

Ministry Boundaries Protocol

Aim:

- For NBBC governance leaders and ministry staff to safely serve God with integrity.

Introduction:

- Church leaders are called to be above reproach (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1). These Ministry Boundaries are intended to clearly and succinctly but not comprehensively, document godly wisdom with respect to appropriate boundaries for NBBC ministry staff and governance leaders. They have been put in place because of:
 - the diversity, complexity and personal nature of church-based ministry;
 - everyone's capacity to unwittingly and at times, knowingly, be unwise;
 - the great importance God places on character and personal integrity;
 - the reality that a lack of godly wisdom by church ministry staff and governance leaders will bring disrepute to the gospel and may cause great pain to many people; and
 - intense public scrutiny, meaning that not only should we do the right thing, we must be seen to be doing the right thing, lest the gospel be brought into disrepute.
- These boundaries are not primarily rules, but mandatory protocol designed to help church leaders connect to people in a manner that is healthy and safe for all parties. Strict compliance is especially important when minors and vulnerable adults are involved.
- The Senior Pastor is the primary point of accountability for ministry boundaries and is to be the point of contact for those with a ministry boundary complaint against a church leader. If the complaint involves the Senior Pastor, or the Senior Pastor is unavailable or in contravention of this policy, the Chairman of the Elders is to be the point of contact. If the Chairman of the Elders is also involved in the complaint or is also unavailable or in contravention of this policy, the Director of Ministries of the BCWA or a BCWA delegated representative of the Director of Ministries, is to be the point of contact. This chain of contact applies to all references to Senior Pastor in this document.

Who must comply with this protocol

- NBBC governance leaders and ministry staff (here after referred to as church leaders) are taken to be:
 - those formally set apart by NBBC for a church wide governance role (namely: pastors/elders and deacons) and
 - those considered members of the NBBC ministry staff, irrespective of the presence or lack of remuneration (including: children and family workers, youth workers, counsellors, Crossway Counselling Service staff and volunteers, specialist pastoral carers, trainee's, office administrators and receptionists).

For the purposes of this protocol, volunteers in ministry work in non-staff roles (including: voluntary pastoral carers and voluntary leaders of individual ministries of NBBC) and staff involved in non-public ministry focused areas (including: book keepers, cleaners, caretakers and maintenance workers), are not considered to be church leaders.

Concurrent compliance requirements

- All church leaders must hold a current Working with Children card and Baptist Churches of WA (here after referred to as BCWA) clearance.

- Church leaders must also adhere to NBBC's documented Safe Church policies and procedures, to all relevant state and federal legislation. to all relevant NBBC Governance Papers and (for pastors) to the BCWA's Code of ethics and ministry practice.

Personal Boundaries

Church leaders will ensure that all interpersonal relationships are conducted without any actual impropriety and without conducting themselves in a way that might create the impression of impropriety, treating each other, members of the congregation and members of the public with respect, consideration, fairness and in good faith.

- Church leaders must show wisdom and discernment by not placing themselves in a potentially morally compromising situation, especially with a minor or member of the opposite sex.
- Where conflict involving church leaders arises, the principles of Matthew 18 must first be applied. In the event that a conflict is not resolved and relationships restored, church leaders will seek the assistance of the Senior Pastor or a mediator recommended by the Senior Pastor.
- Church leaders must seek to be truthful, especially ensuring that public statements are factually correct and where the statements are calling for change, that they are based on Biblical principles and are expressed with humility.
- Church leaders are to avoid any sexual conduct that is incongruent with Biblical teaching, including not viewing, storing, producing or distributing sexually explicit material (either word based or image based).

Pastoral Care Boundaries

Church leaders involved in pastoral care, including counselling, home visitation, hospital visitation and one to one emotional and spiritual encouragement, must not use the power inherent in their role in an abusive or unprofessional manner.

- Where a pastoral care relationship involves a close personal friendship, a close family relationship, or a complexity beyond the competence of the pastoral carer, the ministry leader will ensure that pastoral care is made available from another suitably qualified person.
- A pastoral care relationship that becomes dependent or co-dependent should cease, with the ministry leader seeking to facilitate a speedy transition to another suitably qualified person. The ministry leader must immediately inform the Senior Pastor of the dependency or co-dependency.
- If a pastoral care relationship looks like it may be becoming romantic (heterosexual or homosexual), even if the romance is one sided, the pastoral carer must immediately inform the Senior Pastor of the romance or suspicion of romance and must follow his advice.
- If there is family dysfunction and the pastoral carer is called on to assume responsibilities normally assumed by family members, all steps must be taken to restore primary family relationships. The Senior Pastor must be made aware of this situation and the steps being taken to restore primary family relationships.
- Other than in the context of Crossway Counselling Service, if the pastoral carer or pastoral care recipient are married, no more than two pastoral care sessions (in any twelve month period) may take place with a member of the opposite sex without the spouse of married parties being informed. If there is a particular reason that may make this unwise, the Senior Pastor must be consulted and his advice followed.
- Sensitive information received in the context of a pastoral care relationship shall remain confidential unless:
 - the person gives permission for the particulars to be disclosed; or
 - retaining such information could potentially result in significant harm to themselves or another person; or
 - disclosure is required by law; or
 - information is received that discloses that a criminal offence may have occurred or is likely to occur, or,
 - the information is shared or discussed with the pastoral carer's supervisor as part of their regular debrief, then that information should be passed on to the Senior Pastor or pastoral carer's supervisor. If child sexual abuse is reported or suspected, it must immediately be reported

to the Western Australian Police and the Director of Ministries of the BCWA, in addition to the Senior Pastor.

