



FISH CODE OF CONDUCT

The goal of the FISH Code of Conduct is to set a standard of behaviors that nurtures a Christian environment and reflects the heart of Jesus towards each other and before a world who needs Him. The Lord taught that the entirety of the Old Testament law can be summed up in two commands: “You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and with all of your soul, and with all of your mind,” and “you shall love your neighbor as yourself,” (Matthew 22:37-39). If we keep these in mind, then following the FISH Code of Conduct will be easy. The specific rules in the Code are there for various reasons: to comply with government requirements (Romans 13:1), to demonstrate Biblical virtues (Matthew 5:16), and sometimes as preferences that promote submission to each other in love as we strive for unity (Ephesians 5:21 and Romans 14:14-16). But all are based on the concept of demonstrating love for God and love for each other.

The Code of Conduct applies to all who are involved in FISH. This includes students, parents, registered participants, teachers, coaches, volunteers, and leaders. Monitoring and enforcing the Code of Conduct is the responsibility of the Board of Directors as well as the appointed leaders for each FISH activity. It is also the role of each FISH member to identify lapses and gently correct each other, then ask for help from leaders if the behavior is unchanged. Although these rules specifically apply to FISH events, everyone involved in FISH is reminded that the world is watching and through us they see our Father (1 Peter 2:12).

This list is intended to be representative, not exhaustive.

Academic Integrity

Academic misconduct undermines the integrity of FISH, devalues the hard work of one’s peers, and disrespects teachers. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to the following list:

- Academic dishonesty involves the attempt to improve one’s academic standing through dishonest means and includes activities such as:
 - Unauthorized collaboration on coursework,
 - Use of any unapproved aids to improve performance,
 - Use of artificial intelligence (AI),
 - Sabotaging another student’s work, and
 - Unauthorized copying or sharing of coursework with others;
- The unauthorized dissemination of any academic material (e.g. tests);
- Plagiarism, or the failure to appropriately cite the work of someone else, which can include the re-submission of work personally completed on a prior assignment; and
- Falsification, or the misrepresentation of the truth, in an attempt to improve academic standing which includes inventing sources, altering grades provided by teachers, or in any other way distorting information.

Any lapse in academic integrity, or instance of academic misconduct, noted by a student, parent, leader, volunteer, or anyone else involved in FISH should be reported to the activity or class leader immediately. Any person who has knowledge of academic misconduct, but fails to report, is also subject to disciplinary action.

Dress Guidelines

FISH recognizes that there is considerable variability within the Church regarding what is considered acceptable dress. There is very little applying directly to appropriate clothing within the Bible, leaving much of this up to personal interpretation and cultural context. As Christians, we treat each other and the Lord with love when we promote thoughts honoring to God (Philippians 4:8), live in a way that avoids even the appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22), and submit to each other in humility (Philippians 2:3-4).

Clothing and jewelry may never have words or symbols that are inconsistent with our values or beliefs as Christians. These may not be derogatory or in any way discriminatory towards any race, gender, or belief system.

FISH members, parents, teachers, volunteers, and those registered for events must dress modestly at all times. Clothing must cover all of the chest (including fully covering all cleavage), mid-section (including the sides) and waist down to the mid-thigh. Tops must always include some clothing that spans the shoulders (e.g. straps). Any clothing that is see-through must be covered by something that is opaque, covering those areas listed. Any rips or tears in clothing within these areas may not expose skin. Underclothing (e.g. bra straps or underwear) may not be exposed. Footwear will be generally required (except at events at water venues) and head coverings may be worn if desired but must be removed during prayer and the playing of the National Anthem.

This dress code may be modified to be more conservative or specifically appropriate for a particular activity (e.g. “dressy” for a formal event or requiring close-toed shoes for a hike, for example) on particular occasions, as determined by that activity’s leader. FISH leadership recognizes that these guidelines may not be practical in events that involve water (e.g. the beach or a pool). In those cases, swimwear must be modest. Males must wear shorts that extend to the mid-thigh (not briefs or “speedos”) and females must have their chest, buttocks, and mid-section fully covered (e.g. a one-piece or tankini).

