

JAC YOUTH BEHAVIOURAL POLICY

The Jannali Anglican Church Youth Ministries follow the blueprints for ministry documents on the Sydney Diocesan Safe Ministry website. Of particular relevance are:

[The Blueprint for Ministry for the Head of Youth Ministries](#)
[The Blueprint for Ministry for Youth Ministry Leaders](#)

In addition to these blueprints we have a behavioural policy for youth leaders that has some added material as well as the Biblical basis for many of our policies.

The New Testament is very clear that leaders are to present themselves as models, or examples, for others to imitate. A leader's life is on 'display' and young people are looking to leaders to show them what the Christian life is all about. Leaders should aim to live their lives with integrity, because youth will see their example as 'mature Christianity', (whether it is or not), and will copy them.

Leadership is a great privilege, and yet it carries tremendous responsibilities which leaders must be fully aware of, (1 Peter 5:2-4; Acts 20:35; 1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; 2 Corinthians 6:3-10; Philippians 3:17; 4:9).

Leaders need to keep high Biblical standards in their Youth leadership. The Bible says that leaders of God's people are to be 'above reproach' and 'blameless', (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6-9).

It means behaving in a way that doesn't leave a leader open being the cause of blame, discredit or disgrace in relation to the Lord Jesus and his people. It means living a life that cannot be spoken against. It means practicing godliness in their daily conduct. It means there is to be no 'credibility-gap' between their public and private lives. The life of a leader should be transparent and open to scrutiny. Leaders must not be hypocrites - teaching others but not themselves. The word hypocrite means 'play acting by putting on a mask'.

Leaders are always models to those they lead, whether edifying or not, (1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7, 2:10; 2 Timothy 2:2; Hebrews 13:7). Perhaps a good motto for those in youth leadership is Paul's advice to the Corinthians: 'Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ' (1 Corinthians 11:1). Leaders need to be able to say that to those they lead.

Youth leadership is a high calling indeed.

In addressing these issues though, we want a youth ministry that is characterised by grace and forgiveness, not by rules and regulation.

The Bible is concerned that leaders have a particularly high standard in their personal life. By agreeing to become a youth leader at Jannali Anglican you are agreeing to the following standards of personal godliness. If you find that you need to give attention to one or more of these areas, then start working on it now.

The following policies have been reinforced as a result of the [Faithfulness in Service](#) document (released by the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney in 2005) current edition - 2023.

A. Our Speaking

The Bible has much to say about speech. Words are like bullets - once they've been fired off, you can't get them back. The words we speak will either be positive or negative. The old saying about sticks and stones is a load of rubbish. Words are powerful. They can destroy and devastate people's lives. By the same token, they can enrich and vitalise people's lives as well. Leaders are called upon to strive to speak positive words. We are to watch our language carefully.

We live in a world where words used to pull others down is normal and often promoted. The young people who come to Jannali Anglican may come from backgrounds at school and/or home where negative words spoken to them are the norm. We are to be people who build others up with our words. We should model this in our own lives and teach young Christians to do the same.

- We need to be on guard to prevent any negative talking within our groups. We should not tolerate any belittling or put downs of others in any group. Even when leaders joke about each other, the youth will be watching and then influenced by what we say.

Two of the most frequently mentioned verbal sins in the Bible are gossip and slander.

- **Gossip** is saying things about another person which you wouldn't say if they were physically there with you, (Proverbs 16:28, 18:8, 20:19, 26:20).
- **Slander** is a more destructive activity in that it involves 'character assassination'. That is, the person is actually attacked with words and the person is not there to hear it or defend themselves. It is listed among sins like adultery, (Psalm 15:1-4; Mark 7:21-23; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Colossians 3:8; Titus 3:1-2; 1 Peter 1:24-2:1).

This type of speaking should not come from anyone who calls themselves a Christian and especially not from leaders. We need to keep each other accountable and lovingly rebuke others who slip into this kind of talk. We also need to hold Christian youth accountable during our time with them.

- We should speak words of genuine encouragement and sow words of life into each other and those to whom we minister (Ephesians 4:29; 1 Thessalonians 5:11).
- We need to be careful about the language we use, the jokes we tell, etc., avoiding sexual innuendo at all costs, (Ephesians 5:4; Colossians 3:8-10).
- Leaders must avoid saying (or doing) anything which may be interpreted as 'flirting', either by other leaders or by youth, (1 Timothy 5:1-2).

Our tongues are dangerous. Handle with care, (James 1:26, 3:3-10; 1 Peter 3:8-12). Let us strive to be blameless and godly in this most important area of our lives.

B. Our Sexuality

Every year ministers and youth leaders shipwreck their lives and ministries through sexual sin. Scandals and other sexual disasters to do with youth leaders and youth happen all too frequently. Churches linked to sexual sin have been regularly in the news. Consequently, child sexual abuse has been in the back of many parents minds when it comes to sending their children off to be cared for by others.