Financial Boundaries

Church leaders are to ensure that all their financial activities, whether personal or church related, meet the highest ethical standards, avoiding at all times the possibility or suspicion of impropriety.

- Church leaders will not seek financial gain (beyond their recognised wage and entitlements) for themselves or their families from a relationship arising from their employment at NBBC.
- Church leaders will not use NBBC to recruit clients for private practice or commercial interests, other than by way of submitting an advertisement for the back of the NBBC Fellowship Directory (to be included in the next directory at the discretion of the Administration Manager).
- Church leaders will not borrow money from or lend to, or go into business with, a person within NBBC without first consulting the Senior Pastor.
- Crossways Counselling Service has a strict 'no gifts' policy. Other church leaders who receive a gift or benefit (including bequests) resulting from a pastoral relationship, must use discretion concerning the possible acceptance or return of the gift or benefit, considering the frequency of gifts or benefits received from the same or related parties, the intent and affordability of the gift or benefit and whether the gift or benefit places the ministry leader at risk of being compromised or losing objectivity. The safest and easiest option is to decline any gift or benefit, other than low value gifts or benefits freely given with no expectation of preferential treatment. Gifts or benefits that are accepted must be recorded within 14 days in the NBBC gifts and benefits register unless the gift or benefit is a one-off gift or benefit worth less than \$150 [for more details, see the addendum to this policy].
- Church leaders conducting weddings and funerals for people associated with NBBC, will normally decline any honorarium. Honorariums from other weddings and funerals and from preaching/teaching engagements outside of NBBC, are to be passed on to the church administrator, less receipted expenses not otherwise covered, unless the service leading to the honorarium was prepared and conducted in their personal time.

Print & Digital Boundaries

Church leaders will ensure that all use of the media/social media is truthful, respectful and safe, recognising that there is no such thing as a private digital exchange (e-mails, social media posts and instant messages can be logged, archived and easily forwarded to other parties). Consequently, there should be no expectation of privacy and Church leaders must understand that comments published by individual church leaders may reflect poorly on the church and cause many people great hurt.

- Social media has blurred the line between personal and ministry life, so where possible ministry pages/organisations or similar should be used to contain communications from leaders personal accounts to ministry participants.
- If a ministry leader uses social media for ministry purposes, it must be transparent (only using your real name and accurately identifying your role at NBBC).
- Church leaders must be especially careful in the frequency and content of social media, messaging and phone contact with members of the opposite sex, members of the same sex if there may be sexual attraction, children and vulnerable adults.
- Written permission from a parent/guardian must be obtained prior to posting photos or videos of minors. Personal phone numbers or e-mail addresses of minors must never be made available on social media or publicly accessible sites.
- At no point can a picture or video be published or displayed that might be considered embarrassing or unflattering and if individuals are uncomfortable with a particular photo or video being published or displayed, it must be immediately removed.

DOCUMENT CONTROL:

This Governance Paper was adopted by the eldership on 4 October 2016,
updated 3 November 2020.

Receiving Gifts & Benefits

Aim:

- For NBBC governance leaders and ministry staff to appropriately deal with gifts and benefits.

Definitions:

- A gift is a tangible item of value offered over and above a salary or entitlement. It includes things such as cash, interest free loans, electronic devices and cars.
- A benefit is a non-tangible item of value offered over and above a salary or entitlement. It includes things such as travel, discounts and preferential treatment.
- A bequest is money or property belonging to someone that they say by means of a will that after their death, they wish to be given to a specific person or entity.

Introduction:

- The offer and acceptance of gifts and benefits is an area of high risk for Church leaders. Church leaders should never expect to get anything extra for doing what they are paid to do, and must handle offers of gifts and benefits extremely carefully.
- The perception of being influenced by a gift or benefit is just as damaging to a church leader's reputation as actually being influenced, and can easily bring the gospel into disrepute.

Gifts and benefits Register:

- Gifts and benefits worth \$150 or more, must be expediently recorded in a Gift and Benefits Register administered by the NBBC Administration Manager, including the following:
 - Date given;
 - Recipients name;
 - Benefactors name (if known and able to be disclosed). If not known or not able to be disclosed, a brief description of why that is so.;
 - Description of the gift or benefit;
 - Approximate value;
 - Explanation of why the gift or benefit was provided (if known);
 - Signature of one receiving the gift or benefit;
 - Signature of the NBBC Administration Manager, and
 - Date registered with the NBBC Administration Manager.
- The Administration Manager is to inform the Senior Pastor if they believe that gifts or benefits may be unethical, or if there is any more than a 14-day delay between receiving and declaring a gift or benefit.
- Gifts provided through the NBBC offering that are specially designated to a church leader, are to be passed on to the church leader, who then has the responsibility to declare it in the gifts and benefits register if it is \$150 or more.

Bequests

- A church leader must not seek for themselves or a member of their family to become a beneficiary of a bequest, and in most instances, Church leaders should not knowingly become beneficiaries of bequests arising from a pastoral relationship. If a church leader becomes aware that they may or will receive a bequest resulting from a pastoral relationship, they must immediately disclose this possibility to the Senior Pastor and follow his advice.