



Riverbend Youth Centre Code of Conduct

1. Policy Objective

- 1.1 To enhance the ability of our volunteers and camp staff to productively minister the love of God to all people attending the campsite.
- 1.2 To provide protection for all of the above from the temptations of the devil
- 1.3 To ensure that all operations of Riverbend are in accordance with the laws of the land, promoting integrity and trust.
- 1.4 To protect the reputation of Riverbend and its standing in the eye of the community from harm.

2. Biblical Basis

These scriptures provide guidance on how Christians should relate to, and with, each other

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| 1 Peter 5:8-9 | Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy, the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith. |
| Ephesians 6:10 | Be prepared for battle by putting on the full armour of God. |
| Philippians 2: 1-15 | We are challenged to follow Christ's example of loving without favour, being one in spirit, doing nothing out of selfish ambition, displaying humility, not looking to our own interest, serving others, not complaining and arguing, becoming blameless and pure – thus being a positive role model to those around us. |
| Ephesians 5:15 | Be very careful then how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity. |
| Ephesians 4: 29 | Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. |

3. Philosophy and Values

- 3.1 The Riverbend Board of Management is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children attending our holiday camps. We are also committed to the safety and wellbeing of every leader, volunteer and worker involved with Riverbend. It is a requirement therefore, that our volunteers and workers uphold the following code of conduct.

- 3.2 When you are appointed to a leadership position at Riverbend, we are entrusting you with the authority to influence other people. This influence over people gives you a position of power, enabling you to lead, guide, teach and encourage. This power could be abused therefore this code of conduct describes boundaries for appropriate behaviour to safeguard against potential abuse of power and authority.
- 3.3 Riverbend actively seeks to build the Kingdom of God here on Earth. Our values are taken directly from the Bible and we seek to adhere to them faithfully. A foundation stone in our ministry to the people of Circular Head is the maintenance of integrity and the building/maintaining trust in our operation.
- 3.4 This code provides our camp volunteers and workers with a set of ethical principles guiding their conduct that they are expected to adhere to in their interactions with others.
- 3.5 Riverbend will ensure that this Code of Conduct is passed on to all volunteers and workers associated with Riverbend on an annual basis and refer to it during all induction sessions.

Sections 4-12 set out in practical terms the active implications of this code.

4. Lawful and Reasonable Directions

- 4.1 Riverbend leaders must comply promptly, conscientiously and effectively with all lawful and reasonable decisions and directions given by a person having authority to give such directions. This includes senior leaders such as supervisors, camp staff and the Board of Management
- 4.2 Leaders must not deliberately or knowingly encourage children in their care to not comply with camp rules, guidelines or boundaries.
- 4.3 Camp staff and volunteer workers must uphold and support all Board of Management policies and comply with safety directives and guidelines.

5. Duty of Care

Duty of care is essentially a duty to do everything reasonably practicable to protect others from foreseeable harm.

- 5.1 Leaders at Riverbend operate in relationships that are based on trust. Such positions are bound by two ethical principles:
- a *non-maleficance* – the responsibility to cause no harm to self or others
 - b *beneficence* – to actively promote the good of self and others
- 5.2 All children have a **basic and expected right** to a physical and emotional environment that is free from unreasonable risk of harm. The term harm includes any significant detrimental effect to their physical, psychological or emotional well-being by any cause and includes minor harm that is cumulative in nature and which would result in a detrimental effect of a significant nature to the person if allowed to continue. Amongst other things, harm can be caused by:

- a physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
- b sexual abuse or exploitation; or
- c pressuring children to keep something secret from others such as parents and Riverbend staff
- d bullying or
- e one's own actions.

- 5.3 Riverbend leaders and workers must take reasonable steps to prevent harm to children during camp and to support children who have been harmed.
- 5.4 Riverbend leaders, volunteers, workers, site staff and Board members are expected to behave always in ways that promote the safety, welfare and well-being of all people hiring Riverbend, attending Holiday camps or working at the campsite in accordance with relevant occupational, health and safety legislation.
- 5.5 Leaders must be aware of the relevant policies, procedures and expectations applicable to their leadership role at a Riverbend camp and be prepared to abide by them.
- 5.6 Leaders must keep their 'Working with Vulnerable People' card current and supply an up to date copy to Riverbend.

6. Relationships

Relationship is integral to the effective running of Riverbend and is based around the following principles.