We give thanks to God that no such scandal has occurred here at Jannali. However, we need to be on our guard and alert - both to our own hearts and to the bigger picture of running a youth ministry in today's world. It is another vital area in which we need to be godly and above reproach - individually and corporately, (Romans 13:13-14; 1 Corinthians 6:13,18-20; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4).

- All of our conduct must not only be above reproach, it must always be seen to be above reproach. That is, we must go out of our way to avoid any possible confusion or doubts as to our integrity in these areas.

The following safeguards are matters of wisdom and common sense. These guidelines are based on the outcomes of the mistakes of others and are designed to prevent problems arising.

Most of this is common sense. However, things that go without saying still need to be said. We are all made by God as people with sexual feelings and desires. There's nothing at all wrong with that. We're not expecting that leaders will never experience sexual temptation.

But there are some lines we must never cross.

- It is not appropriate to engage in sexual intimacy with someone to whom you are not married. At the bare minimum 'Sexual intimacy' could be defined as physical contact with parts of another person's body that are usually always clothed.

Paul says there must not even be a hint of suspicion about it. This especially applies if you are a leader. Hence the need to be above reproach.

There must never be any doubt and you must not leave yourself open to this charge. You will need to work out the implications of this for yourselves if you currently have a boyfriend / girlfriend. Be careful about the amount of uninterrupted time you spend alone with your partner.

- It is inappropriate and unacceptable to live or sleep under the same roof (or tent) alone with someone of the opposite sex to whom you are not married or related.
- No youth leader should go away alone on overnight trips or on holidays with a member of the opposite sex to whom they are not married or related.
- No youth leader should be romantically linked with a person who isn't a Christian.
- No youth leader should entertain the possibility of a romantic relationship with a school student.

A breach of these boundaries from a leader will result in them being asked to stand down from their position of leadership over youth.

C. Our Relationships

Our relationships with young people are extremely privileged. No abuse of this relationship is to be tolerated. There is an official protocol in place for dealing with any abuse of young people by church workers (eg. Youth leaders). This protocol involves calling the police. There will be no 'protection' for those who abuse our young people.

All Jannali Anglican Youth Ministries are open to observation by parents and other interested adults.

- Leaders should never be alone with a student in a non-public place. We expect that leaders take every step possible to avoid doing so, including when it comes to giving lifts.
- We need to request parents to drop off and collect their children. If there are exceptional circumstances where a leader's car is needed to take a student home, you must have another person with you.
- Leaders are to abide by the [Diocesan Safe Ministry Transport policy](#) document.

If you need to talk privately to a student (eg. Counselling, pastoral work, individual discipling, etc), then do it where you can be easily interrupted. (eg. In a house where there are other people in other rooms and you have the door open; at the side of the hall or church where others can see you; in an open park where you are clearly visible for a long distance, etc.).

- Leaders must never be alone in 'darkness' with a young person.
- We are to maintain an 'open-door' policy at all times when meeting with youth.
- You should not visit a student who is alone in their home. There must be others present, or else arrange to meet at another time and place.
- You should not have a lone student in your home unless there are others present.
- You should never be alone with a student overnight in the same house, tent, etc. Always work in groups larger than just the two of you.

Never think, 'It won't happen to me', (Jeremiah 17:9).

- Male students are to be counselled only by male leaders, and female students are to be counselled only by female leaders. If a student from the opposite sex requests personal counselling from you, involve a leader of the opposite sex immediately. You can then continue a 3 way counselling arrangement or leave it to the person of the same sex as the student.
- Leaders are not to engage in extended telephone calls, texting and internet 'chatting' with members of the opposite sex on social media sites like Facebook. You must always be godly and above reproach in this area.
- Leaders are to abide by the [Diocesan Social Contact policy](#) document.

Physical contact with students is a vital part of affirming and strengthening relationships. However, we need to be careful that physical touching will not be misinterpreted.

- Handshakes, pats on the back, etc. are in the 'reasonably safe' zone. It is important to remember that some young people are very uncomfortable with what may seem small and innocent actions to you. For example, a hand on the shoulder, or a hand around the waist.
- Leaders should not give cuddles, hugs, kisses or massages, etc. These actions can easily be seen as 'sexual misconduct'. It even impacts on what games we play, for example 'Twister'.

In addition, we always need to be above reproach in the eyes of the parents or any others if they were to observe these actions taking place. What would they think?

D. Our Submission

Submission is another character trait which cuts directly against our sinful nature. 'Humility' and 'pride' are directly opposed. Leaders are to be people who understand the place of submission in the Christian life and, above all, the motivation for it. It was at the very core of our Lord, Jesus Christ and his ministry on earth.

We are to submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21; Titus 3:1-2).

- Leaders are to model submission to those who have pastoral oversight of them, (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5; James 4:6,7).

Part of maturity as a Christian is to work as a team.