Activity leaders are charged with the responsibility of enforcing these dress guidelines during their events. They are required to refuse entry and participation for any student, parent, volunteer, leader, or registered participant who does not meet these guidelines. The leader at the event is the arbiter of what is or is not appropriate according to their interpretation of these guidelines. Parents and students may not argue with leaders on this point. Leaders may also require pre-approval of intended attire (e.g. via emailed pictures) or may require wearing of donated or borrowed clothing for any who arrive without appropriate dress.

Entertainment Guidelines

FISH maintains a conservative and God-honoring standard in its approach to arts, entertainment, and music. All media which is contrary to these standards (e.g. explicit lyrics or those with offensive language, anti-Christian message, sexual content, nudity, etc.) are not permitted at any FISH event. Although industry rating standards are not always reliable, in general movies and TV shows that are rated “X”, “NC-17”, “R”, “MA”, or with an annotation of explicit lyrics will not be permitted. Caution should be used with anything rated PG-13 or TV-14 and restricted to high school students only. Even those ratings of PG or similar or those with certain content (e.g. magic or fantasy) may be offensive to some of our members so gentleness and mutual submission should be our guiding principles (1 Co 8:13). Leaders who are responsible for FISH events are the arbiters of what is appropriate and may require students, parents, other leaders, and any involved in FISH to discontinue involvement in offensive media at FISH events.

FISH event leaders may also decide not to allow the use of personal electronic devices for specific events, classes, sports, etc.

Respect for Others

All FISH participants are required to show proper respect to those in authority in accordance with the guidance we see in Romans 13. Students are asked to address their leaders by appropriate titles (e.g. “Mr.”, “Mrs.”, or “Coach”). Students will treat parents with a similar level of respect. Students are expected to act with appropriate self-control and decorum in academic, sports, and activity settings and to treat the property of those locations where we hold events with respect. “Leave no trace” will be the theme of all FISH events.

FISH upholds the doctrine that all humans are made in the image of God and as such are due honor and respect. We are committed to treating each other and those from other organizations with whom we interact with respect at all times. This includes those who we face in athletic and other competitions. Students, leaders, parents, volunteers, and all involved in FISH are required to treat each other with respect and courtesy. Vulgar comments (e.g. those of a sexual nature), derogatory comments (including those regarding a person’s protected status including religion, sex, race., etc.) will never be tolerated. Participation in bullying, hazing, or any other defamatory activity is strictly forbidden. All involved with FISH are expected to treat others with love, respect, and dignity.

Physical conflict of any kind is never permitted. FISH participants are never allowed to use foul language while involved in FISH activities. FISH participants will stand in respect for the playing of the National Anthem and will be silent during public prayer. Public displays of affection are prohibited other than holding hands or brief hugs. Formal FISH events are for registered participants only.

In accordance with our Statement of Faith, FISH believes that gender is a gift of God and is unchangeable. FISH leaders (coaches, teachers, volunteers, board members) are prohibited from asking students for their preferred pronouns and from using pronouns for themselves that do not adhere to their biological sex. In addition, no one involved in FISH may be required to use pronouns that violate their conscience.

FISH leaders are responsible for supervising only those registered for their events, not siblings or non-registered guests.

Social Media Usage

FISH recognizes and supports the rights to freedom of speech and association for our students, athletes, coaches, parents, and leaders. This includes the use of social networks. In this context, each student, athlete, coach and leader must remember that participating and competing for FISH is a privilege, not a right. The student, athlete and coach represent FISH, its teams, and clubs, and therefore, they are expected to portray themselves, their teams/clubs in a positive manner at all times. Any online postings must be consistent with federal and state laws, as well as the FISH Code of Conduct and Policies (including those listed below). Specifically prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Sexually explicit, profane, lewd, indecent, illegal, or defamatory language/actions.
- Derogatory language regarding school personnel, policies or other students.
- Comments designed to harass or bully students or FISH leadership.
- Nude, sexually-oriented, or indecent photos, images or altered pictures.
- Photos, videos, comments or posts including but not limited to showing or implying the
- personal, illegal use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco.

