern how we live out our lives, not only as individuals but also in community, and in wider society. The preceding Ethos Statement and Code of Conduct are intended to bear out these practical dimensions of biblical authority. They commit the Alliance to uphold Scriptural standards in respect of human attitudes, behaviour and relationships. In particular, they commit Alliance staff, both individually and corporately, to authentic biblical patterns of Christian discipleship, fellowship and social concern.

While the Evangelical Alliance has historically recognised the rights and responsibilities of the individual believer in the ethical interpretation of Scripture, it has characteristically sought to discern its own rules of conduct on a corporate basis, both with reference to pan-evangelical precedent, and through its various councils, boards, committees and commissions. A key instance of such corporate discernment was the adoption of the Alliance's 'Practical Resolutions' at its founding in 1846. In the form updated in 1996, these resolutions are commended to all staff. Other significant examples of corporate moral discernment are to be found in the reports produced by various commissions of the Alliance - e.g. the Theological Advisory Group (formerly known as ACUTE and TAPPAC). Together, these sources offer a more detailed picture of the Alliance's biblical-ethical worldview.

## **APPENDIX B OTHER POLICIES RELATED TO ETHOS & CODE OF CONDUCT**

Equal opportunities policy  
Equal opportunities justifiability policy  
Grievance policy  
Basis of faith and evangelical relationships commitment

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