- 6.1 Relationships should be redemptive based on forgiveness instead of revenge. Riverbend leaders, staff and Board members should never hold grudges, discipline unfairly, fail to forgive children or others or attempt to pay people back for poor behaviour. They must never exercise, or act out of, or express favouritism.
- 6.2 Riverbend leaders should see others as unique people crafted in the image of God.
- 6.3 Leaders need to be prepared to go the extra mile, to turn the other cheek and to persist in praying to God for the children they are responsible for.
- 6.4 Relationships are to be based on respect. If we believe that people are made in the image of God then the way we speak to them, listen to them, relate to them and care for them ought to be respectful. Put downs including sarcasm, refusing to listen to people, negative comments, ridicule, and shouting are all unacceptable.

7. Behaviour and Language

Children learn as much from what leaders do as from what they say. Behaviour, attitudes and language are as important as what is being said during studies and devotions. It is important to use language and ways of relating that affirm worth, dignity and significance

- 7.1 Avoid behaviour that gives the impression of favouritism - "it is easy to love the lovable".
 - 7.1.1 Do not allow campers to wear your clothing including hats, scarves or badges
 - 7.1.2 Do not give gifts to children. If necessary talk to Camp Mum and Dad who can give it as a prize from Riverbend.

- 7.1.3 Do not single out some children for special roles or privileges
- 7.2 Be supportive and uplifting of other leaders.
 - 7.2.1 Do not use negative nicknames, putdowns or sexist language towards children or other leaders
 - 7.2.2 Do not target children or other leaders with unfair and continued criticism
- 7.3 What we post on Social Media can have a negative impact on our reputation, the reputation and standing of others or the integrity of Riverbend.
 - 7.3.1 Comments posted about Riverbend, children who attend Riverbend camps or any Riverbend staff members or leaders need to be positive and uplifting not critical or negative
 - 7.3.2 When making posts on Social Media be wise about the types of photos uploaded or the language used.
 - 7.3.3 Posting images of children from camp, or comments about children from camp, without parental approval is specifically forbidden.

8. Physical Contact with children

Many children enjoy physical contact with adults and will actively seek opportunities for this through simple expressions of affection and confidence in play. Indeed there may be occasions where physical contact is necessary. However some children do not seek or enjoy physical contact. **Children should be allowed to choose the degree of physical contact they have with others, apart from exceptional circumstances or when needing medical attention.**

- 8.1 It is inappropriate to initiate close physical contact. It should be in response to the child's needs not the leaders' needs
 - 8.1.1 Avoid touching children between the neck and the knees and specifically avoid areas normally covered by bathers/swimwear
 - 8.1.2 A sideways hug around the shoulder is more acceptable than an arm around the waist or a front on hug
 - 8.1.3 Be open and not secretive about any form of physical contact
 - 8.1.4 Be aware that consistent contact with the same person may give the Impression of favouritism. It is unwise and may result in others competing for attention or feeling left out
- 8.2 Private conversations between leaders and children should occur in public areas. The wise principle is to remain visible to others.
- 8.3 On no account must any form of physical punishment be administered, even in fun. No leader is to ever physically discipline a child. This includes hitting, slapping, spanking, shaking, squeezing, pinching. Riverbend staff and leaders are encouraged to use positive discipline that benefits the camper and takes into account their background and needs. The aim is to teach the principle that there are consequences for our actions. The only form of physical restraint appropriate is to protect children

from harm. This includes reasonable restraint to stop a fight, to stop bullying or to avoid an accident.

