

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND - SHAWBOST

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Free Church of Scotland are Christians associated together in the body of Christ.

- The **supreme** standard is the Bible, and all other standards are subordinate to it.
- The **subordinate** standard is the Westminster Confession of Faith.

In addition, this Code of Conduct lays out clear standards of **behaviour**. The aim of the Code is to ensure that expected standards of conduct are outlined and understood both by those ministering on behalf of the church and those being ministered to.

The Bible is not silent on the dangers of lording it over people as opposed to being good shepherds – it is a serious neglect of duty by church leaders. Indeed, biblically the standards to which church leaders are held are deemed to be ‘above and beyond’ those of other institutions and communities. (Nicholls, Challenging Leaders, 2023) (1 Peter 5:2-4) ² *Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

Members of the Free Church of Scotland are expected to behave in accordance with this code of conduct in the following way:

Conduct

- Conduct ourselves at all times in a manner that honours God and the Church.
- Be truthful and honest in our communication with each other in keeping with our beliefs, values and aims.
- Treat all people fairly and with respect and dignity and recognise the opinion of others.
- Be accountable for our actions and not use unequal power relationships for personal benefit and report any incidences of others doing so.
- Be careful not to say or do anything that may bring the church into disrepute. This includes the use of all social media outlets or public forms of expressing views and opinions.

Illegal Activity

- We will not ignore any form of illegal activity, relating to the Free Church of Scotland, its representatives or the people and communities we work with.
- Where there is a safeguarding risk, we will make it known to the appropriate Safeguarding coordinator.
- We will abide by the Free Church of Scotland’s Safeguarding Policy and procedures.
- We will refrain from any form of physical or verbal, emotional or sexual abuse, intimidation, or exploitation.

Safe environment

- We will actively promote an environment where abuse or bullying of any kind is neither tolerated nor allowed to take place. Bullying is conduct amounting to offensive, threatening, abusive, malicious, intimidating, or insulting behaviour that may be an abuse or misuse of power, position or knowledge through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate, or injure the person concerned and which is behaviour occurring in circumstances where it would appear to a reasonable individual that it would amount to bullying of that person.
- We will actively promote an environment where discrimination and harassment are neither tolerated nor allowed to take place. Harassment is unwanted physical, verbal, or non-verbal

conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of another person made in the image of God or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. In deciding whether conduct has that effect, consideration shall be given to the perception of that person, the other circumstances of the case and whether it is reasonable for the conduct to have the said effect.

- Discrimination may be direct or indirect and may occur intentionally or unintentionally.
- We will ensure that people who raise concerns (including whistleblowing) will be supported and not be treated inappropriately or discriminated against.

Information and Resources

- We will ensure that we use congregational funds and resources entrusted to us in a responsible and cost-effective manner and account for all money and property, following the appropriate policy and procedural requirements.
- We will abide by the Free Church of Scotland's Data Protection Policy. The Free Church is committed to complying with privacy and data protection laws including the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- In all financial matters we will act with scrupulous honesty and publicly account for all monies handled by us on behalf of others in accordance with Scottish charity regulations.