- Do not undermine the senior leader of your group. Even if you don't agree with them, never take anything away from them in front of the youth. Don't give Satan a foothold. Hold your tongue, (James 1:26, 3:3-10; 1 Peter 3:8-12).
- If you have an issue with another leader, indeed any other Christian, Jesus tells us what we should do, (Matthew 18:15-17). There is a right place for disagreements about ministry. Disagreements can be positive and should be expressed because we need to be constantly thinking about the best ways of conducting our ministries. The right places are either privately with the appropriate leader, or in team planning meetings. Always remembering to do everything in love.
- Leaders are to submit themselves and be obedient to the government and the laws of our land. It should be clear that we leaders, are living as good citizens of Australia. This will be evidenced by our obedience to road rules, speed limits, copyright, etc, (Romans 13:1-7). It is an out-working of 'Love your neighbour'.

Submission is hard, but it is the pathway to godliness.

E. Our use of Alcohol/Drugs

While drinking alcohol is a matter of personal freedom, Christian leaders are to take a mature Biblical approach to this area of great potential for harm in the lives of those they lead. Our society gives alcohol a very high profile. This is the society our Christian young people have to live in. There is great temptation for them to conform and give in to peer pressure in this area.

- Any misinterpretation of 'approval' from a leader of a lifestyle which may lead a young Christian to stumble or fall into sin is to be avoided at all costs.
- All youth leaders are strongly urged to abstain from drinking alcohol where there are young people present, for the sake of others and the ministries you are involved in, (Matthew 18:5-7).

The apostle Paul gave up his 'rights' for the sake of others and their walk with Christ, (1 Corinthians 9:12,15,19-27).

- Leaders should be able to not drink alcohol, even when it is freely available. If a leader is unable to control themselves to say 'no' if alcohol is present, it would seem that the leader has a dependency problem and should speak to someone for help, (Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 6:12, 8:13; Romans 14:20-15:3; Ephesians 5:18).
- No youth leader is to use any illegal drug(s) such as marijuana, ecstasy, speed, etc.
- No youth leader under 18 years of age is to drink alcohol, (Romans 13:1-2).
- Smoking is a similar issue and needs to be thought of by using the same principles as for alcohol.
- No alcohol or smoking should ever be present at any Jannali Anglican Youth Ministry activity.
- No youth leader should have been consuming alcohol or smoking before or while interacting with young people.

F. Our Appearance & Behaviour

All Christians, but especially leaders, are to be very conscious and deliberate in the way they dress and present themselves.

- While we need to be relevant to the culture we are trying to impact, our presentation should not be provocative or immodest. We need to be particularly aware of this at swimming / beach activities.
- We need to be aware of the 'slogans', concepts, images, etc., on our clothing. We need to be conscious of any subtle messages we are sending out. Our choices in this area should never cause someone else to stumble.

It is important to remember that men and women can be equally lustful. We can create issues for our brothers and sisters when we wear clothing that reveals underwear or areas of the body normally covered by underwear. Clothing that is see through or suggestive is unhelpful for those who are visually stimulated, which is a problem given the nature of fashion styles in our culture (especially in summer - too loose, too tight, too short).

- All of us therefore need to be very conscious of what effect the clothes we are wearing will be having on the members of the opposite sex who are looking at us.
- We need to consider not only the effect on other Christians of the opposite sex, but the effect on those of the opposite sex who are younger and already struggling under the enormous pressures of hormones and adolescence. We need to dress carefully, and put the good of others ahead of our own.

G. Dealing With Mistakes

When someone fails to maintain godly standards, we need to understand and model the God who is full of grace and forgiveness. We need to know that we ourselves have failed God by our continuing sin, that we have a God who wants us back, who calls us to repentance and is ready to offer forgiveness, (Ephesians 4:32).

If you are struggling with any of these policies - do not panic. It is not the end of the world. We still love you dearly.

- If you are struggling then please talk to our Youth Minister ASAP. It's important that we help each other out, share our burdens, help carry each other's loads and help one another keep on the right track.
- If you are aware that other leaders are struggling with any of these guidelines, for their good and the sake of the Youth Ministry, take the initiative and talk to them first, ASAP. If the issue is unresolved after your discussions with them, the youth Minister should be notified so we can work to resolve any misunderstanding, (Galatians 6:1-2; Matthew 18:15,16).

H. Relevant Documents

The following Diocesan documents are accessible on the Sydney Diocesan Safe Ministry website pages. <https://safeministry.org.au/resource-documents/>

Faithfulness In Service 2023

<https://safeministry.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Faithfulness-in-Service-20230309.pdf>

Safe Ministry Guidelines

https://safeministry.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/SM_Guidelines.pdf

Social Contact Policy

https://safeministry.org.au/wp-content/uploads/pdf/PSU_SocialContactPolicy_v3_1.pdf

Transport Policy

https://safeministry.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/SM_TransportPolicy.pdf

Leaders need to read and be familiar with the content of these documents for three reasons - the Good, the Bad and The Ugly.

The Good

It enables us to be above reproach, to be pro-active in this area, to be seen to be a 'safe place' for parents to send their children, and for us to talk with integrity when any parent or concerned adult asks us about this area.

The Bad

If someone in your group confides in you that they have been the victim of sexual misconduct, it gives guidelines on what to do.

The Ugly

If you are careless in these areas, you may find yourself on the end of a misconduct charge.