9. Sexual Conduct

- 9.1 Physical contact between adults and children may be misunderstood by others. Any physical activity that is, or may be seen as, sexually stimulating to the adult or child is inappropriate and must be avoided. Children may not be aware of creating such situations. It is your duty to be alert to such circumstances and act accordingly.
- 9.2 Leaders', volunteers' and workers' interactions with children must be, and must be seen to be, faithful to biblical principles and professional at all times.
- 9.2 Leaders, volunteers and workers at Riverbend must not attempt to sexualise a relationship with any child. To do so is a breach of trust, an abuse of authority and criminal. Failure by the other person to reject such conduct does not necessarily imply meaningful consent for in law a minor cannot consent.
- 9.3 Leaders, volunteers and workers at Riverbend (with the exception of authorised people such as Riverbend site staff and the follow-up team) must not provide or exchange personal contact details such as telephone numbers or email addresses with children. Similarly, Facebook messaging, Facebook friends, text messaging, pod-casting and chat rooms between leaders and children who have been campers is prohibited without authorisation from Riverbend management.
- 9.4 The following behaviour constitutes either misconduct or sexual misconduct:
- a unasked for and inappropriate touching of children
 - b suggestive remarks or actions of a sexual nature including inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature and/or asking sexually based personal questions
 - c showing yourself to others sexually (exhibitionism)
 - d obscene gestures, obscene or sexual language, jokes containing sexual references, screening online and/or video material that is offensive, sexual or pornographic or deliberately exposing children to the sexual behaviour of others in any form, is prohibited.
 - f comments that express a desire to act in a sexual manner
 - g personal correspondence (including electronic communication) with a child in respect of the leader's sexual feelings for them.
 - i flirtatious behaviour directed at a child
 - j dating a child
 - k spending significant time alone with a child other than to perform one's professional duties, or without other reasonable explanation
 - l expressing romantic feelings towards a child in any way.
- 9.5 Sexual misconduct can also include *grooming* behaviour. Grooming behaviour is a process whereby sexual offenders *condition* and build rapport with children or young persons in order to reduce their resistance to, and increase compliance with, sexual abuse. The grooming process can include:
- a misleading children by pretending to them that they are special, for example by spending inappropriate time with them, inappropriately giving gifts, showing special favours to certain children or allowing children to overstep the accepted Riverbend rules and guidelines.
 - b breaking of accepted Riverbend standards of behaviour, for example, allowing children to sit on their lap, talking about sex, apparently *accidental* touching.

c engaging in inappropriate, personalised forms of communication.

9.6 All Riverbend leaders, volunteers and workers must discourage and reject any advances of a sexual nature initiated by a child. Should such a situation arise then the leader must report such instances immediately to the senior leaders at the camp or to their most appropriate supervisor to assist in preventing repetition and avoiding subsequent allegations.

10. Other conduct

10.1 All leaders and volunteers must sign in and out during Riverbend run Holiday camps and must inform the supervisor before leaving.

10.2 Of a night, cabin leaders must remain in their rooms. Their primary responsibility is to the campers they are leading. Leaving the room of a night to socialise with other leaders, unless sanctioned by the site staff, is not acceptable and will result in a ban from future camps.

10.3 Leaders must follow all directives from site staff and supervisors regarding possession of phones and other electronic devices during camp.

10.4 Leaders must not engage in, or initiate, romantic relationships with other leaders during camps. A leader's focus is on the children in their care, not each other

11. Discrimination, harassment and bullying

11.1 The Riverbend Board of Management is committed to providing a workplace and camping venue free of all forms of discrimination, victimisation and harassment. Common types of harassment include:

- a intimidating behaviour
- b bullying
- c sexual harassment

11.2 All Riverbend leaders, volunteers, workers and Board members must not discriminate against, victimise or harass any peer, leader, volunteer, worker, child or parent, nor discriminate in how services are provided to others. Everybody has the responsibility to act fairly and evenly towards others.

12. Privacy and Confidentiality

12.1 During the course of a camp, it is possible that leaders may come across private and sensitive information. This must be kept confidential including not talking about it to other leaders or posting it on Social Media.

12.2 Photos of children cannot be taken during camp and posted on any social media site or transmitted electronically without permission of the child AND their parent.

12.3 Confidential, private and sensitive information must be handled carefully and the integrity of such information is to be maintained at all times in compliance with relevant privacy legislation.

13. Procedure for Dealing with Breaches of the Code of Conduct

13.1 Breaches of this Code of Conduct, including apparent breaches and allegations, will

be dealt with in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice. Potential breaches may involve the leader being relieved of their duties and/or sent home. In cases of alleged serious misconduct, an immediate report will be made to the Board Chair. Illegal actions may also result in Police involvement.

13.2 All people governed by this code of conduct should be aware that the Board of Management may apply consequences if the Code is breached. Depending on the nature of the breach, various sanctions such as the following may be applied:

- a appropriate warnings
- b counselling
- c sent home
- d suspended from attending future camps
- e dismissal
- f laying of criminal charges or civil action

Board approval. April 11, 2016

This document is subject to an annual review