Substance Use

FISH prohibits the use or distribution of alcoholic beverages, marijuana/THC, tobacco, nicotine, illegal drugs, and non-prescribed controlled substances by students. This includes the inappropriate distribution of medications that have been prescribed to a particular student to others as well as the possession of drug paraphernalia.

Adults involved in FISH (e.g. leaders, volunteers, teachers, and parents) are prohibited from using any of the above substances at FISH events, even if their use is permitted by law. In addition, involvement in any illegal drug activity is prohibited by FISH and may be grounds for immediate dismissal.

Progressive Discipline

The standard of evidence of misconduct will be the preponderance of the evidence; that is, that the behavior in question is more likely to have occurred than not. An eyewitness's report, videos, pictures, etc., will be used to make the characterization of misconduct as objective as possible.

Participants in events in Christian organizations may sometimes struggle with balancing grace with truth, or mercy with justice. We must look to the Bible for guidance in handling matters of misconduct. In this, Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 5 serve as model texts. Remember that Paul reprimanded the Corinthian church for failing to respond to misconduct within its ranks, and the discipline he directed was quite severe. With these guidelines in mind, the general approach to discipline will be:

1. First offense: verbal warning. This should optimally be performed at the lowest level by the designated FISH leader or volunteer managing a FISH event or activity (e.g. a coach for an issue involving a sport). The issuance of a verbal warning will be reported by that leader to the overseeing FISH Board member and will be discussed and recorded at the subsequent FISH Board meeting.
2. Second offense: written warning. This will be performed by the FISH Board member assigned with oversight for an activity (e.g. the Athletic Director for an issue involving a sport) and will similarly be documented at the next FISH Board meeting.
3. Third offense: Will be discussed with action taken by the FISH Board. Actions may include suspension or expulsion from FISH membership. The decision will be provided to the family by the FISH Board and will be signed by the Chair of the FISH Board.

Although this is a general guide, it may be modified as the situation dictates. Some offenses may be benign enough that multiple verbal warnings are appropriate. Others may be so severe that immediate expulsion is the best response. Both extremes will be avoided as much as practical. Discipline will always seek justice but will be tempered as much as possible with grace, recognizing that we are all sinners afforded mercy by a loving God. However, in obedience to the Lord we will not shy away from definitive action when the safety or reputation of FISH is impacted. In addition, as the situation dictates the Board may also notify someone's church leadership of any adult involved in a lapse of morality leading to disciplinary action.

FISH recognizes that children are still developing in maturity and faith and should not be held to the same standard as adults. For all lapses the child's age and developmental status will be weighed against the relative level of responsibility of their parent(s). There will certainly be times in which parents are held accountable for the actions of their child(ren). FISH Board members, leaders and volunteers will be held to a higher standard of conduct. Any breaches of conduct by members of the FISH Board or their children will be handled internally by the FISH Board.

In the event of disciplinary action there will always be consideration given to reconciliation. The same Paul who wrote so severely about the lack of response to misconduct in 1 Corinthians went on to express in 2 Corinthians 2 the hope to be able to “forgive and comfort... reaffirm (our) love” for someone who had experienced church discipline. The potential for restoration is a fundamental tenant of the Christian faith and one that FISH holds dear.

Finally, FISH members should remember that the details of disciplinary actions will not be shared by FISH leadership with anyone without a “need to know.” Lack of information about the action taken against someone does not mean that no action was taken; rather, this reflects that this action has been taken privately out of respect for those involved. For this reason, the leaders will not comment on the specifics of any disciplinary action.