

# Code of Conduct

## Atlantic School of Theology

*Adopted and approved by the Board of Governors and Senate*

*January 2019*

### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

This Code of Conduct is intended to promote a harmonious, respectful environment for all who study, work, and serve at Atlantic School of Theology. It encourages all who participate in the AST community to conduct themselves appropriately, and it outlines procedures to be followed if there is a complaint against a member of the AST community. We believe that all persons are created equal and all are called to live in respectful and mutual relationships. AST is committed to providing an environment that upholds these beliefs in what we say and what we do.

This Code of Conduct applies to all students enrolled in all programs; to all paid personnel (including those appointed to work at AST by other bodies); and to all volunteers, including field education supervisors and members of the Senate and Board of Governors. All persons within these categories agree to this Code of Conduct by virtue of registering for AST courses or programs (students); accepting employment at AST (paid personnel); or agreeing to serve AST (volunteers). A copy of this Code is provided at the time of admission, employment, or service. The Code is printed in the Academic Calendar and appears on the AST website.

This Code of Conduct applies in all places that involve AST activities, including but not limited to classrooms (on land and online), meetings, gatherings, and worship services. It also applies in places in which AST community members carry out AST business, learning, or teaching, including field education sites.

### **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

The members of the AST community together commit that we will:

- seek the well-being and dignity of others, and AST as a whole, through our actions and words, treating all with respect and care
- conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity
- live in just and right relations with one another
- make appropriate use of AST's assets, resources, and property, both real and virtual, including its computer network

We further pledge that we will not:

- assault, harass, harm, discriminate against, or coerce others
- make direct or indirect threats against persons or property
- instigate circumstances or conditions that endanger the health and safety of others
- misrepresent ourselves or AST
- disrupt classes, meetings, or other gatherings (on land or online) to the extent that others are unable to learn, work, serve, converse, or associate with others effectively
- use large amounts of computer network bandwidth at the expense of other users
- engage in illegal downloading and peer-to-peer (P2P) distribution of software or other files that are not academic in nature or that infringe copyright

## **RELATED POLICIES**

This Code of Conduct further assumes that all AST community members will adhere to the Criminal Code of Canada as well as local, provincial, and municipal laws, together with all other AST policies, including but not limited to policies on Sexual Violence, Harassment and Discrimination, Wireless Network Usage, and Plagiarism. AST students, personnel, or volunteers who live in AST residences must also abide by AST Residence policies.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND APPEAL**

Disciplinary processes will respect privacy, and will take note of power differentials between members of the community and the implications of those differentials.

Infractions of this Code of Conduct that involve criminal infractions will be referred to law enforcement. AST may pursue disciplinary procedures beyond what the law requires.

### *Complaint Processes*

Stage 1 – Any person(s) who is/are concerned that a member of the AST community has violated this Code of Conduct should speak informally and promptly to that person, when possible, and seek a sensible resolution.

Stage 2 – If Stage 1 has not resulted in a satisfactory result, or was not possible, a signed complaint may be made in writing to:

- the Academic Dean (for complaints concerning students);
- the Chief Administrative Officer (for complaints concerning paid personnel);
- the President (for complaints concerning volunteers).

If there is a possible conflict of interest relating to any of these administrators, the complaint is to be addressed by one of the others.

The complaint must provide sufficient reason or evidence to conduct an investigation. Spurious or merely defamatory complaints are themselves considered infractions of this Code of Conduct.

In Stage 2, the administrative officer concerned will undertake to resolve the complaint by speaking with the person accused of a violation. The person accused will be notified in writing of the accusation. The administrative officer and the person accused may each bring up to two advocates or witnesses to this conversation. Redress, as outlined below, may be required. In egregious cases or situations of threat or danger, the administrative officer may act immediately, as an interim measure, to distance the person accused from any other persons and/or the campus or other settings.

#### *Redress*

In Stage 2 of the Complaint Process outlined above, redress may be required in the form of restorative justice process or via penalties.

#### *Restorative Justice*

- A process of dialogue and resolution may be sought that does not involve penalties.
- Training or education in the area of offense may be part of this process.

#### *Penalties*

Penalties may be levied, including any of the following:

- a warning letter stating that the person has violated the Code of Conduct
- a letter of reprimand
- requirement to apologize or to make restitution or compensation
- a period of probation
- removal of AST financial support (to a student)
- removal of privileges
- prohibition or suspension from campus or other AST activities, including online classes
- suspension or removal from academic programming, employment, or service for a defined period or permanently

Failure to cease a violating behavior will result in additional penalties.

The person who has violated this Code of Conduct will be informed of any penalties in writing. Penalties will be noted on the relevant academic or employment record, and will be communicated appropriately (e.g. to course instructors, field supervisors, church judicatories, or AST colleagues).

Penalties stipulated here cannot exceed or contradict the provisions of collective agreements with paid personnel.

## *Appeals*

If penalties are imposed on a member of the AST community, that person may appeal the decision of the administrative officer within 15 calendar days only if:

- not all facts were considered, or new facts have come to light since the penalty was imposed;
- the penalty is unreasonable; or
- the administrative officer made an error in applying this Code of Conduct.

A written appeal must be filed by the person penalized and submitted to the Chair of the Board of Governors. The appeal must indicate the grounds for the appeal.

Within 30 calendar days, a formal hearing will be convened by a person named by the Chair of the Board of Governors who is not the administrative officer first involved in hearing the complaint. The formal hearing panel will include the convener; one member of the full time faculty or another AST employee; one member of the Senate or Board of Governors; and one student appointed by the Student Union. Any party may each bring up to two advocates or witnesses to the formal hearing, which will be a confidential proceeding. Penalties, as outlined above, may be reconsidered, dismissed, or applied in a different way. The person accused will be notified in writing within 10 days of the panel's decision.

In all cases and at all stages, AST will not pay any financial costs incurred by the person accused.

## **DOCUMENTS CONSULTED (2018)**

The drafting of this Code of Conduct consulted the related regulations of Atlantic School of Theology (Halifax); Dalhousie University (Halifax); Huron University (London, ON); Iliff Theological School (Denver); Lutheran Theological School (Philadelphia); Mount Saint Vincent University (Halifax); Saint Mary's University (Halifax); St. Andrew's College (Saskatoon); Union Presbyterian Seminary (Richmond, VA); and Vancouver School of Theology (Vancouver); as well as the recommendations and requirements of the Province of Nova Scotia.